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EXILE AND IDENTITY

by

BRIGITTA BOVELAND

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in
Psychology in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of
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Abstract

EXILE AND IDENTITY

by

Brigitta Boveland

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In 1942, in New York City, a group of Austrian Jewish refugees of Nazi Austria founded the AUSTRIAN INSTITUTE, later renamed the AUSTRIAN FORUM. Eighteen people affiliated with that organization agreed to be study participants, and granted in-depth interviews. Following principles advanced in Environmental Psychology, the AUSTRIAN FORUM was examined as the socio-cultural, physical place that gave public expression to an identity sprung from exile. The study participants' narratives described the exile experience as one of severe disruption to place attachment, with the loss of home bearing critical implications in regard to the reconfiguration of identity. In the FORUM's fifty year history, the organization represented different facets of that identity--patriotism for Austria, expression of the exile experience, and nostalgia--thus giving voice to the complex emotions of a group of people coming to terms with the experience of violent displacement.

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Note:

Most of the names used in this dissertation referring to the study participants have been changed to ensure privacy. However, a few of the study participants are public figures, and in these cases, with their consent, I have not concealed their identities.

CHAPTER 1

ABOUT THE PROJECT

INTRODUCTION

My first encounter with the AUSTRIAN FORUM was a reading of Austrian exile literature by the Austrian actress Angelika Schutz. There were about fifty people, many of whom were engaged in animated conversations in German while waiting for the event to begin. The darkened room was illuminated by a small lamp on the desk where the young woman was reading. The readings dealt with the plight of the Jewish people in Austria, after the *Anschluss*. They dealt with being in exile, and they dealt with the anxiety the authors felt for those they had left behind. The small group of largely elderly people listened attentively. I felt as if I could touch the air, heavy and thick with memories. I also remember the joyful response of these people when Angelika Schutz switched to lighter readings, humorous episodes of daily life in old Austria. Many of the anecdotes she read in dialect involved some reference to the Austrian cuisine, and this especially seemed to generate a warm response. And I remember a small gesture of the librarian who helped to organize the evening, when she impulsively stroked the cheek of the lady sitting next to me.

It was at this event that I met Mimi Grossberg, one of the last living poets of a circle of Austrian writers exiled in New York, a circle which used to be very active during and after World War II. I remember how pleased she was when she realized that I, too, spoke German. That evening she gave me her book The Road to America (1986).¹

This first encounter with the FORUM had a strong impact on me, of which the content of the reading was only part. More important was the decisive feeling that I had discovered something which was new and genuine. I had visited the Austrian Cultural Institute before. But it was this evening with a small group of elderly people listening intently to what must have been a description of their own pasts, and it was the small, moving gesture of the librarian before she switched off the lights, that suddenly opened up a new dimension to me--a view of the Institute as not only a place where one official picture of Austrian culture becomes manifest, but also a place people come to with a need for a social context which itself creates culture. That same night I read the biography of Mimi Grossberg. Here I found a passage that speaks to the history of both the FORUM and the Institute:

¹Generally the émigrés use the term "America" when they refer to the United States. Accordingly I use America in the text whenever it reflects the study participants' choice of words.

The AUSTRIAN INSTITUTE was founded in 1942 by Guido Zernatto, a prominent poet and former Austrian cabinet member, by Professor Siegfried Altmann, of whom I spoke already, and by Frederick E. Taylor, a participant in many Austrian exile activities. They made the INSTITUTE into a sought-after forum for exile actors, musicians, writers, artists and scientists. It was of immense importance for these exiles to find an intelligent, intellectually interested, German-understanding audience...

Shortly before he died in 1963, Professor Altmann had given up the name AUSTRIAN INSTITUTE to the Austrian State which had bought a beautiful narrow building at 11 East 52nd Street, NYC,...As a reward for having given up the name and for having renamed our organization AUSTRIAN FORUM, the AUSTRIAN FORUM received the right to use the new auditorium of the Austrian Institute once a month for its performances and also a small upstairs office to be used permanently.
(Grossberg, 1986, p.88)

Since that first experience with the FORUM, I have gone back many times. First I was an occasional visitor, but when I decided to write my dissertation on emigrant culture, I became a more regular guest, until the Fall of 1992, when the current president resigned and no new leadership was found, and when the AUSTRIAN FORUM ceased to exist.

Usually the events took place once a month on a Sunday afternoon, and they seldom lasted longer than 5:30 PM. They were not always readings; many times they centered around music--a recital of arias and lieder, or an interview with Jarmila Novotná, an opera singer who was most famous in the Thirties and Forties. These events always had a social ending; the chairs were quickly put aside so that people

could intermingle freely, while drinks and snacks were being served. Though I had gotten more familiar with the FORUM since my first visit, my fascination with the place remained. I was amazed how, on some Sunday afternoons, a world which to me seemed to be from another time and place emerged here in New York City, and became real for a few hours.

But there is another aspect to my fascination with the FORUM, which goes beyond the phenomenon that uprooted people recreate a culture reminiscent of the culture of their former country. It has to do with the particular group of people who founded the FORUM, and who, for the most part, had still been using it. Most of these people came to New York City not as immigrants, but as refugees, persecuted and forced into exile by Nazi Germany. Hannah Arendt (1978) wrote about the experience,

We lost our occupation which means the confidence that we are of some use in this world. We lost our language, which means the naturalness of reactions, the simplicity of gestures, the unaffected expression of feelings. We left our relatives in the Polish ghetto and our best friends have been killed in concentration camps, and that means the rupture of our private lives.
(p.56)

It is in this light that the creation of a place, devoted to the culture of the country that brought so much pain, appears outstanding.

I. THE REFUGEES.²

When Hitler took power in 1933, life became increasingly unbearable for German liberals and political dissenters, and because of more and stricter anti-Semitic laws enacted by the Nazis, for the Jewish population in general. When Austria became part of the German Reich in 1938, the Austrian Jewish population was threatened, too. The persecution of the Jews reached a first crisis in 1938, when in the *Reichskristallnacht* the synagogues were set on fire, and an outburst of violence against the Jews began. Nineteen thirty-eight started off a new wave of emigration. Half the refugees who came to the U.S. between 1933 and 1945 arrived in the period 1938-1941 (Strauss, 1971). Emigration from the German Reich was made illegal after 1941.³

In the literature, there is a lack of agreement on the

²Different terms are used when speaking about the people who escaped from Nazi Europe to the U.S.A.: refugee, émigré, exile, immigrant, emigrant. The term "refugee" seems to fit best the historical period when people were actually fleeing and hadn't settled down. The terms "immigrant" and "emigrant", however, simply denote movement into or away from a country. Wishing not to gloss over the fact that the move from Europe was forced by abhorrent political circumstances, I will use the terms exile or émigré. The different terms increasingly appear when I describe the Discourse on Exile later in this chapter. They are very much a reflection of the author's location--both geographical and political.

³Austria's *Anschluss* and the escape from Austria are the subjects of **CHAPTER 5** and **CHAPTER 6**.

number of refugees who actually came to the United States. For example, Strauss (1986) speaks of a total of 500,000 of U.S.-immigrants from Germany, Austria and Czechoslovakia, including about 30,000 (6%) non-Jews. Lowenstein (1989) cites 150,000 - 190,000 Jews and others who came to the United States. The assessment of specific Austrian emigration figures is particularly difficult. The lack of reliable statistics is due to the fact that after the *Anschluss* in 1938 American immigration statistics included Austria with Germany. But the confusion is also grounded in the particular history of Austria as a nation. Wilhelm Schlag (1961) writes,

... many who had grown up in Austria, or become Austrian citizens, had been born in various other parts of the former Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and thus fell under Czech, Hungarian, Polish, Rumanian or Yugoslav quotas. (p. 179)

Peter Eppel (1990), in a more recent work on Austrian emigration to the United States, contends that there exist only two reliable figures: one, provided by the *Israelitische Kultusgemeinde Wien* (umbrella organization of Jews in Vienna), is 28,615 Austrian Jews; the other, extracted from the National Archives in Washington D.C., speaks of 40,000 Austrians in the U.S.A. who have immigrated since 1938.⁴

⁴In 1995, the *Dokumentationsarchiv des österreichischen Widerstandes* (DÖW) published a comprehensive documentation of Austrian emigration to the United States 1938-1945 which

There has seldom been a group of immigrants that encompassed so many illustrious names. Albert Einstein, Hannah Arendt, Bertolt Brecht, Arnold Schönberg, Thomas Mann, Otto Klemperer are only a few of a cultural elite that emigrated from Nazi Europe. These celebrated immigrants attracted much attention, and the literature concerning this group is extensive. But as Lowenstein (1989) rightly points out, the intellectuals represented only a minority of the refugee wave.

Only 18 percent of gainfully employed refugee arrivals were professionals, and many of these were doctors and lawyers rather than intellectuals. The few thousand intellectuals were far outnumbered by refugee businessmen and non-intellectual professionals. Those studies that have tried to present a picture of the social characteristics of the refugee wave as a whole show that the intellectuals were not typical of the wave. (p.23)

Although the majority of the refugees differed from the elite group, nevertheless they carried attributes of an elite compared with other immigration waves to the United States. The refugees from Nazi Europe "were mainly of middle- or upper-class origin and were engaged primarily in business, professional, or white-collar occupations. They came chiefly from cities and many were well educated" (Lowenstein, 1989, pp.23-24). This socio-economic profile of the refugees is largely due to the fact that, because of

reiterates the numbers provided here.

U.S. immigration regulations which required an affidavit of support, only those people managed to escape to the United States who had either resources on their own or connections to U.S. citizens. The case of the Jewish physician Victor Spira demonstrates how desperate this situation could be for someone who lacked both. His example shows the arbitrariness of exile together with the ingenuity born out of this desperation.⁵ Asked why he had wished to flee to the U.S.A. of all places, he replied,

Well, that really happened quite by accident /.../. We knew we would have to emigrate, but had not the faintest idea to what place. At that time in Vienna I went from one consulate to the other, from one legation to the next and from one steamship company to the other, wrote letters to all countries under the sun, to Albania, Mexico, Cameroon, Shanghai, South America, went to libraries to study the immigration rules and regulations of different countries--all to no avail. Prior to granting an immigration visa, the United States required the famous *Affidavit of Support*, i.e. a paper signed by a US citizen willing to accept financial responsibility for the prospective immigrants to make sure that they would not have to rely on the US Government for financial support. At long last, someone had a truly wild, crazy idea: We scanned some American telephone directories for people named Spira, and wrote to them, asking them to sign the affidavit required. We justified this by referring to possible, albeit extremely remote, family ties. Much to our surprise, this ruse succeeded: Some people bearing our name turned out to be decent, helpful, and generous. They assisted us in obtaining our visa. Of course the guarantee they

⁵That Spira's case was not at all unusual is shown by the experience of several participants in this study who found themselves in a similar situation and opted for the same strategy to come to the U.S.

gave was a mere formality. The people who signed our affidavits never had to spend a single penny on us. (Quoted in Eppel, 1990, pp.4-5)

The start in the new country was difficult. The beginning was not only characterized by psychological hardships but by economic hardships as well. The refugees leaving after 1938 arrived impecunious, since by then the Nazis did not allow the transfer of money. Those who were foresighted, and had organized their escape well in advance, could bring at least part of their belongings. Those who waited to the last minute and hastily fled arrived with practically nothing. In the United States the refugees fortunately found an elaborate network of organizations that provided help in every imaginable way. Strauss (1979) mentions 168, mostly Jewish, organizations which attended particularly to the matter of the refugees. There were an additional 68 regional and local organizations in the metropolitan area of New York City. Some of these organizations go back to the end of the nineteenth Century, some came into being between 1933-1945, and others yet were founded only in the postwar period. The support these organizations provided ranged from practical matters such as free meals, English classes, and preparations for American citizenship at the height of the immigration, (1933-1945), to legal questions of reparation after the war, and to the establishment of welfare programs and homes for the elderly in the 1970's. Despite their

differences in structure and function based on their particular orientation--most of these organizations had a national, religious or professional orientation--they shared one main goal: to ease and accelerate the legal, economic and social integration of the refugees into American society. (Strauss, 1986, p. 304)⁶

The Aufbau, "America's only German-Jewish Publication," was a support and still is after all these years. Emerging from the monthly "calender of events" of the German-Jewish Club in 1934, within ten years it developed into an important and, among refugees, widely read newspaper with a circulation of 35,000 weekly.⁷ The Aufbau published the names of the people who had newly arrived in New York City, as well as housing and want ads, and in 1941 it published the "Aufbau Almanac," a handbook of all the organizations that supported the refugees. In addition to this pragmatic focal point, the Aufbau became a forum for the liberal and critical discourse of exiled writers and intellectuals. After the war the Aufbau developed three focal points: questions surrounding reparation to the refugees, support for the state of Israel, and a critical, yet sympathetic,

⁶The study participants' arrival in the United States and their adjustments to the new country are dealt with in **CHAPTER 7**.

⁷Today's circulation is 6,000 bi-weekly.

coverage of the New Germany (Schaber, W., 1972).⁸

A lively social and cultural life developed among the refugees. Many of the organizations that provided material support also offered programs for social and leisure activities. The AUSTRIAN INSTITUTE was founded in 1942. The INSTITUTE, later renamed the AUSTRIAN FORUM, which I visited from 1991 to 1992, with its unambiguous orientation towards Austrian culture, held a particular position in the exile context. With the majority of its members Jewish,⁹ one is pressed to ask why these Austrians, who had just been expelled from Austria because of their Jewishness, established and joined an organization committed to Austrian

⁸In addition to the Aufbau and some short-lived German-Jewish newspapers, there existed the Staats-Zeitung, which goes back to 1835, and was most popular before World War I when its circulation reached 100,000 readers twice a day. Today, a liberal weekly newspaper, the Staats-Zeitung appears with a circulation of 15,000. (E. Stadelmann, editor in chief, in Hartenstein, 1991, p.302) Unlike the Aufbau, however, and perhaps because it did not develop out of the German-Jewish milieu, the Staats-Zeitung never became the organ of the émigré community.

There were also newspapers for the Austrian émigrés in particular, none of which is still in existence: Austro-American-Tribune, Austrian Labor Information, Austrian Labor News, and Austria. For more on the most important of these papers, the Austro-American Tribune, see CHAPTER 7.

⁹"How many non-Jewish emigrants from Austria had there been? A handful, but not many" (Harry Zohn, personal conversation, December 5, 1993).--See also early in this CHAPTER, where I refer to Strauss's (1986) estimate of 6% non-Jews of the U.S.-immigrants from Germany, Austria and Czechoslovakia.

culture? In other words, what prompted them to express in public the Austrian aspect of their identity rather than the Jewish side? The questions raised here address the complexities and contradictions of an Austrian-Jewish identity unfolding, and being re-formulated, against the background of the American exile.

II. THE CONSTRUCTION OF IDENTITY.

One can view society as comprised of the social processes in which human beings engage in their daily activities, and by which they construct their world. These world-building activities are not limited to the material world. Rather, they encompass the human activities that create a world of ideas and meanings as well. This "meaningful world" becomes the matrix within which we make sense of our activities, and thus becomes the result and the pre-supposition of our actions at the same time. However, the world-building processes of our daily activities can't be comprehended as only individual projects. Rather, they must be viewed as a social enterprise that produces a common and shared world of meanings. This meaningfully constructed and socially shared world is never a finished product. Instead, people engage in social processes by which meanings are constantly created, shifted and re-made. (Berger & Luckmann, 1966)

The world in which we live our daily lives, and where as social actors we construct, negotiate, and re-construct meaning about this world, has been denoted the *lifeworld*. This concept, originally coined in philosophy by Edmund Husserl (1962), who assigned utmost importance to its analysis and description in all its dimensions, was made fruitful for the social sciences by Alfred Schutz. Schutz

stresses the social embeddedness of human existence by his conceptualization of the lifeworld as socio-cultural.

Not only the spatial and temporal relations are social but also the very style of lived experience and cognition in the everyday world is social. The world with its multiple items is accepted as a theater where knowledge and action are fundamentally intersubjective. (Schutz, & Luckmann, 1973, p.XXIX).

Members of one culture share beliefs, values, and interpretations regarding the world. These shared-in-common and mutually sanctioned sets of interpretative categories within a culture are not questioned. On the contrary, as Schutz points out, it is the taken-for-granted attitude, the suspension of doubt (or "époché" in Schutz's words), that is typical for the "natural attitude" by which we live our daily lives.

This dissertation conceptualizes self-identity as emerging and being constructed in the context of the shared horizon of a lifeworld. When we speak of identity we address the question of how we understand our own "true" self, and how we define our place in this world. Our sense of identity allows us to integrate our manifold daily experiences which, at times, are divergent, inconsistent, even contradictory. With the understanding of who we are, and together with our memories, we develop our personal histories, thus creating both meaning and continuity that hold our lives together.

Yet individual self-identity can only be sustained within the network of a collective identity of a shared culture. The shared horizon of the different cultural forms of life becomes integral to a person's sense of self since it helps to define "... an 'I' by placing it against a background 'we'" (Appiah, & Gates, 1992, p.627).

The social and cultural embeddedness of the individual and his or her self-identity has been acknowledged by social scientists. For example, Harold Garfinkel (1968), who further developed the theories of Schutz, holds that a person's identity depends on his or her ability to act according to the shared background assumptions of a commonly-shared culture. A person's self-esteem is either fostered or undermined by the feeling of competence in behaving within a given framework of understanding. "Any disruption of the presupposed features of action dramatically challenges one's senses of competence, morality, or sanity" (Garfinkel, 1968, p.35)--a point which is particularly relevant for cultural strangers and persons in marginal social positions.¹⁰

The social dimension of the self is also at the core of

¹⁰A fine phenomenological description of the stranger was given in an article titled "The Stranger" by Alfred Schutz, himself a stranger in America after being forced into New York exile from his native Vienna in the 1930's.

George Herbert Mead's (1968) conception of identity. A person develops a self only through social interaction. "Through a process of imaginatively taking the perspective of others with whom he interacts, many of the 'attitudes' of significant others are incorporated into one's views of self" (p.34). Essential to Mead's theory

...are the propositions that an individual (a) will conceive of himself much as he believes significant others conceive of him, and (b) will tend to act in accord with expectations he imputes to these significant others concerning the way "people like him" should act. (p.34)

Irving Goffman's (1959) work adds an important feature by pointing to the socially staged events out of which the self develops. The self as performance is identified with the social mask and role playing, and the individual is seen as the result of his or her impact on the "audience".

While the image is entertained concerning the individual, so that a self is imputed to him, this self itself does not derive from its possessor, but from the whole scene of his action, being generated by that attribute of local events which renders them interpretable by witnesses. A correctly staged and performed scene leads the audience to impute a self to a performed character, but this imputation--this self--is a product of a scene that comes off, and is not a cause of it. (p.252)

In psychology, Erik Erikson represents an important perspective in the theory of identity. Operating in the framework of psychoanalysis, he describes the conscious

feeling of having a personal identity as being based on two observations: "the immediate perception of one's selfsameness and continuity in time; and the simultaneous perception of the fact that others recognize one's sameness and continuity" (1994, p.22). This continuity must largely be ascribed to the work of the ego, which, in psychoanalysis, is conceptualized to negotiate the individual's drives with the demands of society. Erikson's theory of identity, however, departs from strict psychoanalysis to incorporate the insights of cultural anthropology and sociology. His Childhood and Society (1993), which describes the child rearing methods of different Native-American tribes, as well as those of modern Western society, is an example of his placing the individual's ego development in a specific socio-cultural environment. Erikson's notion of the "individual's ego space-time" (1994, p.31) reflects the insight that a person's identity develops in a specific geography at a specific time. This notion most of all preserves the topography of the individual's childhood which, in turn, must be related to the collective space-time and the life plan of society.

...the human environment must permit and safeguard a series of more or less discontinuous and yet culturally and psychologically consistent steps, each extending further along the radius of expanding life tasks. All of this makes man's so-called biological adaptation a matter of life cycles developing within their community's

changing history. (1994, p.163)

Personal identity, or ego-identity, accrues developmentally. The ego matures by confronting developmental stages which are usually triggered by crisis, the most dramatic of which occur in adolescence. A successful identity formation depends on the successful mastering of each developmental crisis. However, "identity formation neither begins nor ends with adolescence", Erikson argues. (1994, p.122) Instead, he envisions the process of identity formation as a lifelong development, lasting into old age, and where each life stage represents its own unique challenge to a person's self understanding. (1997)

In his socio-cultural history of the concept of identity, Baumeister (1986) evaluates the modernization processes of Western society and their impact on the development of self-identity. His point is that in modern times it has become more and more difficult to develop an unambiguous sense of identity. The increasing emancipation from social and religious constraints allows--and even forces--the individual to make choices that did not exist before. Baumeister argues that it is because of the choices that the modern individual has to make without the provision of clear criteria on which to base these choices, that problems of identity occur.

Identity used to mean one's roles or attributes; it now meant the underlying entity that is expressed by these roles or attributes. Identity became equated with one's set of metacriteria, which may or may not always exist. Hence the appeal of images like "finding oneself" or "searching one's soul" for questions about identity. The appropriate metacriterion is presumed to be there somewhere inside, but one doesn't know just where and what it is. So one hopes to establish the metacriterion by searching for it. Equating identity with abstract elusive metacriteria has helped to make identity hard to know and define, and has thus contributed to the problems of identity. (Baumeister, 1986, p.152)

While these social scientists integrate or rely on the socio-cultural context in their understanding of the development of self-identity, they nevertheless hold up a concept of the self that is endowed with substance, attributes and meaning. Even Goffman's social mask and role playing in his theory of identity depends for its palpability on the contrasting sense of the "real self," as John Lyons (1978) rightly points out. Recent developments in social theory, however, have raised serious doubts about the very concept of the self. Arguing that the idea of a self is an "invention" that grew out of the rationalization and modernization processes of society in the last two centuries "to substitute the soul" (Lyons, 1978, p.222), today's skeptical authors question whether there is anything else to the self than that which becomes manifest in social relations. Lyons contends that the emphasis on the self was largely a product of late-eighteenth-century thought. Before

then people tended to view themselves as exemplars of more general categories--members of religion, class, profession. Even the soul was not an individual's possession, it was given to him by God. In his literary analysis of the romantic and modern period, Lyons suspects that the romantic idea of an outer social self and an inner true self has to give way to the suggestion that the self is only a social fiction, and that modern literature is "...anguishing about 'this' abyss within" (p.229).

Social theorists have made the concept of the modern self the matter of their critical analytical interest. Michel Foucault, in his influential and seminal work, Order of Things (1970), analyzed societal, literal, and scientific institutions and the instruments by which they retrench, channel, and control the discourse about the human experience. For Foucault, the modern self is an historical and cultural reality that has been constituted within a discourse that not only is entrapped in structures of power, but that exercises power itself. In his essay, Foucault delineates three "systems of exclusion" by which discursive practice is restrained: There is first the most direct exclusion which works by prohibition and taboo, such as is exercised, for example, in the discourse on sexuality. There is secondly the establishment of boundaries and rejection. Foucault points to the discourse of the mad whose word does

not pass for truth or meaning. And thirdly, and in Foucault's view the most evasive system of exclusion, the strife and commitment to a truth which, since the Nineteenth century at least, has been sanctioning only the materialistic, technical, and instrumental investment of knowledge.

Since Foucault's work in the 1970's, and certainly to some degree due to Foucault's seminal ideas, the knowledge produced in the last two centuries has become the object of increased scrutiny. The postmodern critique questions the modern vision of the disembedded, rational, closed, male subject aiming at self-dominance and self-mastery, and the universalist concept of reason that remains indifferent and insensitive to context. These "grand narratives" of the Enlightenment, as Jean-Francois Lyotard (1984) referred to them, do not afford a place for the realities of people living at the margins of society, i.e. the mentally ill, women, children. Western rational tradition has excluded or distorted their "small narratives" by rendering them mad, hysteric, or childish. Differing lifeforms and differing subjectivities were subjected to the normalization processes of scientific discourse. These processes have been described in great detail by Foucault in his genealogies on madness and sexuality. Since subjects are constructed in discourse, there exists, from Foucault's point of view, no possibility

to establish substance to the self other than that which has been assigned to it discursively.

The social constructionist point of view, first expressed in sociology and adopted by social psychology by the mid 1980's, assigns utmost importance to social relationships in terms of the formation of self-identity. The argument, most prominently advanced by Kenneth Gergen, considers obsolete both the romantic vision of an inner, true self, distinct from the outer social self, as well as the modern vision of the rational, intentional, and autonomous self.

The explanatory laws of human action shift from the interior region of the mind to the processes and structure of human interchange. The question "why" is answered not with a psychological state or process but with consideration of persons in relationships. (1985, p.12)

In his more recent work, The Saturated Self. Dilemmas of Identity in Contemporary Life (1991), Gergen stresses his point that, as the beliefs in an essential, identifiable self erode, a new conception of self emerges, which places relationships in the central position hitherto occupied by the individual self.

Under postmodern conditions, persons exist in a state of continuous construction and reconstruction; it is a world where anything goes that can be negotiated. Each reality of self gives way to reflexive questioning, irony, and ultimately the playful probing of yet another reality. The center fails to hold. (p.7)

Gergen distinguishes three phases along which the new consciousness of self-identity develops: (1) "Strategic manipulation," the individual finds his- or herself in many diverse roles in order to achieve social gains, which undermines the concept of one essential self; (2) "Pastiche personality," the individual feels liberated from the concept of the essential self and enjoys the different self-expressions that are possible with the abandonment of the essential self; (3) "Relational self," the individual's autonomy is substituted by an understanding of "...a reality of immersed interdependence, in which it is relationship that constructs the self" (p.147). This new understanding of the self allows for pluralistic thinking and the acknowledgement that we live in interdependence with each other, thus building the foundation for a more harmonious social life. Yet, Gergen knows that his postmodern discourse on self-identity which, as a text, is hopeful in its implications, must ultimately be carried into action and be examined in real life. (p.259)

Gergen's playful constructing and re-constructing of self-identities, however, is oblivious to the societal processes and conditions in which the formations of identities take place. But, as Foucault has already shown in his discourse analysis, identities are formed within a social structure characterized by the unequal distribution

of societal power. Cornel West (1992) stresses that the argument of social constructionism concerning self-identity must take into account the embeddedness of the human body in the material world. "For identity is about bodies, land, labor, and the instruments of production. It's about the distribution of resources" (p.21). However, as the question of identity has evolved at the end of the Twentieth Century, to encompass such powerful categories as race, gender, religion, ethnicity, and nationality, the idea of where "class" fits in as a category of identity becomes an extremely complicated question. Nevertheless, as West argues, the discussion of the social construction of identity has to begin "... with talk about resources and the way they are linked to cultural identities..... when you talk about identity it's got to be linked to material conditions in terms of what kind of assets and resources people have" (p.116). To West, in contrast to Gergen's cheerfulness, the question of self-identity has the potential to become a matter of life and death. Xenophobia, nationalism, and sexual violence are cases in point--as was National Socialism for the Jews, among others.

Jane Flax (1990) writes,

Postmodernists wish to destroy all essentialist conceptions of human being or nature... In fact Man is a social, historical or linguistic artifact, not a noumenal or transcendental Being... Man is forever caught in the web of fictive meaning, in chains of signification, in

which the subject is merely another position in language. (p.32)

The postmodern dissolution of the subject accounts for the ambivalence some feminist authors express towards post-modernity.¹¹ Though not unsympathetic to the constructionist argument of postmodernism--they share the struggle against the grand narratives of the Enlightenment--the feminist critique is directed towards the subject emptied of any possible meaning and content, thereby undermining the very project of female emancipation. (Benhabib, 1991) Without a voice, the experience of women and other marginal groups will remain in its formerly assigned shadowy place.

Post-modernism abolishes the subject at the very moment that women ...for the first time in history are constituting themselves as empowered subjects. If the subject has no voice, then there is no place in social science for special attention to a woman's perspective. (Rosenau, 1992, p.52)

Seyla Benhabib (1991) represents a strong voice arguing against the onslaught on the self, that would empty the concepts of agency, autonomy and selfhood, as well. In Situating the Self. Gender, Community and Postmodernism in Contemporary Ethics (1992) she opposes the "...attempts to

¹¹The debate among Seyla Benhabib, Judith Butler, and Nancy Fraser which deals primarily with the "death of the subject" and its implication for emancipatory action, is enlightening. In Praxis International (1991).

replace the vision of an autonomous and engendered subject with that of a fractured, opaque self;" where "...the 'deed without the doer' becomes the paradigm of subversive activity for selves who joyfully deny their own coherence and relish their opacity and multiplicity" (1992, p.16). She proposes, instead, a concept of the subject that relies in its development on the existence of a community and its communicative faculty. For Benhabib, personal identities are constituted socially and narratively.

The self becomes an individual in that it becomes a "social" being capable of language, interaction and cognition. The identity of the self is constituted by a narrative unity, which integrates what "I" can do, have done and will accomplish with what you expect of "me", interpret my acts and intentions to mean, wish for me in the future, etc. (p.5)

II.1. PLACE-IDENTITY.

As much as the social and cultural processes involved in the development of self-identity have been delineated, their embeddedness in the physical world has often been neglected. But as one cannot conceive of the human existence outside of history, so must this existence be anchored in real world settings.¹² Environmental psychology, with its recognition

¹²Unlike West (1992) whose push to integrate the "real world" in the discussion about identity, stresses the need for a political-economic analysis, environmental psychology's emphasis lies on the very physicalness of the world and its

of the significance of the physical environment to the human experience, provides a particular contribution to thinking about identity formation. Its concept of place-identity stresses the placeness of a person's being as a meaningful experience in life. Indeed, people also define themselves in terms of the places with which they have developed an affectional relation, and the stories they tell about the meaningful places in their lives speak to at least some aspects of their self-identity. The authors of the influential Place-Identity: Physical World Socialization of the Self (1983), Proshansky, Fabian, & Kaminoff, define place-identity as

...a sub-structure of the self-identity of the person consisting of, broadly conceived, cognitions about the physical world in which the individual lives. These cognitions represent memories, ideas, feelings, attitudes, values, preferences, meanings, and conceptions of behavior and experience which relate to the variety and complexity of physical settings that define the day-to-day existence of every human being. At the core of such physical environment-related cognitions is the "environmental past" of the person; a past consisting of places, spaces and their properties which have served instrumentally in the satisfaction of the person's biological, psychological, social, and cultural needs. (p.59)

Proshansky et al. link place-identity and self-identity via the conceptual framework of social roles and social attributes. As a person's social roles change over the

importance to identity formation.

course of the life cycle, places to express these roles will change, too.

Place-identity cognitions express and reflect the physical settings and their properties that support and are directly relevant to the social roles and attributes that define who the person is, how he or she is to behave, and what he or she is worth...at the root of changes in cognitions of place-identity lie changes in the social roles and social attributes of the person and therefore in his self-identity. (p.80)

Though the authors depict self-identity expressed in social roles as the drive behind a person's place-identity, they view the process work also in the reverse. This seeming ambiguity in the conceptualization of place-identity reflects the transactional nature of the person-environment relationship where, in fact, the person is viewed as continuously engaging with the world, simultaneously affecting and being effected by his or her environs.

...we must stress the importance of the ecological approach in which the person is seen as involved in transactions with a changing world...the psychologically healthy state of a person's sense of self is not a static one, rather it is characterized by growth and change in response to a changing physical and social world. (p.59)

As places and spaces constitute the backdrop for the social events which are usually at the center of the situational context, so place-identity remains in the background of one's awareness.

...the individual is generally not aware of the variety of memories, feelings, values, and preferences that subsume and influence his or her responses to the physical world. One is simply comfortable in certain kinds of physical settings, prefers particular spaces, kinds of lighting, furniture arrangements, number of people in a room for a party, number of people in an office, and so on. (p.63)

It is at times of incongruity, however--that is, when there is a misfit between a person's social roles and the environment to carry them out--that a person's place-identity moves to the foreground. And, as Proshansky et al. assert, "Physical settings themselves may change radically...and thereby no longer correspond to the existing place related cognitions that serve to define the self-identity of the individual" (p.65).

One important dimension of place-identity lies in its emphasis on the emotional bond that people form with their environments. This emotional dimension, captured in the concept of place attachment, is particularly present in early works of such humanistic geographers as Buttimer (1980), Tuan (1980), and Relph (1976) which describe people's sense of rootedness and belonging to geographically discernible places. The meaning of home is an especially important theme in this context, its meaning ranging from an expression and extension of the self (Cooper, 1974), to the undermining of a sense of self in cases of a lost home (Fried, 1963). A more recent publication, PLace Attachment

(1992), collects a broad range of research pertaining to the relevance of different environments in a person's experience. Despite the diversity of this research, the authors converge on the importance of place attachment in its various forms on self-identity as a way of anchoring and thereby securing the self in a changing world. Cooper, in her contribution on "Environmental Memories", (1992), shows how people, throughout their lives, invest places with meaning, and how the memories of places endowed in such a manner can contribute to a sense of continuity in one's life. What Cooper calls the "acts of anchoring ourselves"--spatial control, spatial self-expression, and environmental continuity--"are critical to our emotional well-being" (p.88).

...they allow us to weather the swells and storms of change that are components to a greater or lesser extent of every life path. Such continuity with the past becomes especially critical in old age. (pp.88-89)

The harmful effects of events that lead to the severance of people's ties to their environments are stressed by Brown and Perkins in "Disruptions in Place Attachment", (1992). As with place-identity, place attachment usually remains in the background of a person's awareness, until, as Brown and Perkins describe in terms of natural disasters, a catastrophic event happens which throws "into sharper relief the depth and breadth of environmental supports to identity"

(p.296). Such

drastic disruption in ties to places reveal how these places had enabled people to sustain a rich set of multiple but connected identities that defined residents as worthy people. (p.296)

This richness embedded in people's connectedness to places is recognized by the proponents of place-identity and place attachment. As much as they emphasize placeness in the human experience, at the same time they stress places' integral relationship to the social and cultural realm.

However "physical" or objectively real these settings, they are inextricably tied to the social and cultural existence of a group, as expressed by its valued activities, interpersonal relationships, and individual and group role functions. As we have often said, there is no physical environment that is not also a social environment, and vice-versa. (Proshansky et al., 1983, p.64)

Angelika Bammer's (Ed.) (1994) Displacements examines one of the most severe disruptions in place attachment--"The separation of people from their native culture either through physical dislocation (as refugees, immigrants, migrants, exiles, or expatriates), or the colonizing imposition of a foreign culture--what I am calling here displacement" (p.xi). "Where do we belong when the map of our world has been redrawn?" (p.95). How does the experience of having been displaced from one's cultural moorings impact the notions of cultural identity? What gets saved when

moving from one culture to another, to finally become identified as "symbolic markers of passage and continuity?" (p.90), and what gets lost? These are some of the questions addressed in Displacements, which describes "one of the most formative experiences of our century" (Bammer, p.xi). "As the migrant and refugee become the 'unhomely' inhabitants of the contemporary world" (Homi K. Bhabha, 1994, p. 271), the collision of distinct cultures and histories produce a new form of self-identity which emerges from the articulation of difference: The cultural "hybrid."

The effect of mass migrations has been the creation of radically new types of human being: people who root themselves in ideas rather than places, in memories as much as in material things; people who have been obliged to define themselves--because they are defined by others--by their otherness; people in whose deepest selves strange fusions occur, unprecedented unions between what they were and where they find themselves. (Salman Rushdie, Imaginary Homelands, 1991, pp.124-125)

The discussion of the self and identity, of which I have presented only a rough outline, addresses the core idea of my dissertation--the question of identity in a chaotic world. To put "the place back into 'displacement'" (Bammer, 1994, p.xiv), the study of this group of Austrian exiles can be viewed as an examination of a most severe disruption in place attachment. Exile, the banishment from one's native

country, means the severance of a fundamental emotionally important tie. And with the expulsion from his or her country, the exiled not only loses grounding in the physical world but in the social and cultural world as well. The theoretical discussion resounds in themes expressed by many of the émigrés' autobiographical writings. The Austrian-Jewish exile situation was likely to shatter all sureties of the background assumptions of the lifeworld (Schutz, 1973), and the marginalized position of a refugee could suddenly upset one's sense of self (Garfinkel, 1968). The Jewish émigrés from Nazi Europe were forced to confront the question of self-identity, under circumstances of life and death (West, 1992), as they themselves have described:

Though immediately after our arrival we had applied for American citizenship, our passport still said that we were German nationals.¹³ German! We, who no longer spoke German at home, we, who were trying so hard to become good Americans. My daughter's first words were in English. My husband and I had decided that as far as we were concerned Austria no longer existed. (Stella Hershan, 1991, p.195)

Anyway, it seems to me more honest to confess to an identity which is fractured rather than coerced, and contradictory rather than forced. It appears to me that life and history itself breaks at this point like in a prism: I am Jewish and--I say it reluctantly--German. And in this I differ from the many German Jews (older and younger) who couldn't say that, and others who do say it with

¹³After the *Anschluss*, Austrians had become German citizens.

total ease. (Ernst Loewy, 1986, p.39)¹⁴

Obviously, one can indeed only live with a history such as the Jewish emigrants carry on their backs by confronting persistently the excess of role complexity: as a Jew neither believing nor a Zionist, as an intellectual, by definition, adjusted to social distance; as a citizen, not a German anymore but not yet a true American either. This situation appears overly complex, though the intellectual productivity of such an existence is obvious, too. (Alfons Söllner, 1985, p.356)¹⁵

The discussion of self-identity explicates that one's own self and identity is embedded in the material and social world, within which individuals constantly need to establish, assure, and readjust their identities in the course of their lives. Appropriating Benhabib's thesis (1992) that identities are constituted narratively, I investigated the question of identity as it unfolds in the narrative of a life-story. Therefore, since I take Benhabib's thesis, and also argue with Gergen (1991) that self-identities form within a network of social relationships, I studied the life-histories of individual émigrés in the socio-cultural context of the AUSTRIAN FORUM. I placed the individual identity against the background of a collective identity as it was expressed in this exile

¹⁴My translation from the German.

¹⁵My translation from the German.

organization.

However, before providing more background information for the AUSTRIAN FORUM, I will first turn to the expansive discourse on exile as represented in the academic literature. This academic literature, itself, can be viewed as another socio-cultural context for the construction of an identity in exile.

III. THE DISCOURSE ON EXILE.

The academic literature dealing with emigration to the United States during the Nazi-period spans more than four decades, originates on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean, and covers a wide range of issues. Despite its diffuse nature, however, one can delineate clearly distinguished clusters of interpretations regarding the socio-cultural identity of the people who escaped Nazism. The disparate words given to these socio-cultural identities as outlined in the literature reviewed below--refugees, exiles, Jewish immigrants, Austrian emigrants--are not just labels; rather they all represent different facets in the lived experience of the émigré. They reflect different contexts, and they change over time. They can be viewed as markers of a space within which the Austrian-Jewish-American identity is constructed.

The early literature produced in the United States originated in a critical concern held by the American public regarding the refugees from Europe. The author of the first and up to now most comprehensive social analysis of the refugee "problem" (Davie, 1947) writes in his introduction in 1947,

The recent refugee movement to the United States has aroused unusual interest because of its dramatic character, the type of people it

involved, and the international unrest characterizing the period when it occurred. Composed primarily of middle- and upper-class persons, it contrasted sharply with earlier immigration movements and attracted the interest and sometimes the opposition of American professional and business people who hitherto had seldom if ever been directly concerned with immigrant arrivals as associates or as competitors. Since a majority of the refugees were either Jews by confession or "non-Aryans", that is, Jew by descent only, the movement provided a basis for anti-Semitic agitation, which was intensified by German propaganda. The refugees became the object of widespread discussion. On the one hand, they were hailed as a superior group greatly enriching American culture and economic life and, on the other hand, as a destructive and subversive element in our society. (p.XI)

Davie (1947) concluded that, indeed, there was no refugee problem, but rather that the refugees behaved like all the other immigrants who previously came to the United States. The only difference was that the new group adapted to their new environment more successfully and much faster than any preceding group. Among other things, Davie's 1947 study found that the new immigrants mastered the English language to an astonishing degree, that many of them were already American citizens or were in the process of becoming citizens, and that most were able to find a job comparable to the job they had held in their home country. Kent (1953) studied the processes of integration of a subgroup of the total group of refugees. His sample consisted of former nationals of Germany and Austria who had belonged to the professional class abroad and who emigrated to the U.S.A.

between 1933 and 1941. Kent, too, assesses that

...the refugees of the professional class on the whole have made remarkable progress toward the goal of integration. Probably no other large group of immigrants has ever surpassed them in the speed with which they have adjusted to American culture. (p.241)

The refugees not only did not present a problem to the United States by quickly integrating into American society, but "...the adopting country has benefitted as much, if not more, from their coming" (Davie, p.391). The extraordinary success of this group of immigrants, and the unusual contribution of a few intellectual and artistic giants among them to American society, was underlined by publications whose very titles suggest the outstanding characters they dealt with: The Cultural Migration (Neumann, Peyre, Panofsky, Köhler, & Tillich, 1961); Illustrious Immigrants (Fermi, 1968); The Intellectual Migration (Fleming & Bailyn, 1969); and The Muses flee Hitler (Jackman & Borden, 1983). Though the intellectual and creative power of these émigrés has been widely recognized, there exists surprisingly little systematic knowledge of the influence these intellectuals had on American culture and the academy (Fleming & Bailyn, p.3). One of the few exemptions is Jay's (1973) The Dialectical Imagination: A History of the Frankfurt School and the Institute for Social Research, 1923-1950, which concentrates on the years of highest creativity at the Institute. These were the years of exile in America. Rutkoff

and Scott's (1986) New School. A History of the New School for Social Research, 1917-1970, traces some of this history with attention to the academic institution in New York where many refugee scholars found a new livelihood. (See also Krohn's Intellectuals in exile: refugee scholars and the New School for Social Research, 1993).

A later piece of research, originating in the United States, stresses the fact that the emigration from the Nazi-period was a Jewish emigration. Strauss's (1978-1986) research is published in the six volumes of The Jewish Immigrants of the Nazi Period in the U.S.A. Its emphasis runs counter to the above mentioned research which has focussed on the elite origin of the immigrants. Critical of the elitist focus, which Strauss thought to be responsible for a distorted overall image of the emigration (see also Strauss in Frühwald & Schieder, 1981), this research stresses the integration of German Jewry into American society at large, and into American Jewry in particular. A case in point is Lowenstein's (1989) socio-cultural study of the 20,000 German-Jewish immigrants who settled in Washington Heights, New York City. However, the German-Jewish community of Washington Heights, according to Lowenstein, represented an atypical part of the general refugee wave as it was not assimilated and was much more closely tied to Jewish tradition than to German culture.

Before their emigration, the refugees who settled in Washington Heights lived in small towns in closely knit Jewish communities, and had been small businessmen or white- and blue-collar workers.

Compared with the average member of the refugee wave the Washington Heights settler was less intellectual, less wealthy, more "Jewish", and less "assimilated". Jewish religion and Jewish ethnic identification were much stronger in Washington Heights than was average for the refugees. The immigrant culture created in Washington Heights had some of the middle-class character of the refugees as a whole, but lacked the cosmopolitan quality of the life of the famous immigrants of the period. (Lowenstein, p.25)

In Germany, following a few isolated works, a literature on "*Exilforschung*" (research on exile) developed in the 1970s. The student movement of the late 1960s had put Germany's Nazi past under scrutiny, and one result of this critical examination was that the question of German emigration and exile was brought forward. This critical examination produced a rich body of literature. One substantial section of this research is concerned with securing individual life-histories, biographical materials, and the establishment of archives. The focal point converges on the intellectual and political elite with a sometimes

emphatic stress on the anti-fascist exile (Loewy, 1991),¹⁴ and puts forward the underlying evaluation of this emigration as a far reaching loss to Germany. The Biographisches Handbuch der deutschsprachigen Emigration nach 1933 by Röder and Strauss, (Vol 1, 1980; Vol 2, 1983; Vol 3, 1983), provides a basic work regarding the intellectual and political elite. It contains approximately 8,700 biographies of people from Germany, Austria, and Czechoslovakia who were persecuted for political or religious (racial) reasons. Included were residents who were not citizens of these countries but who had come to Central Europe prior to 1933 and participated in its cultural life, as well as people who had left before 1933 and decided not to return because of political events. The first volume contains the biographies of well known personalities from politics, economics and public life; the second and third volume lists the biographies of people representing the arts, sciences and literature. The standards of inclusion were high. For example, in regard to the second volume, they were: (1) a high level position in a hierarchically structured institution such as a university, academic institute, professional institution, hospital or firm;¹⁵

¹⁴This is particularly true for works originating in the former East Germany. (See for further details Loewy, 1991)

¹⁵However, due to the large number of Central European academics at American colleges and universities, the scope of the Handbuch has been limited to full professors and selected,

(2) accomplishments defined by number and quality of publications, performances, exhibitions, commissions, productions and so forth; (3) accomplishments defined by public or peer recognition, such as the Nobel Prize, membership in the Royal Society and other prestigious professional associations, or a role at national and international congresses; (4) innovation in fields of scholarship, at forms or styles, inventions and discoveries, founding schools with successors, and other comparable endeavors. The elitist character of the handbook is acknowledged when Strauss, one of the editors, writes

...the sample brought together in this dictionary does not "represent" the entire group of émigrés of the Nazi period or its major subgroups, like the Jews, political, or intellectual migrants. It does not correspond in major demographic ways to the composition of the whole émigré group...
(p.LXXVIII)

In addition to the Handbuch, Spalek's (1978) index of the archival material regarding the German-speaking emigration available in the United States, provides another valuable, informational guide. With this groundwork, (the securing of individual life-histories and archival material), the foundation is laid for the study of phenomena that go beyond the description of the exile experience of outstanding personalities. Möller's Exodus der Kultur (1984) uses the

high quality institutions.

material of the Handbuch to give a problem-oriented account of the cultural migration that is placed in the cultural/political context of Germany before and after 1933.

Frühwald and Schieder (1981), in their overview of the state of the research on exile, express the need for an analytical as well as interdisciplinary approach to the subject. They suggest that such an approach would make the research on exile superfluous as it becomes more and more an integral part of the respective academic disciplines. Whereas most of the research has been undertaken by historians and literary critics, Frühwald and Schieder ask for the involvement of disciplines such as social psychology to advance research that addresses the tension in the relationship between exile and integration, and how "exile as a form of life" affects language and identity (p.18-19). Srubar (1988) believes it is time for the research on exile to develop a "sociological perspective" (p.7-8), centering around themes such as assimilation to the culture of the new environment, the impact of specific groups of intellectuals on the culture of the host country, the influence that the emigration experience has had on the work itself, and the relationship of the émigrés to their home countries.

Some of the German research on exile emphasizes the literary emigration. In this context, questions concerning

language, style, exile-induced themes, the conditions of literary production, and the reception of the work are dealt with. Unless they belonged to the handful of world-famous authors, most writers experienced exile as a disabling disruption in their creative work, from which they never fully recovered. Thus, a major concern of the research centers around the re-discovery of forgotten writers with the goal of making them known to a larger public, thereby adding to the growing volume of "exile literature". Ernst Waldinger's Noch vor dem jüngsten Tag (1990), a collection of poems and essays, Frederick Brainin's Das siebte Wien. Gedichte (1989), and Lili Körber's novel Die Ehe der Ruth Gomperz, first printed in 1934, prohibited in 1935, and reprinted in 1984, are three recent examples of Austrian-Jewish writers who were re-introduced to a German speaking audience.

The question of how the exile situation affected the language and style of authors is part of the larger question of how the work of various authors has been changed through the exile experience. Köpke (1985) assesses that an exile does not mean an epoch in literary history, it is not even characterized by a common style or a literary concept, nor by a group of friends. It merely represents a phase in an author's life. Though the experience of exile affects severely the processes of creativity of an individual

author, mostly negatively as distraction and impairment, the influence of exile on language and style, however postulated, has not yet been examined fully (Köpke, 1985). Yet, writers themselves note frequently the problem of "language loss" and their struggle in trying to acquire a new language. Maimann (1981) bases her description of the phenomenon of "speechlessness" in exile on the autobiographical material of professional writers. For many the switch to another language, if only on the level of functional language, was a very painful experience. The more difficult the acquisition of the new language was, the more precious, almost mystical, the mother-tongue became. The mother-tongue was home. For example, to the writer Peter Weiss, exile meant being cast out of language. Writing in German represented a process of re-appropriating and regaining a language which, after the horrors exercised by his former home country, could only be the language of an imaginative world, thus Weiss's highly individual, artificial style (Kleinschmidt, 1985). There were others for whom the adherence to the German language meant a political statement, that is to foster the language of the non-fascist Germany (Maimann, 1981).

In more recent years, the evaluation of exile has been changing towards an understanding of how the need to cope with loss also led to survival strategies. Pfanner (1986)

writes,

...if one only concentrates on the sociological and biographical details of exile (as many researchers hitherto have done), one does not get the full picture of this period. With good justification, the question has lately been asked as to the positive effects and influences of the exile after Jan. 1933 in all areas of cultural activity. (p.8)

This re-evaluation of the exile experience particularly emerges when the focus lies on women and exile. Kreis (1984) portrays women to whom exile was challenge, and who faced that challenge with courage and strength. For these women, dealing with exile led them to develop their self-confidence and assertiveness, often at the side of famous men, i.e., Marta Feuchtwanger, Salka Viertel, Gisela Graf. Lixl-Purcell (1988) develops the point further in his collection of autobiographies of German-Jewish Women of Exile, when he argues that these biographies lend themselves to a radical reinterpretation of women's role, fate, and destiny by subverting the image of women's vulnerability and by overcoming the stigma of powerlessness.

For the first time, exile forced many women to formulate on their own the solutions to questions regarding identity, subjectivity, and autonomy... For many women exile constituted the central experience of their lives, and it would indeed trivialize their struggles if one were to read their works as mere reminders of what happened forty or fifty years ago. The lessons of women's exile and its history need to be reconsidered. (p.7)

Also, the feeling of estrangement in a foreign culture and language can produce a tension that urges many to write for the first time. The study of little known women writers among the literary emigrants from Nazi-Europe points in this direction (Schoppmann, 1991).

A particular Austrian focus developed in the 1980s.¹⁶ Before that, Austrian emigrants were subsumed under German-speaking émigrés and covered by the research discussed above. Stadler, (1988), who deplores the excessive restrictions on archival material, argues that research on exile has encountered difficulties in establishing itself in Austrian academia because of Austria's peculiar history after World War II. He suggests that the construction of Austria as the first victim of Hitler's fascism is "ideology," and obscures the fact of self-made Austro-Fascism, which eliminated democracy and sanctioned anti-

¹⁶An earlier focal point on Austria was put forward by Schlag's A Survey of Austrian Emigration to the United States (1961), and Wilder Spaulding's The Quiet Invaders (1968), which summarily presents the contributions of Austrians to American culture covering a period from the nineteenth century to the 1960s. In their presentation, the emigration of the Nazi-period is only a facet in the broader picture of Austrian emigration to the U.S., and thus conveniently glosses over the particular political circumstances in Austria leading up to it.

Goldner (1972) should also be mentioned. A refugee himself who worked as a lawyer in New York after World War II, his study of the Austrian political emigration has been commented on critically by Ingram (1976), who does not share Goldner's characterizations of some of the conservative political organizations as strictly cultural.

Semitism long before the *Anschluss* in 1938. The *Waldheim Affair* of 1986 marks a turning point in Austria's collective memory.

In the 1943 Moscow Declaration the Allies conceded Austria the status of "Hitler's first victim." The founding fathers of the Second Republic utilized this Allied statement to free Austria of any responsibility for Nazi war crimes and externalized all war related guilt. Austria became a "nation of victims." By 1949 most of the more than half a million Austrian Nazis and sympathizers were reintegrated into the body politic and the dark side of World War II history was purged from private and public memory. The controversy about Kurt Waldheim's World War II record in the 1986 presidential election became the turning point in Austrian World War II historical memory. Waldheim elucidated the paradoxes of naive *Pflichterfüllung* [doing his duty] in a murderous regime. After Waldheim a complex picture, more truthful to the past, is emerging and portrays Austrians as both victims and perpetrators. (Bischof, 1997, p.8)

With Austria's historical memory shifting away from her own victimhood, the true victims of Austria's past under Nazism--Jews, gypsies, homosexuals, political dissenters--could come into focus. Trying to make up for lost time, a younger generation of Austrians launched investigations "into Austrian anti-Semitism, the Austrian victim myth, and the *Ostmark's* [Austria's name after the *Anschluss*] contribution to the Nazi war machine..." (Herzstein, 1997, p.116) And a body of Austrian research on exile and emigration began to emerge. It follows motives and lines of development similar to those of its German predecessor. It also focuses on the intellectual, artistic and political

elite, tracing both their impact on the host countries as well as the loss to Austria (Stadler, 1987; Eppel, 1990; DöW, 1995).

As I have tried to show, the academic discourse on exile has largely focussed on the intellectual and artistic elite that made the emigration from Nazi Europe so unusual in history. The "brain drain" from Europe was America's gain, an observation widely captured in the early works originating in the United States. The German speaking research on exile shared the orientation towards the elite, and was concerned mostly with securing the individual life-stories of outstanding personalities. In its course, important archives were established that make it possible to study other aspects of the emigration. However, a theoretical penetration and conceptualization of the phenomenon has been lacking (see i.e. Köpke, 1985; Srubar, 1988). Thus, considering Frühwald and Schieder's (1981) plaudit for an analytical and interdisciplinary approach which includes, among others, a discipline such as social psychology, my dissertation research on the history of the AUSTRIAN FORUM, and the question of the cultural identity of the people affiliated with it, appears timely. This research takes into account the collective side of the exile experience, thereby going beyond the mere individualistic approach of much of the above reviewed literature. Also, by

not choosing a high-profile organization such as the Frankfurt School (Jay, 1973) or the New School for Social Research (Rutkoff & Scott, 1986), the dissertation attempts to bring into focus the every-day face of emigration which has been overshadowed by the focus on the elite. While it also would be possible to write the story of the AUSTRIAN FORUM as a story of the elite since the organization hosted many famous personalities, I believe, this would miss the FORUM's central meaning. In the New World, the AUSTRIAN FORUM provided a socio-cultural, physical context for a group of Austrian-Jewish émigrés coping with exile. Hence, my research opts to push this socio-cultural context to the foreground and examines it for its identity-forming qualities.

IV. THE AUSTRIAN FORUM.

The AUSTRIAN FORUM was founded in New York City in 1942 under the name AUSTRIAN INSTITUTE. A letter to the U.S. Department of State on April 22nd, 1943, (Archives of the AUSTRIAN FORUM), announced the existence of the AUSTRIAN INSTITUTE, and detailed the following goals:

Working for the liberation of Austria, which state shall be built up upon democratic principles in accordance with the Atlantic Charter...;

Becoming a full member of the United Nations;

Supporting the United Nations to the fullest extent;

Working for recognition of a representative body of Austria.

Five years later, and two years after the end of the war, the INSTITUTE's goals had shifted to the cultural realm.

The basic purpose of the AUSTRIAN INSTITUTE, Inc., will be to contribute to the increase of understanding between the United States of America and Austria; to strengthen cultural and other ties between the two countries and to engage in any activity...which may reasonably contribute to these general purposes.
(Certificate of Incorporation, July 21st, 1947)

The same document stated explicitly, that "the purposes of the corporation shall not include any political activity" (p.2). The cultural emphasis is also stressed in Wilhelm

Schlag's¹⁷ observation regarding the AUSTRIAN INSTITUTE:

Austrians, as a rule, are not too fond of mass activities. Smaller, more intimate, organizations have a greater appeal. This is particularly true of the AUSTRIAN INSTITUTE. This society was founded in New York in 1942, at a time when few of the bulk of the refugees wanted to be reminded that they had come from Austria. It was the aim of that non-political and non-profit cultural organization to promote the understanding between the United States and Austria and to strengthen the cultural ties between the two countries, a purpose which it has endeavored to serve faithfully to this day. Many of the intellectually most outstanding of the refugees were, and are, its members. (Schlag, 1961, p.189)

Another aspect of this cultural intention is emphasized in Mimi Grossberg's recollection of the beginnings of the AUSTRIAN INSTITUTE. She mentions the numerous Austrian intellectuals, then living in New York City, who were seeking a forum for their cultural activities. "It was of immense importance for these exiles to find an intelligent, intellectually interested, German-understanding audience" (p.88), she writes in The Road to America (1979).

A conversation with the vice-president of the organization in 1991 revealed one of these cultural activities--to present the music of the "silver epoch," the

¹⁷Wilhelm Schlag is the Austrian official who was in charge of establishing the Austrian Cultural Institute In New York. (See later in this **CHAPTER** and particularly **CHAPTER 8**)

period of operetta emanating out of the Vienna of the Austrian Empire at the turn of the century. The music of Johann Strauss, Franz Lehár, and Emmerich Kálmán reached a popular peak in Vienna between the wars, and by emphasizing the music of the "silver epoch," the INSTITUTE wished to add a missing piece to the musical culture of New York City (Marian Kiepura, personal conversation, April 16, 1991).

The AUSTRIAN INSTITUTE changed its name in September 1962. The Austrian government had indicated a desire to open a cultural office in New York City using the name Austrian Cultural Institute. In order to avoid possible confusion of identity and purpose between the two organizations, the twenty year old AUSTRIAN INSTITUTE agreed to change its name to AUSTRIAN FORUM. As compensation, the AUSTRIAN FORUM received the right to maintain an office for its president at the Austrian Cultural Institute, and to use Institute space to organize its own cultural events.¹⁸

This arrangement did not last. By the time I discovered the AUSTRIAN FORUM, in 1989, it had no office at the Austrian Cultural Institute. However, monthly events did take place in the big room on the ground floor of the Institute with a custodian present to help move chairs or to

¹⁸For more on this episode and other details of the FORUM's past, CHAPTER 8.

employ the technical equipment.

My initial inquiry into the history of the AUSTRIAN FORUM exposed one set of contemporary Austrian attitudes towards the émigrés. It was the librarian of the Austrian Cultural Institute who informed me that the FORUM's archives were kept at the Institute. She explained that nobody had ever taken an interest in this material, especially not the current leadership of the FORUM, and she urged me to examine the archives.

But when I tried to do so, I was told that I could not. The deputy director and acting director of the Austrian Cultural Institute at that time denied my access to the material on the grounds that opening the archives for study might interfere with Austria's national interest. Though knowing that this matter did not fall within his responsibilities, I sent a letter to him explaining my research project in detail and formally requesting access to the FORUM's archives. When I called to inquire about his decision, the problem had vanished. But he gratuitously offered his opinion about my research, which culminated in his contention that it was a waste of time, that the Austrian emigration of the Thirties and Forties belonged to the past, its people were old or dead, and that nobody was interested in them. I should rather study other immigrants

to the United States, of which there were many and more interesting ethnic groups...

I found the archives of the AUSTRIAN FORUM in a locked, walk-in closet on the third floor of the Austrian Cultural Institute. However, the material did not present itself as an organized archive at all. On the contrary, the FORUM's history was in a state of disarray. Boxes and books covered with a thick layer of dust filled the shelves from top to bottom at one side of the closet. Some boxes were so decrepit that they fell apart as soon as they were touched. Out of them dropped loose membership cards, letters, and envelopes filled with slips of receipts. Some of the boxes contained, in addition to stationary and program announcements, pieces of soap, perfume bottles, and a variety of rubber stamps. It appeared as if somebody had cleaned an office in a rush, stuffing everything into boxes without discretion, and had locked these boxes in that closet where they had been sitting ever since.

The episode surrounding the discovery of the AUSTRIAN FORUM's archives represent an ironic footnote to the interest in anything related to the Holocaust in Austria today. The episode is a reminder that not too long ago Austria's collective memory did not include her own entanglements with Nazism and involvement with the

persecution of her Jewish citizens. What was assigned to oblivion a mere six years ago, becomes historical data with Austria's collective memory shifting to come to terms with her past.

CHAPTER 2

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND METHODS

This dissertation research is concerned with exile and identity. It attempts to understand what happens to people who were exiled and whose private lives were ruptured (Arendt, 1978, p.56); people who experienced persecution, separation from loved ones, and the loss of relatives and friends in the concentration camps. It addresses how this experience bears on the re-formulation of the exiles' place in the world.

The Austrian Jews¹ who were exiled immediately prior to or following the outbreak of World War II did not have a choice but to re-configure their identities. To oversimplify what is an extremely intricate negotiation of identity formation, the exiles had essentially three broad choices. Put schematically, they could leave their pasts behind completely and begin a new American life. They could identify with their persecuted selves and affirm their Jewishness. Or they could hold on to a piece of their cherished former identities and emphasize their Austrian

¹This does not need to be a self definition. Under Nazism, Jewishness was defined by the *Nuremberg Laws* which established the basis for the persecution of the European Jews.

sides. (Of course, in reality, these three choices are not mutually exclusive--hence the "intricate negotiation of identity formation.") Still, it appears that the people who were attracted to the cultural environment of the AUSTRIAN FORUM chose the last path. When I entered the world of the AUSTRIAN FORUM I was struck by this phenomenon. What I, perhaps naively, perceived as a contradiction, triggered my curiosity, and I wished to understand these people who came to America under the circumstances of exile, and who created a socio-cultural-physical environment which evoked the cherished cultural qualities of their former lives in Europe.

In order to address the above questions, my research proceeded along two lines. First, operating with a concept of self-identity that emphasizes the social and cultural embeddedness of the individual, and subscribing to the thesis that identities are constituted narratively (see **CHAPTER 1**), I investigated the question of identity as it unfolded in the narrative of eighteen life-stories.

Second, the dissertation looked at the history of the AUSTRIAN FORUM as a socio-cultural context that some Austrian Jewish émigrés created in order to re-configure their identities. This perspective sees people

...as active agents in the historical process who construct their own world. Using Meyerhoff's phrase, we are "the authors of ourselves".

Selves, social organizations, and cultures are not given but are problematic and always in production. Cultural change, cultural continuity, and cultural transmission all occur simultaneously in the experiences and expressions of social life. All are intersubjective processes and indeed are the experiences [using Dilthey's expression] "in which the subject discovers himself". (Turner, & Bruner, 1986, p.12)

In that sense, the story of the AUSTRIAN FORUM provided a powerful lens that brought into sharp focus the complexities and contradictions of an Austrian-Jewish identity being formulated against the backdrop of the American exile.

I. METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH.

The questions concerning identity and exile, and the meanings embedded in an organizational culture which sprang out of exile, were addressed in a way that enabled experience, time, and change to be reflected upon. The complexity of these questions required an open and flexible approach. The phenomenological focus on lived experience is particularly open, and thus was apt to deal with the life-histories and cultural identities of the Austrian émigrés (Amaral, 1979; Schnell, 1984). Yet, in accordance with my proposition that identities are constructed in a social and cultural context, the methodology departed from pure phenomenology and adopted a critical analytical approach by examining the socio-cultural contexts in which the émigrés' experience unfolded.

The methodology encompasses participant observations, the use of archival data which had been neglected for years and in-depth interviews with FORUM members as well as Austrian émigrés who knew the FORUM, occasionally attended events, but who never formally became members.

I.1. PARTICIPANT OBSERVATIONS.

Since my first encounter with the AUSTRIAN FORUM, my

involvement with this organization has gradually but dramatically changed. Initially a distant and infrequent visitor, I eventually became a regular guest who decided to write her dissertation about the FORUM and its people. In my fieldwork I visited the FORUM's events more and more regularly, and in its last year of existence I tried to attend every possible event. I began to take fieldnotes in 1991 recording the course of the particular event, estimating the number of people attending and their ages, and marking gender distribution. I also noted the social interactions among the participants including their reactions towards me, and I recorded our conversations paying particular attention to the language being used. I recorded my observations after each event took place, in order to not be obtrusive. Only during the organization's last year, did I begin to introduce myself as a social researcher, wishing to write a dissertation on the AUSTRIAN FORUM.

However, my fieldwork was not only directed towards the AUSTRIAN FORUM; I also wished to explore some of the broader social and cultural networks where émigrés from Central Europe came together. During this exploration, I discovered three more or less formal organizations which all have distinct settings, members, and cultures: Literarischer

Verein, Austrian-American Federation, and Stammtisch.²

These organizations helped to bring into sharper focus the particular space within the exile milieu occupied by the AUSTRIAN FORUM.

I.2. ARCHIVAL DATA.

I organized the material that I found in the closet of the *Austrian Cultural Institute* along the categories described below:

Legal Documents:

These are documents concerning the founding period of the AUSTRIAN INSTITUTE, (i.e. certificate of incorporation, organizational goals, letters to the U.S. State Department, as well as the minutes of the special meeting of September 20th, 1962, when the decision was made to change its name from AUSTRIAN INSTITUTE to AUSTRIAN FORUM).

There are also documents referring to other organizations: Austrian Jewish Aid Committee, American-Austrian Music Society, Austrian Aid, American Austrian Society, Austrian

²The *Literarischer Verein* (Literary Club) was founded in the last century by German immigrants. The *Verein*, which organizes monthly literary events, is located in the mansion of the *Liederkrantz Club* on Manhattan's Upper East Side. By contrast, the *Stammtisch* (a regular circle of cronies), founded by the writer Oskar Maria Graf and his friend George Harry Asher in the 1940s, grew out of the exile milieu. It has always been an informal, weekly gathering of German speaking people interested in discussing political, social, and cultural matters. The *Austrian American Federation*, co-founded in 1958 by Clementine, a participant in this study (see **CHAPTER 3**), who also served as its president from 1978 to her death in 1996, was committed to establishing cultural ties between Austrian émigrés and Austria. Located at the Austrian Consulate, the *Austrian American Federation* held monthly events--mostly showings of movies provided by the Austrian Information Service--and attracted an audience that largely overlapped with that of the AUSTRIAN FORUM.

University League of America, Associated Austrian Relief.

Membership Cards and Member Addresses:

Aside from loose membership cards, which are rarely dated, only two lists of members exist that allow an assessment of membership at a specific point in time: The list of 139 members who participated in the decision of the change of name in September 1962, and a mailing list from the 1968/1969 season, which counted 202 FORUM members.

Letters:

The letters not only allow insight into the processes of how the cultural events were programmed, they also show the range of the wider socio-cultural activities in which the INSTITUTE was involved, (i.e. contacts with U.S. governmental institutions, other Austrian organizations, responses to anti-Semitism, relief for Austria after the war). They reveal the close relationship with Austrian governmental institutions in the United States, especially in New York, and they show a particularly intimate relationship with the Austrian Cultural Institute after its founding in 1963.

Program Announcements:

The program announcements cover a period from the 1940s to the 1970s, ending in 1975. Though incomplete, the material is substantial, showing the cultural activities of the FORUM ranging from political-economic lectures to poetry and concerts. Many of these facets of Austrian culture share a common focus on Vienna.

In addition to the program announcements there also exist "introductory remarks" and "closing words" of the president of the day regarding the various events.

Bookkeeping:

The bookkeeping shows that the AUSTRIAN FORUM has been supported by its members' contributions. In addition to the routine expenditures such as artists' fees and room rent, the accounts reflect the social network of which the FORUM was part--gifts to the custodian or to the impoverished widow of the former president Altmann, contributions to philanthropic organizations as well as to American institutions that promote Austrian culture, and a gift to the victims of the flooding in Austria in 1965.

Books:

In addition to a few volumes relating to a variety of

topics, there is a collection of books concerning the blind, possibly the remains of the library of Professor Altmann, one of the founders of the AUSTRIAN INSTITUTE, and former director of the Institute for the Blind *Hohe Warte* in Vienna.

Miscellaneous:

Under this category I included photographs, a set of poems by Norbert Grossberg, the late husband of Mimi Grossberg, and newspaper clippings from the Aufbau and the Staats-Zeitung announcing or reviewing the events organized by the AUSTRIAN FORUM.

Although the archival material of the FORUM was incomplete and fragmentary, it nevertheless provided valuable information for writing its history. In addition, I used the archives of the *Dokumentationsarchiv des österreichischen Widerstandes* [archives of the Austrian resistance] in Vienna, and the archival resources assembled in New York City which contain a wealth of information regarding the emigration from Central Europe under Nazi rule: The Leo Baeck Institute and the Oral History Research Office of Columbia University. I also conducted interviews with key persons who provided specific knowledge regarding the development and history of the AUSTRIAN FORUM: Marian Kiepura, the son of Marta Eggerth, the AUSTRIAN FORUM's last president, Trude Bartel, a friend of Alfred Farau's, the literary director of the AUSTRIAN FORUM, Wilhelm Schlag, the Austrian official who established the Austrian Cultural Institute, and Harry Zohn, professor at Brandeis University and eminent expert of the Austrian emigration to the United States.

I.3. INTERVIEWS.

The people I interviewed were all drawn from the social environment of the AUSTRIAN FORUM, but who entertained different degrees of closeness to the organization. In the course of my fieldwork I visited numerous events at the AUSTRIAN FORUM, where I met participants who were willing to be interviewed. I ended each of these initial interviews by asking whether there was somebody else I should or I could talk to. In addition, the librarian of the Austrian Cultural Institute introduced me to Austrian émigrés who knew the FORUM from an earlier era and who had participated in its events, but who had since stopped going. Only one person declined to be interviewed explaining that he didn't wish to stir up old, painful memories.

I met Laura differently. In the summer of 1993 we sat next to each other on a flight from New York to Zürich. We talked for hours, and I learned that she knew the AUSTRIAN FORUM. She continued her trip to Vienna, and when she returned to New York we met for an interview.

I conducted eighteen "qualitative research interviews." Steinar Kvale (1983) describes the "qualitative research interview" as a rich mode of phenomenological and hermeneutic understanding.

The mode of understanding in the qualitative research interview may be briefly outlined in 12 main aspects. It is: 1) centered on the

interviewee's life-world; 2) seeks to understand the meaning of phenomena in his life-world; it is 3) qualitative, 4) descriptive, and 5) specific; it is 6) presuppositionless; it is 7) focused on certain themes; it is open for 8) ambiguities, and 9) changes; it depends upon the 10) sensitivity of the interviewer; it takes place in 11) an interpersonal interaction, and it may be 12) a positive experience. (p.174)

Kvale's qualitative research interview is similar to the unstructured and semistructured interviewing practiced in the social sciences. Bernard (1988) distinguishes between four interview types according to "...the amount of control we try to exercise over the responses of informants" (p.204): informal, unstructured, semistructured and structured interviewing. In terms of the unstructured and semistructured interview, he elaborates,

The idea [of the unstructured interview] is to get people to "open up" and let them express themselves in their own terms, and at their own pace...Unstructured interviewing is used in situations in which you have lots and lots of time--such as when you are doing longterm fieldwork and can interview people on many separate occasions. In situations in which you won't get more than one chance to interview someone, semistructured interviewing is best. It has much of the freewheeling quality of unstructured interviewing, and requires all the same skills, but semistructured interviewing is based on the use of an interview guide... (p.204-205)

The eighteen qualitative research interviews focused on the meaning of the AUSTRIAN FORUM to the interviewee, and the changing of her or his cultural identity in the course of exile and adjustment to America. The interviews were

semistructured in so far as I used an interview guide to ensure that specific topics were covered. The topics addressed in the course of an interview encouraged the narrative structure of the interviewees' lives to emerge and covered, in particular, the interviewee's relationship to the AUSTRIAN FORUM, his/her biographical background, the journey of exile, their preconceptions of America, their sense of being Jewish-American-Austrian, their relationship to post-war Austria, and the meaning of home (See the Interview Guide in **Appendix 1**).

The interviews took place between 1993 and 1994, with the largest number, 14 out of 18 interviews, conducted in 1994. Most of the time the participants chose to be interviewed in their homes. However, one interview took place at the workplace, two at the Austrian Consulate, one in a branch of the New York Public Library, and two in my apartment. All interviews, with the exception of two--Beatrice and Hilde--were conducted in German.

Because of the nature of the open-ended, in-depth interview, they varied greatly. Some interviewees were willing to share their experiences freely, others restrained themselves and adhered more closely to the questions I asked. Some people dwelt on certain meaningful aspects of their lives, which other interviewees mentioned only in passing, if at all.

The fact that many interviewees were old, and tired easily, meant that in some cases repeat meetings were necessary in order to cover the topics of the interview. This extended involvement with some of the interviewees led in one case to a participant, Robert, who was a journalist, sharing the contents of an old suitcase. The suitcase held the clippings of all the articles that he had ever written. Among them I found his articles for the Austro-American Tribune which I made the basis for the "excursus" in **CHAPTER 7**.

The interviews were tape recorded, transcribed, and the transcripts sent to the interviewees with the request to check the accuracy of the information given. Through this procedure I wished to obtain a mutually agreed upon set of data for me to analyze. But there was another--surprising--side to this enterprise. Receiving the transcripts of their life-stories was, for some interviewees, a moving and thought-provoking experience. Some sent the transcripts to their children.

Kaspar's case was different. For reasons I do not fully understand, a formal interview with him was not possible. Instead, we engaged in a series of conversations over a period of four months during which I took extensive notes. These notes, and additional information in old letters and other documents, became the basis of the Memoir "From Vienna to New York." Earlier versions of the Memoir led to renewed

talks, corrections and supplements. Eventually a text was written which was very much to Kaspar's liking and which he sent out to his family and friends. I took the Memoir as the "mutually agreed upon data set" to be part of the dissertation research.

I.4. DATA ANALYSIS.

The data were analyzed through a hermeneutic process of understanding. At the center of that process lay the encounter between myself, and the information gathered from the people who participated in the research, and the data related to the AUSTRIAN FORUM. I engaged in a lengthy and dynamic dialogue with this material (participant observations, archival sources, and life stories), going back and forth in the attempt to extract meaning from a body of information that presented itself as messy, senseless, and contradictory. This hermeneutic process of understanding required openness and empathy.

We must learn the art of being responsive to works of art, texts, tradition (and...other persons or forms of life) that we are trying to understand. We must participate or share in them, listen to them, open ourselves to what they are saying and to the claims to truth that they make upon us...understanding requires effort and care, imagination and perceptiveness... (Bernstein, Beyond Objectivism and Relativism, 1988, p.137)

Moving to the United States opened me to the experience

of a group of émigrés from Austria who had come to this country half a century earlier. I felt compassion for these people who were out-of-country, and with whom I shared what Salman Rushdie (1992) called the "migrant sensibility" (p.124). However, I understood that I was situated decisively outside the émigrés' experience: The distance between one person who moved to a country voluntarily, and another who was forced to leave under life-threatening conditions, is enormous, perhaps insurmountable. Thus, there remained a large part of the émigrés' life stories foreign to me. In any event, the tension between the familiar and the foreign stimulated my interest, and quest for understanding. From here I could begin to weave "my" narrative of exile out of the many threads provided by the archival material I found, and the people who participated in the study.

The subjective factor in doing qualitative research has lately cast doubt on the very possibility of accurately representing another culture, or different experiences in life. The proponents of this view argue that the author of a scientific text writes but one story, about a piece of reality, with no more an authoritative claim to the "truth" than the author who writes fiction. There exists no privileged way of knowing one story is "truer" than another, and any claim to the "truth" rests solely on the credibility

and persuasiveness of the author.³

Empathy, intuition, and creativity were essential in writing the narrative of exile of a group of Austrian émigrés. Without these qualities, the data gathered would have remained mere data, and would not have evolved into a meaningful text.

To make sense out of any presumed pattern of relations among so many different elements requires the researcher to go far beyond simple reporting and description. Success at this task calls for imagination and creativity--highly subjective mental processes. The resulting publication may or may not be persuasive to particular readers, but there is no way in which it can be put to a scientific test. (Whyte, 1993, p.370)

But that does not mean that my interpretations were arbitrary or distortive. They emerged from a dialogue with the material gathered, circumscribed, and supported by that material. In the end I created a narrative that held, for me, the most explanatory power for stringing the data together, its construction applying interior logic and filling in missing pieces with extrapolations from known events.

³One can find an instructive glimpse into the discussion on ethnographic writing as social realism or fiction in William Foote Whyte's (1943/1993) "Appendix" written fifty years after the publication of his sociological classic Street Corner Society.

Because of my interest in studying the narration of identity formation, I placed the interview material, the life stories of the study participants, at the center of my analysis. There was, however, another reason. With the "approved" transcriptions of the interviews, I had a mutually accepted "piece of reality" against which my interpretations could be checked. Unlike my participant observations, which were highly impressionistic and subjective, the interview transcripts, (and the archival material for that matter), provided me with the sense of grounding and security necessary to write this narrative of exile. This is why I used my participant observations sparsely, mostly to convey the flavor of cultural events conducted at the AUSTRIAN FORUM. Nevertheless, having moved in the exile milieu for some years, (and having read many memoirs describing the different experiences of exile), I have absorbed a much broader knowledge than my "limited" data set suggests. And it is this subterranean knowledge that has provided much of the fertile soil for my interpretations to emerge.

I.5. A NOTE ABOUT TRANSLATION.

The nature of this dissertation required a lot of translating from German to English. As a researcher whose first language is German, it was convenient to conduct

interviews with all but two of the study participants in their native tongue. The quotes from the interviews as they appear in the text are my English translations. Only Hilde and Beatrice chose to be interviewed in English, and their quotes were taken directly from the interviews.

In addition I used a number of quotations from texts published in German. The chapter on the history of the AUSTRIAN FORUM, with its heavy use of archival sources written in German in particular required much translation. In a footnote I indicate these quotations as my own.

Also, the dissertation made occasional use of poems, many of which were written in German. My translations of these did not aspire to render their poetry--that would have required a different skill altogether. Rather they merely attempted to convey the poems' meanings as best as possible.

CHAPTER 3

WE ARE THE LAST ONES. QUESTION US

We are the last ones.
Question us.
We are authentic...

Our fate is under landmark protection.
Our best client is the
bad conscience of posterity.
Take it, help yourselves,
We are the last ones.
Question us.
We are authentic.

Hans Sahl (1976, p.13)

INTRODUCTION

The people who participated in this study represent a loosely knit community of Austrians in the U.S. who in some way or another foster and express their ties to their former home country, and who move--not exclusively, but regularly--within the horizon of Austrian-German culture. I have met other refugees who seemingly have integrated more fully into the American or Jewish-American way of life--seemingly not needing the uses that the study participants found in the FORUM. Whether or not this appearance is fact can be determined only by future study.

The following biographical sketches of the study participants try to conform to a standard of presentation, (in terms of age, year of arrival in the U.S., educational background, professional activity, etc.), yet, the sketches are very individual as they stress different experiences and meanings in a life, and as they were told in the narration of the interview.

The first number of each biographical sketch refers to the age of the interviewee at the time of the interview--the number is marked with an asterisk when the age was estimated; the two numbers in parenthesis refer to the year of arrival in the U.S., together with the interviewee's age at that time.

I. STUDY PARTICIPANTS.

Marie 83 (1938 - age 27) Melk, a small town on the Danube. Marie's family later moved to Vienna, where she received a doctorate in economics from the University. Her first marriage to a Hungarian doctor lasted only three months, but provided her with valuable foreign citizenship when Hitler assumed power in Austria.¹ She left Vienna with her future husband, a Viennese lawyer. In New York, they never worked in their professions. Instead they made a living at her husband's hobby, stamp collecting, and named their stamp business, as a compliment to America, Liberty Stamp Co..

Our circle always consisted of terrible snobs regarding education. I have always said, 'I am a snob'... probably quite typical for a segment of the emigrants. (p.47)

Georg 69 (1940 - age 15), Vienna. The Red Vienna represents Georgs's family background of union and socialist party leaders. With the rise of Dollfuss' Austrofascism, in 1934, his father lost

¹Any foreign citizenship provided some protection against the Nazis after the *Anschluss*.

his job as the head of a department of the Austrian health insurance. Fortunately, the network of the International Socialist Movement helped the family emigrate through Switzerland and France to the United States. Georg received his high school, college, and graduate education in New York, worked for the Youth Services of New York City, and is finishing his doctorate at Columbia University.

I grew up in the midst of Austrian culture with Austrian friends, and jokes, and music, and art, and that is a part of me which I won't discard since it means very much to me. (p.1-2)

Nora 76 (1950 - age 32), Vienna. Nora, her husband, and their daughter were separated during World War II and were not reunited until 1947. Nora was repeatedly imprisoned and spent time in several concentration camps. After the war the family waited in Italy for five years for their entry visas to the United States. In New York, Nora and her husband became employees of Pan Am.

I live like a human being again - and I am actually free!
(From her poem, "After being released from Auschwitz," 1945)

Leo 79 (1939 - age 24), Vienna. Leo comes from a conservative, well-to-do Jewish family of art and antiques dealers. Harassment, and prison terms for himself, his father, and his brother during *Kristallnacht*, preceded the family's emigration to America. Leo's love, Ita, a Polish girl, stayed behind. In New York, his brother, the late poet Friedrich Bergammer, continued the antiques business while Leo pursued a career as a commercial artist. Leo fought against Nazism as an American soldier, and, after eight years of separation, was reunited with Ita who just barely survived the war.

Over there people perished, and I was supposed to start a new life?--I couldn't...I had to do something, (join the Army), one way or another. (p.25)

Gaby 79 (1939 - age 24), Wiesbaden, Germany. Gaby was the wife of Friedrich Bergammer, the poet, who, back in Vienna, received early recognition from Hugo von Hofmannsthal, 1874-1929, the poet, playwright, and librettist of the Wiener Moderne. Educated as a goldsmith, Gaby worked for fifty years with Art Carved, a jewelry business in New York. Gaby is the hostess of the *Stammtisch*, a weekly gathering of German speaking friends.

... my life has been rather uneventful. At least I don't remember any great trauma. I was never without a job, always worked from the start, had my own room... (p.12-13)

Beatrice *78 (1947 - age 31), Vienna. Beatrice's family owned asbestos mines in Russia, and while in Vienna she worked in that business. After the *Anschluss*, a domestic work permit for England enabled her to leave Vienna and unite with her brother who at that time was studying in Manchester. He soon left for America (1939). Beatrice, however, stayed in England during the war and supported herself with factory work. (Her parents could not get their exit papers in time, and they died in a concentration camp.) After her arrival in the U.S., Beatrice found work as a secretary in New York.

...you came here and they would tell you about vitamins, and you were so surprised about it, the futility of it... (p.18-19)

Stella 78 (1939 - age 23), Vienna. Stella went to business school to work with her father and brother, both furriers. The family's emigration was delayed when the American consul sold their quota numbers, and they had to register again.

Finally, Stella and her brother were allowed to leave Vienna on the last train to Paris, where, upon their arrival, war broke out and they were declared enemy aliens. A refugee organization intervened to enable them to continue to England and America. Her brother joined the American Army and returned from the service weakened by malaria and hepatitis; he died prematurely at age 52. (Stella's parents stayed behind waiting for their visas, and were killed by the Nazis.) Soon after her arrival in New York, Stella met her husband, Siegfried, who became a prominent lecturer at the AUSTRIAN FORUM.

Sometimes I think of things, "O, I want to ask my brother!"--then I realize, nobody is there. There is no one I can ask, what was there, what happened. Only the cemetery... (p.16)

Carola 72 (1956 - age 35), Vienna. Carola experienced a particular situation in Vienna after the *Anschluss* because of her mixed Jewish and Catholic background. Her Jewish father, who participated in Tito's Resistance, died in Dachau; her Catholic mother spent time in prison for her husband's activism and religion, and Carola ended in Ravensbrück as a political prisoner. After the war she lived in Slovenia,

Vienna, and Canada before coming to the United States to join her brother. In New York she worked in a prominent publishing house. She is a volunteer for the Lighthouse and the Austrian American Federation.

...one has lost one's home. But I have lost even more than home. I lost my identity...Am I Catholic? Am I Jewish? Before Hitler the question would not have affected me. I was Viennese.
(p.20)

Clementine 89 (1938 - age 33), Vienna. In Vienna, Clementine was one of the first women lawyers, a profession she could not continue after she came to America. In the U.S., she joined Count Ferdinand Czernin's Austrian Action, an exile organization that attempted to unite all refugees in their fight to liberate Austria. During the war, Clementine worked for the British Information Service and the American Office of War Information, and afterwards she was employed by UNRRA, the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration, in the course of which she travelled to Germany to become the director of camps for displaced persons. After her return to New York, she worked as a librarian in the New York Public Library, where she helped establish the new library of the

Graduate Center of the City University of New York. Today Clementine is the current President of the Austrian American Federation.

...we all had expected that Czernin would have been asked to return, to be Chancellor, President, something. He did everything to liberate Austria. Nothing happened. Nothing. Neither he, nor we, nor anybody were asked to come back... (p.3)

Kaspar 89 (1939 - age 34), Dresden, Germany. When Kaspar was ten years old, the family moved back to Vienna, where his father joined the Austrian military in World War I. As a young adult, Kaspar studied law. With his degree, he left for Berlin where he stayed until 1933, afterwards returning to Vienna. When Hitler came to power in Austria, Kaspar, his fiancée, and his sisters escaped to the United States; his parents died in Auschwitz. In the U.S., Kaspar never worked at his profession. Instead, he engaged more or less successfully in several business ventures until he was able to make his lifelong interest in books his profession, becoming a dealer of rare and antique books.

This [the Austrian National Library] is the place where, more than 70 years ago, when I was seventeen, I acquired my love for books, volunteering to

work on the catalogue of the military collection. (Letter to Austrian National Library, April 20, 1978)

Erna 88 (1939 - age 33), Vienna. A pianist, Erna had her first concert in Vienna at age eleven, and later became a student of Emil Ritter von Sauer, 1862-1942, the German virtuoso pianist who taught at the Vienna Academy. After the *Anschluss* Erna left for the United States by finding an American sponsor through a telephone directory. Her father, a violin teacher, couldn't leave Austria in time and died in a concentration camp in Poland. After the war, Erna performed frequently in Austria, and at the AUSTRIAN FORUM, where her husband, Harold Knecht, was in charge of the bookkeeping.

I was a poor, battered wunderkind. I didn't have a youth. (p.9)

Liliane *70 (1959 - age 35), Vienna. Liliane was a student at the conservatory in Vienna when she escaped with her parents to Lithuania, where she met her husband. While her parents were able to emigrate to America, Liliane and her new husband continued their flight from Nazism into Russia where they survived the war. Only the special

treaty Adenauer signed with the Soviet Union allowed them and their child to leave the Soviet Union for America where they were united with her parents.

Again and again I drove to the house where I used to live, where I was born. I visited my school, the conservatory, every place where I used to be so happy. And a rage flared up inside of me because all this was taken from me. That was in 1970. (p.7)

Erich *75 (1952 - age 33), Vienna. Erich worked as a window-dresser during the day and studied drawing and sketching at night, a skill he used on stage and which allowed him to leave Vienna for Switzerland where he spent one year as a refugee. He continued to England where he met his wife, also an émigré, joined the British Army, and became a British citizen. In America, he united with his family, and worked as a commercial artist.

Every day you wake up and collect impressions which increase your knowledge. If you can collect from different countries, it will add to your library of impressions. One can never know too much. (p.12-13)

Ann 67 (1951 - age 24), Wiesbaden, Germany. Ann's father, a semi-professional soccer player from

Vienna, moved to Germany where he met his wife. In 1935, the family left for Austria, and when the Nazis came to power there as well, the family escaped to Shanghai, an open city where no visa was required. In Shanghai, Ann met her husband, Hans Bernfeld, who later became president of the AUSTRIAN FORUM. For many years Ann supported the FORUM with bookkeeping, mailing and making phone calls, and, most memorably, with her exquisite pastries.

Calculate it yourself: Eight years Wiesbaden, four years Austria, ten years Shanghai, two years Vienna, and here I have been living for 43 years now. I am an American. (p.19)

Andreas *74 (1939 - age 20), Vienna. Because of the dire economic situation in Austria, Andreas had prepared for his emigration to South America since high school. When his plans were accelerated by the sudden political changes, he left for Chicago, leaving behind his mother who later died in Auschwitz. In the U.S., he studied electrical engineering and, as a student, became an extensive traveller until 1942 when he joined the U.S. army to fight Nazism. After the war he came to New York where he met his wife, Else. Andreas picked up his studies again to become a

patent lawyer. His law firm, where he still works, serves many clients from German speaking countries.

So, I had a life plan. Then the Nazis came, and that was the end of that. And since then I am a day-to-day-pragmatic. That means, I don't make long-range plans anymore. Never. Not anymore... (p.12)

Marthe 83 (1938 - age 27), Salzburg. When Marthe was a child, her family moved to Vienna and her parents divorced. Her father, Professor Martin Pappenheim, a neurologist who was well acquainted with the circle around Freud, later emigrated to Palestine. Marthe became a pupil of the Schwarzwaldschule, an alternative high school founded by Eugenie Schwarzwald. Marthe went on to University to become a medical doctor, and at the time of the *Anschluss*, she was specializing in neurology and psychoanalysis. Through her father's connections she achieved a work permit at the Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, and joined the staff of Adolf Meyer, a leader of the Mental Hygiene Movement. A few years later Marthe moved to New York where she has lived ever since, with only a brief interruption to teach at Yale. She stopped practicing as a psychoanalyst only a

few years ago. (Marthe's efforts to save her mother came too late. Her mother, aunt and uncle committed suicide when they learned they had to move to a camp.)

...I have always said when I was asked, "I am not Jewish; my father is Jewish." But this was always a political statement. It didn't mean anything to me in terms of religion.
(p.12)

Robert 85 (1940 - age 31), Vienna. In Austria, Robert, a journalist reporting on cultural affairs, was the Viennese correspondent for numerous foreign newspapers of the former Hapsburg Empire. Attempting an escape to Denmark in 1938, he was stopped at the border and sent back. He finally was allowed to go to England where he waited more than a year for his visa to the United States. In the U.S. he worked odd jobs, but advanced quickly to the position of bookkeeper for a large plastics firm. All the while Robert pursued his career as a journalist, mostly reporting on the musical scene in America for European German-speaking newspapers. In 1960, he decided to focus only on his journalism. He contributed frequently to a German radio show in New York, and was until recently the music critic of the Aufbau.

I was at the reopening of the Wiener Staatsoper in 1955... My boss was very proud. He told everybody, "There is a picture from the opening on the front page of The New York Times. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles was there, and my office manager Bob. Bob was also there!" He was very proud. (p.3-4)

Hilde 73 (1941 - age 20), Vienna. A child of a well-to-do family in Vienna, Hilde met her future husband, Henry, at the opera. The *Anschluss* accelerated their courtship, but also caused their separation. Henry escaped to France, Hilde to England. She used a trip to France to unite with her fiancé in Paris, however when the war broke out they again were forced in separate directions, he to the Foreign Legion, she to internment in the women's camp, Gurs, in Southern France. Using her family's influence she got Henry out of the Foreign Legion and organized her own emigration to the United States. When the pair reached America, they reunited again and began a family. But life together was interrupted one last time when the U.S. entered the war, and Henry was drafted. After the war they began a business, and today they are still working in their factory manufacturing belt buckles.

My poems are poems for my husband. I

write love poems. I write for my
husband or for my children. (p.10)

Table 1.**STUDY PARTICIPANTS' AGE AT PARTICULAR POINTS IN TIME.**

	<u>Date of Birth</u>	<u>1918 End of WWI</u>	<u>1938 Anschluss</u>	<u>Arrival in U.S.</u>
Marie	1911	7	27	27
Georg	1925		13	15
Nora	1918		20+	32
Leo	1915	3	23+	24
Gaby	1915	3	23@	24
Beatrice*	1916	2	22+	31
Stella	1916	2	22+	23
Carola	1921		17+	35
Clementine	1905	13	33	33
Kaspar	1905	13	33	34
Erna	1906	12	32+	33
Liliane*	1924		14	35
Erich*	1919		19	33
Ann	1927		12+	24
Andreas*	1919		19+	20
Marthe	1911	7	27	27
Robert	1909	9	29	31
Hilde	1921		17+	20

* Age was estimated.

+ Experience of *Kristallnacht*.

@ As she was living in Germany she did not experience the *Anschluss*.

CHAPTER 4

THIS IS MY VIENNA, THE CITY OF SONGS

This is my Vienna, the city of songs...
But was it ever only the city of songs?

Ernst Waldinger (1990, p.140)

INTRODUCTION

The German writer Uwe Johnson (in Falke, 1994) called the past "the stories of personal places," the places of one's childhood and youth, of friendships and landscapes. The émigrés spent their childhoods, youths and young adulthoods in Vienna. Their memories draw a place of childhood ease and joy, of youthful enthusiasm and idealization, as well as early struggles for establishing oneself professionally. They recollect Vienna as a place where they belonged and felt secure, but which also held experiences of poverty and fear. The émigrés called Vienna home until, all of a sudden, it became a place where "one was not wanted, and where one's life was threatened" (Erich, p.2).

Yet, before I turn to the émigrés' stories of personal places, it appears useful to provide a more objectified

presentation of Austria's past. This presentation pays special attention to Jewish life in Vienna with a focus on the time between World War I and II. Necessarily brief and incomplete in the context of this work, the historical sketch, nevertheless, attempts to provide historical background to the émigrés' stories of personal places.

I. THE FIRST REPUBLIC (1918-1938).

When World War I ended in 1918, the political landscape of East-Central Europe had changed dramatically. The Hapsburg Empire, which had governed the region until the outbreak of the war, was defeated, the Monarchy had dissolved, and the Empire fallen apart. In the Paris peace settlement of 1918-1919, the victorious allies--Italy, France, Britain, the U.S.A.--gave priority to the ethnic question and created nation states from the provinces of the former Austro-Hungarian Empire, (Austria, Hungary, Poland, Rumania, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia). Thus, it was hoped that the *Nationalitätenfrage* (*The National Question*), referring to the quest for ethnic autonomy in parts of the Empire, that had been brooding since the nineteenth century, would now be put to rest.

Yet, the assessment that after 1918 "the issue of nationality was dead in Austria" (Pauley, 1995, p.67), held true only for the ethnic majorities ruling in the newly established nation states. In fact, new borders were drawn also to satisfy security needs of the victorious allies along with the new countries of East-Central Europe. For example, Italy claimed the Brenner Pass along with 225,000 German speaking South Tirolians, and the Czechs received the Sudeten Mountains along with well over three million German-

speaking Austrians. And so, because there were not exclusively ethnic criteria for the establishment of new boundaries, the "ideal of self-determination was abused" and, according to Pauley, "the peace agreement lacked intellectual and moral foundation" (1995, p.59).

This lack of a moral foundation to the peace settlement following World War I was felt keenly in the new Austria, where few ever really supported the Paris agreement. The transformation from a monarchy to the First Republic, from a great empire to a small state, was a difficult transition. In the words of Stourzh, (1995, p.19), 1918 marks a "wave of discontinuity in the concept of Austria and Austrian self-consciousness." The nearly 4 million German-Austrians, whom Austria had to cede to its neighbors, created a potentially restless minority in these countries, keeping the question of a German national identity alive. And Austria, itself, not only felt cut off from its former German-speaking provinces, but without them was deprived of vital natural resources and major sections of its industrial base.¹ Many began to question Austria's *Lebensfähigkeit*, its very

¹The loss of these territories for Austria meant a loss of its working class, too, and thus represented a major loss in the constituency of the Social Democrats, with only Vienna providing strong support for progressive social politics. The otherwise mostly rural and Catholic First Republic supported the Christian Social Party, [For a socialist critique of the peace settlement see Friedrich Adler, the socialist leader, (1943, p.187).]

viability, and the conviction grew that Austria could only recover from the war by uniting with Germany. The old romance of an incorporation into Germany, of Austria being part of one German nation, was, at different times, supported by all major political forces in Austria. Unification with Germany, however, was precluded by the Paris peace settlement. France especially opposed this option, but the other allies, too, did not wish to see postwar Germany larger than the prewar Empire.

Austria's First Republic was deeply divided and confused on fundamental political issues, and the national climate was lacking in the respect and tolerance that foster democracy. Parties considered themselves enemies, not political rivals. Opposing parties had not just to be outvoted, they had to be overcome (Stourzh, 1995, p.2). One divisive issue was this question of independence from Germany. The strongest supporters of a unification with Germany were the Social Democrats (SDAP) and the Greater German People's Party (GDVP), but the Christian Socials (CSP), too, at times flirted with the idea. Yet, the parties were never united around the idea of the *Anschluss*.² The stronger the Socialists in Germany were, the stronger the

²Or in Pauley's (1995) words, as Austrians "never unanimously favored the union with Germany, they never unanimously opposed it either" (p.65).

support among the Austrian Socialists to unite. The more influential the nationalists in Germany became, the more the GDVP wanted the *Anschluss*, the less interested, however, were the Socialists. After Hitler's *Machtergreifung*³ in Germany, when the Nazis came to power in 1933, the political infighting ceased, and Austrian politics fractured along different lines. The goal of unification was eliminated from the Social Democrat's program, the Christian Socials also opposed the *Anschluss*, and the German-friendly Austrians withdrew their support from the GDVP and joined the Austrian Nazi Party. "Although Austrian Nazis were more fanatically pro-*Anschluss* than any of the other Austrian parties had ever been, and although they successfully contributed to the actual German annexation in 1938, there were far fewer Austrians who supported the *Anschluss* idea in early March 1938 than did in the winter of 1918-1919" (Pauley, 1995, p.65).

There was another divisive issue. Deep fractures ran through the political geography when it came to the question of the form by which the First Republic should be ruled. The Social Democrats were supporters of the Republic to a degree that they offended non-socialists, to whom socialism and republicanism became one and the same. The Christian Socials

³Hitler's seizing of power.

along with the reactionary *Heimwehr*⁴ and the *League of Front Fighters* did not feel any enthusiasm for the republic and preferred the reconstruction of the Hapsburg regime. Still others favored some form of authoritarian or even dictatorial government. It was ultimately this lack of consensus that paved the way for the Christian Social Chancellor Dollfuss to dissolve the parliament in 1933 and the workers' uprising in 1934.⁵ The Social Democrats were defeated and declared illegal along with the other parties. Democracy was eliminated. Instead, the supposedly all-encompassing *Patriotic Front* was created and the *Ständestaat*, the corporative state, was established--an authoritarian regime, "even more unpopular than the democratic one it replaced" (Pauley, 1995, p.66). "Austria ceased to exist on February 12, 1934. Morally, intellectually, culturally" (Ullmann, 1944, p.47).⁶ With democracy destroyed, and the labor movement crushed, the Austrian regime--"helplessly caught in the undertow between Italian and German fascism, and itself infiltrated by

⁴Gruber (1991) writes about the *Heimwehr*: "By the early 1930s the *Heimwehr* was a formidable paramilitary organization with a small delegation in parliament (*Heimatblock*) on which Chancellor Engelbert Dollfuss depended in dismantling the republican structure. Its politics is a mixture of nostalgic monarchism, pan-Germanism, and fascism given coherence by a violent antisocialism" (p.187).

⁵Dollfuss was assassinated by Austrian Nazis in 1934. Kurt von Schuschnigg succeeded him as chancellor until the *Anschluss*, after which Schuschnigg went into exile in the United States.

⁶My translation from the German.

'illegal' National Socialists" (Stadler, 1995, p.15)--began to generate a stifling intellectual and reactionary political climate--"deeply hostile to Jews and intellectuals" (Stadler, 1995, p.17)--that forced many liberals and socialists into exile long before the advent of National Socialism.

I.1. THE VIENNA OF THE FIRST REPUBLIC.

With the end of World War I, Vienna had to adjust to a fundamentally different role.

Once the sparkling cultural capital of Central Europe, outshining Budapest and Prague as well as Berlin in the brilliance of its intellectual and artistic innovations and practices, Vienna saw its luster vanish with the onset of the war and the consequent collapse of the Monarchy. During the 1920s talent migrated from Vienna to Berlin, which became the new center of intellectual and artistic ferment. (Gruber, 1991, p.6)

No more the home of the Emperor⁷, Vienna was no longer

⁷Franz Josef, who had been held in high respect as the protective father-figure--"...a beloved and almost universally revered symbol of authority by German and non-German speaking Austro-Hungarians alike before the end of the century." (Pauley, 1995, p.58)--had died during the war, in 1916, having reigned for more than half a century, 1848-1916.

The realization that an era had come to an end with the Emperor's death, and the sense of insecurity and confusion that the people were left with in its aftermath foreshadowing the events of the First Republic, are captured in G.H. Asher's short story The Emperor's Last Parade:

...They had loved to call their city "The Emperor's City". O yes, other countries, too, had

accorded the respect and loyalty it had enjoyed during the Monarchy. (Pauley, 1995, p.67) The large and influential capital of the Empire now seemed to be oversized for the much smaller and impoverished Austria of the First Republic. The city of two million was an anomaly and represented a burden to the otherwise rural country of seven million, with only a few regional urban centers. And the "big wounds inflicted by the amputations" of the peace settlement (Adler, 1943, p.189), together with the economic crisis which took hold in the Twenties, affected the urban population of Vienna in particularly harsh ways. Daily life,

kings and emperors; they lived far away or had been dead for a long time. And a long line of rulers had preceded the old man who now lay dead, too. One could read about it in history books or in newspapers. But **their** Emperor had been around forever. Their parents and grandparents had known him. The gothic churches and the green roofed baroque palaces, the huddled worn-out houses in the twisted streets of the old town, the noble avenues, even the venerable chestnut trees in the parks--the Emperor seemed to have anteceded them all. No one could remember the Emperor ever having been a young man. He simply had always been there--in familiar aloofness, perhaps ever since his dynasty had ruled the country, the Empire and, as it was told, much of the known world many centuries ago.

Now that he had died, the people were neither stunned nor even particularly touched by his passing. They were not really prepared for it nor were they surprised. Rather it seemed to them as if a stretch of their own lives had come to an end of sorts. They were like a family forced to leave the old house that had always been their home and watching it being torn down. Forlornly they stand around with their bundles and things--not knowing where to go. Not actually mourning for the dank ramshackle palace, but silenced by choking uncertainty and fear... (p.2-3)

especially for large sections of the working class, was made difficult by housing shortages, unemployment, hunger and cold. The urban crisis was aggravated by a stream of refugees from eastern Europe.⁸

In 1919, the Social Democrats won absolute control of the municipal government in Vienna. With that the "stage was set for the working class, largely invisible during the heyday of bourgeois culture, to leave its imprint on the city" (Gruber, 1991, p.6). The Social Democrats began to carry out far reaching social reforms including an ambitious housing program, an extension of public health and social welfare services, and a radical reform of education. But these reforms did not make the Austrian Socialists unique; indeed, major cities like Berlin, Frankfurt, Paris, Lyon, and London experienced similar reforms. What made the Austrian Socialists outstanding, however, was that they went beyond the implementation of social reforms, and set out to realize an "experiment in working-class culture" (Gruber) reaching into the most private spheres of a worker's life, and--in the words of the Social Democratic leader Otto Bauer-- "creating a revolution of souls" (quoted in Gruber, 1991, p.38).

⁸Among them many *Ostjuden*, Orthodox Jews from the eastern provinces of the former Empire who settled mostly in the Leopoldstadt in the second district of Vienna, across the Danube Canal.

The successes of the social reforms and the "relative recovery" becoming visible in "Red Vienna" (Adler, 1943, p.189), spawned a large and loyal membership for the Social Democrats. However, the strength of the Social Democratic party in Vienna was deceptive. The rest of the country remained firmly in the hands of its political opponents, the Christian Social party and its allies.

From the beginning the country was divided into two camps--Vienna and scattered industrial enclaves against the largely agrarian and Catholic provinces--whose hostility was not simply political. It expressed itself in the hate mongering by the Catholic church, the far-from-silent partner of political reaction, for whom socialism was the Antichrist. (Gruber, 1991, p.10)

A first chastening incident occurred in 1927 when frustrated masses in Vienna stormed the Palace of Justice, and the police indiscriminately fired into the crowd killing 85 people. The events of 1927 marked a "turning point in the fate of the republic" (Gruber, 1991, p.10). They ushered in a period when the role of culture in Social Democratic politics began to change. Cultural organizations and activities--such as the education of taste, the organization of leisure and sports events, the realization of the public housing palaces as all encompassing worker environments containing laundries, bathhouses, kindergartens, libraries, meeting rooms, swimming pools, cooperative stores, youth and mothers' consultation clinics, and much more (Gruber, 1991,

p.180)--became increasingly a surrogate for politics.

...the cultural project, originally conceived as a major weapon in the armory of class struggle, more and more became a substitute for politics... Towards the end, the socialists' projected relationship between politics and culture became reversed. Instead of providing a protected environment for culture, politics depended more and more on cultural expression. The 100,000 workers, representing the gamut of cultural organizations, parading through the streets of Vienna during the International Worker Olympics in 1931, and the more than 200,000 spectators at the worker festival in the new stadium celebrating the symbolic fall of capitalism, were neither culture nor politics, but a metaphor for both. (Gruber, 1991, p.183)

Further speaking to the weakness of the Social Democrats were the events of 1933, when they could not prevent the Christian Social Chancellor Dollfuss from eliminating democracy, and the events of 1934, when the final workers' uprising was crushed by the reactionary forces of the state.

I.2. THE JEWS OF VIENNA.

Since the Tolerance Edicts of Emperor Joseph II in 1782, which marked the first cautious steps towards emancipation of Jews, and which allowed them to leave the dreadful isolation of the ghetto, the German speaking world exerted a powerful attraction for the Jewish communities of Central and Eastern Europe. Though their complete emancipation was still decades away, the prestige of German culture was great for upwardly mobile Jews and those who wished to free

themselves from the constraints of tradition. Berlin, Prague and Vienna became centers in the Jewish migration to the West.⁹

In the second half of the 19th century, the "Old Vienna" of the Monarchy, this "sparkling cultural capital" (Gruber, 1991), was a bastion of Austrian liberalism. Struggling against aristocracy and baroque absolutism, at first defeated and chastened in the 1848 revolution, liberalism came to power in the 1860s.

The principles and programs which made up the liberal creed were designed to supersede systematically those of "the feudals,"... Constitutional monarchy would replace aristocratic absolutism; parliamentary centralism, aristocratic federalism. Science would replace religion. Those of German nationality would serve as tutor and teacher to bring up the subject peoples, rather than keep them ignorant bondsmen as the feudals had done... Finally, laissez faire would break the arbitrary rule of privilege in the economic sphere and make merit, rather than privilege or charity, the basis of economic reward. (Schorske, 1981, p.117)

The ascendancy of liberalism promised liberty and progress particularly for the Jews of the Empire. Indeed, it

⁹The Jewish passion for the German language and culture has been repeatedly described (e.g. Beller, 1989; Gay, 1992; Reinharz & Schatzberg, 1985; Zohn, 1986), and its explanation has been related to the affinity of the German language to the Yiddish which developed from the Middle High German, the translation of the Hebrew bible into German by Moses Mendelssohn, and the Jewish admiration for the classical poet Friedrich Schiller who expressed the liberal ideas of the Enlightenment (for more see Zohn, 1986, p.15).

secured their complete emancipation which was granted by Emperor Franz Joseph in 1867. Vienna, one center of German culture, exuded magnetic powers, and the newly built railroad further aided the move of many thousands to the capital. Jews from all over the Monarchy--Bohemia, Moravia, Hungary, Bukowina, and Galicia--flocked to the city, and in 1890, 12% of the Viennese population was Jewish.

The Austrian liberals were never capable of overthrowing the aristocratic order. Their social base was always weak and confined to the middle-class Germans and the German Jews of the urban centers. Unlike in France, where the aristocracy was destroyed, and unlike in Britain, where the bourgeoisie fully fused with the aristocracy, the Austrian bourgeoisie always "remained an outsider seeking integration with the aristocracy" (Schorske, 1981, p.7). Faced with this relative exclusion from power, the Austrian bourgeoisie turned to culture as a way to assimilate (Schorske, 1981).

During the height of liberalism, the Jews increasingly took part in Austrian society, achieving professional and economic successes. Jews became fellow-citizens, and Jewishness a matter of faith¹⁰ if they did not convert to

¹⁰Jews were considered fellow-citizens of the *Mosaic Persuasion*. This new linguistic term was unique to the German language, where the word *Jew* was reserved for cursing. This semantic distinction allowed a sharp differentiation between the emancipated and assimilated Jews and the *Ostjuden*, the

Protestantism.¹¹ Many Jews thought that assimilation-- dressing, speaking, celebrating holidays, and educating one's children, simply as Christians did--was the ideal solution to the Jewish Question.

As more and more Jews attended German schools, spoke perfect German, and associated with Germans in business, they indulged in their passion for German culture. Kant, Goethe, and Schiller were their writers, Bach, Beethoven, and Schubert their composers. Although a certain glass wall remained to separate most Jews from most gentiles even during the years of the closest intimacy, that wall seemed a mere brittle survival from more primitive days. (Gay, 1992, p.XII)

The decades following the emancipation up to the turn of the century were the years of the "Jewish-German symbiosis" (Gay, 1992, p.281), and the contributions of Jews to fin-de-siècle Viennese high culture, the Wiener Moderne, were impressive.¹²

But not every Jew who came to Vienna sought to disappear into the general population. For many, it was not so much

East European Jews, still embedded in the ghetto culture of the shtetl. (Beckermann, 1992, p.13). See also Wertheimer, (1987), and Hödl, (1994).

¹¹Beller (1989) asserts that at the turn of the Century about a quarter of all Jews in Vienna converted to Protestantism. (p.153)

¹²Beller (1989) argues that the Wiener Moderne was in fact a largely Jewish bourgeois phenomenon, in contrast to Schorske (1981), who described the Wiener Moderne as a result of the defeat of the liberal bourgeoisie. (This issue is elaborated further in footnote 16.)

the lure of the German culture that brought them to Vienna, rather the hope of escaping the dreadful narrowness and poverty of their ghetto lives in the Eastern provinces of the Empire. There was one neighborhood in Vienna, Leopoldstadt, which was inhabited by a high proportion of Jews,¹³ and whose vernacular name, *Mazzesinsel*,¹⁴ alluded to the distinctly Jewish character it displayed.

Conveniently located next to the railroad station, the Leopoldstadt was the first stop for newcomers from the East European provinces. Here, they could expect to find charity and support in their search for work and housing. The many *Kaffeehäuser*, cafés ubiquitous all over Vienna, offered a good chance to meet friends and relatives from home, as much as they provided a refuge from the dire housing conditions.¹⁵ These cafés where one could sit the whole day with a single cup of coffee or glass of wine, reading newspapers and magazines from all over the world, formed an essential part of the Viennese way of life. But, as Allan Janik, & Stephen Toulmin (1973) observe, there was another side to this institution:

¹³In the 1920s, almost 50%--60,000 people--in that neighborhood were Jewish.

¹⁴*Mazzes* refers to the Jewish unleavened ritual bread and *insel* is the German word for the English *island*.

¹⁵With Vienna's population swelling by the turn of the century, parts of the Leopoldstadt had deteriorated into some of the worst slums in Europe (Beckermann, 1992, p.12).

Viennese working class housing has always been inadequate, both in quality and quantity. Its apartments were dreary and impossible to heat adequately, so there has always been a need to escape these dingy and cold living quarters, and it was satisfied by the warmth and cheer of the ubiquitous cafés. (p.34)

And it was also in the Leopoldstadt, where the industrialists and businessmen, who had come to wealth with the bloom of capitalism, built new and elaborate synagogues next to the more modest older, shtetl-style places of worship.

Yet, despite the presence of a large Jewish community, and despite its successes, the Monarchy had always known a tradition of anti-Semitism. Its mild, cerebral version during the second part of the 19th century became increasingly visceral after the defeat of liberalism,¹⁶

¹⁶By the end of the century, Austrian liberalism was defeated. Its enlightened principles had not proven strong enough to stem the emerging forces of modern mass movements: Christian, anti-Semitic, socialist and nationalist. In fact, by 1895, Vienna was "engulfed in a Christian Social tidal wave" (Schorske, 1981, p.5). Once again, for the Austrian bourgeoisie, culture assumed a heightened significance.

...the function of art for Viennese middle-class society had altered, and in this change politics played a crucial part. If the Viennese burghers had begun by supporting the temple of art as a surrogate from assimilation into the aristocracy, they ended by finding in it an escape, a refuge from the unpleasant world of increasingly threatening political reality....The life of art became a substitute for the life of action. Indeed, as civic action proved increasingly futile, art became almost a religion, the source of meaning and the food of the soul. (Schorske,

and Karl Lueger's Christian Social party appealed successfully to anti-Semitic sentiments in order to create a mass movement. Emperor Franz Joseph tried to stem that wave, but finally gave in to the populist vote--after having rejected Lueger's election as Vienna's mayor five times.

If most Jews were loyal to the Monarchy it was because the liberties it guaranteed were better than nothing. It was thus to be expected that it was only really after the Empire's demise that most Jews realized how "Austrian" they had been. (Beller, 1989, p.181)

The anti-Semitism, still somewhat tamed in the more pluralistic climate of the multi-national Empire, developed fully after World War I when the confused and divided First Republic united against its Jewish fellow-citizens. All the political parties and social classes of the First Republic were anti-Semitic to one degree or another (Pauley, 1995, p.67-68). The Social Democrats at least did not inscribe anti-Semitism in their party program, though they, too, failed to take a strong stance against the anti-Semitic outgrowths of their opponents.¹⁷ The Jewish war refugees from Poland and Russia--about 25,000 who settled mostly in the Leopoldstadt--aggravated the resentment. Their poverty

1981, pp.8-9)

¹⁷With almost their entire leadership of Jewish ancestry, the Social Democrats feared being viewed as a "Jewish party".

and, many times, their deep religious belief made them outsiders even to the established Viennese Jewish community. Many were followers of the Hasidic sect and had come to join their Rebbes who had moved their "courts" to Vienna, making the First Republic a center of Hasidism.

Other *Ostjuden* who aimed at societal changes, assumed a much more radical position than the Social Democrats. In the *Kaffeehäuser* of the Leopoldstadt, a variety of newly organized groups met, including left Zionists. The idea of Zionism had won renewed attraction for the young radicals in the face of anti-Semitism.

Thus, there were many ways of being Jewish in the Vienna of the First Republic. This richly textured Jewish life was an expression of the tension between the promises of the Enlightenment and assimilation on the one hand, and the preservation of Jewish religion and tradition on the other.

One could be a Jewish Socialist or Communist, a Chasid at one of the "courts" that had emigrated to Vienna, a member of one of the small Sephardic congregations, or a Zionist. One could also be a Zionist and at the same time be active in Social Democracy; one could define oneself as an assimilated Viennese Jew and distance oneself from the East European Jews, one could either give up one's Jewishness, or one did not know anymore that one was a Jew at all. (Beckermann, 1992, p.13)¹⁸

¹⁸My translation from the German.

The *Anschluss* in March of 1938 put an effective end to Jewish life in Vienna. Even the old-established and most successful Viennese Jews were not spared from persecution. Beller's assessment--"The German culture and values which the Jews in the Austrian Empire worshipped were something other than reality. They had assimilated into a great and glorious culture but the society for that culture did not exist" (1989, p.164).¹⁹

¹⁹In fact, the society for that culture did exist to the extent that Jews populated the middle class and some rose to prominence and wealth. But in the end that did not protect them from persecution.

II. THE EMIGRES' LIFE IN VIENNA.

II.1. THE SOCIAL-ECONOMIC, POLITICAL AND CULTURAL ASPECTS.

Austrians were struggling to cope with the effects of the lost war. The country's social-economic plight was dire. "Austria in the Twenties and Thirties was an extremely sad country. Cut off from the rest of the Monarchy which used to be a good economic unit...", it experienced huge unemployment, housing shortages and misery (Andreas, p.10).

Poverty was dreadful after 1918. The hunger. One was cold. One didn't have shoes...I always had frozen feet and I wore felt slippers because one couldn't get shoes. In the snow. That was bad. (Marthe, p.23)

Kaspar whose father had returned from the war a sick man, remembers difficult times, too,

...after the war, horse-drawn wagons, filled with coal to the top, rambled through the cobble stoned streets. Some coal always spilled out and you saw little boys with a basket following the wagon and pick up the fallen bits of coal.-- Because of the blockade of "our enemy", coffee, oranges and all imported foods disappeared from the shelves. There was *Ersatz* for everything. Coffee, I think, was made of wheat which Mama roasted on our stove. Sugar was rationed and even the small rations were not always available. (Memoir, 1969, p.3)

The war refugees, fleeing the pogroms in Russia and Poland, flooded Vienna. They knocked at doors and asked for charity or tried to sell things. "I can remember...that the bell rang now and then and a poor person was standing

outside..." (Robert, p.20-21). By the mid 1930s, Andreas at age seventeen, realized that he wouldn't be able to make a living in Austria, and he began preparing for his emigration to South America. He studied Spanish and evaluated different countries (p.13). Kaspar, too, felt the need to leave Vienna. It was too difficult to make a living as a young and inexperienced lawyer²⁰ and his family did not have the connections that could ease his way into the profession. His short excursion into journalism did not bring the income and success he had hoped for either, and in 1929 Kaspar moved to Berlin.

Yet, the recollections of personally experienced hardship are sparse. Indeed, it must be said that the stories of personal places assembled in this study exhibit rather sheltered lives. Most stories reflect a middle class, if not well-to-do upbringing.²¹ "We had a good life there. We were well-to-do. We had everything we wanted", says Beatrice (p.18). Hilde's recollections also evoke a bourgeois background when she describes her mother taking tennis

²⁰The young lawyer had to go through a long period of apprenticeship: one year of unpaid work in different courts was followed by six years as apprentice to an established lawyer, during which time the young lawyer earned hardly any money. (Kaspar, 1994, From Vienna to New York, p.9) Clementine, the first woman in Vienna to be a criminal lawyer, experienced similar difficulties. Though she quickly made a reputation of herself, it was hard to make a living and for many years she worked out of her parents' apartment.

²¹See also **CHAPTER 3** on "Study Participants".

lessons, dancing lessons and cooking lessons, and her mother-in-law as the first woman driver. "And she was in car races, and that was in the Twenties and Thirties" (p.13).

Even Kaspar observes,

We lived in a five room apartment with balcony ...on the third floor of a very nice six story apartment building in the predominantly Jewish section of town, the 2nd Bezirk...Our apartment was big and very nicely furnished and my friends thought we were rich. We were the only family in my crowd with a maid, so maybe we were. (Memoir, 1974, p.2)

And Andreas, who decided he had to emigrate for economic reasons, remembers growing up in a beautiful apartment with a balcony overlooking the garden in a Viennese suburb close to Schönbrunn, one of the Emperor's former residences.²² And though there was seldom meat on the table, "there was enough money. It was sufficient that I got a bicycle. Even a new one" (p.12).

As with poverty, the politically restless times of Austria between the wars were experienced mostly from a distance. Marie (p.4) and Beatrice (p.9) mention demonstrations and fights at the University, often ignited by right-wing fraternities. Kaspar, in his interlude as an aspiring journalist, describes the riots between students

²²He and his mother shared that apartment with his mother's sister.

and the police during the Dollfuss era. "At that time the Viennese police force did not include one Jew," he reports (From Vienna to New York, 1994, p.9). Robert responded to these times with a deep resentment against politics. "Anything but politics!", he says about his work as a journalist covering cultural affairs from soccer to the arts (p.8). In his youth he became a member of the *Paneuropäische Union*,

It was above politics...Against the war. Against terror. Against everything. It was neither right nor left. It didn't flirt with either Communism nor Capitalism...It was absolutely not militant or combatant. It was a peace movement. (Robert, p.18)²³

Carola remembers her family as being Social Democrats though "...politics was never a big thing in our family" (p.15). Similarly, Andreas's mother voted for the Social Democrats, but there wasn't much more to it than that Andreas learned skiing with the leftist youth organization *Naturfreunde* (p.11).

The Social Democracy, however, had decidedly more meaning for Georg who grew up deeply steeped in the culture of the

²³The *Paneuropäische Union* was founded by the Austrian count Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi, born in Japan in November 1894. Coudenhove-Kalergi envisioned a united Continental Europe to balance the world powers of Great Britain, U.S.A. and Russia. Robert learned from his schoolfriend in Vienna that Otto von Habsburg is today's president of the pan-European movement and is representing the movement in the European parliament.

Red Vienna. He was raised in "...the working class neighborhood in Vienna where my father grew up, and two of my grandparents had lived" (Georg, p.19). One grandfather was a member of the executive committee of the Austrian printers' union. Georg's father was active in the Social Democratic Party. "Since his youth he was with the party. And so was my youth, too. Then, in 1934, the Austrofascists came" (p.8). His father lost his job with the Austrian health insurance program in the 1934 uprisings, and remained unemployed for a year.

Marthe's youth and young adulthood were also very much shaped by Social Democratic thinking. She went to the Schwarzwaldschule,²⁴ a private *Gymnasium*, and even as a young pupil she joined the Social Democratic youth, a membership she maintained through her university years. Her fond memories of the Red Vienna's progressive era--"It was a model. One can still read that today" (p.23).--emphasize the liberated role of women.

We could do everything. We could not have a full professorship. But we used to say, "In ten years, we'll have it!" In ten years, though, there was

²⁴The Schwarzwaldschule, a school project founded by Eugenie Schwarzwald in 1901, was the first school in Austria where girls could receive the *Matura*, the entry to the university. Inspired by the pedagogy of Maria Montessori, the Schwarzwaldschule counted Oskar Kokoschka among its teachers. Adolf Loos designed the class-rooms, and Arnold Schönberg and Alban Berg gave concerts for the students. The Schwarzwaldschule existed until the *Anschluss*. Eugenie Schwarzwald went into exile in Switzerland where she died in 1940.

Hitler, and that was a great relapse. Because the women have not reached again what they almost certainly had in the Twenties. (Marthe, p.38)

A lighter, if not nostalgic, tone is present in the émigrés' recollections when they turn to the cultural aspects of their lives in Vienna.

I was lucky to be born in an enchanting city, and that is Vienna, a city of music. Already as a little girl I used to dance in the park to the tunes of Strauss, the king of the waltz. (Nora, p.20)

Though "the time of our parents was already history...and the Monarchy was something from the far past..." Vienna's cultural life continued seemingly unharmed by the new political and economic realities (Leo, p.8-9). "...I often went to the theater. The cultural life was outstanding, and a large part of the population was interested in theater and music" (Erich, p.8). The *Staatsoper* and the *Burgtheater* remained the temples of High Culture, whose pathos could cause an overwhelming impression as experienced, for example, by the young Leo (p.8)²⁵ But the Social Democrats had their imprints on the city's cultural life as well when they added new institutions such as the

²⁵There existed Yiddish theaters, too. Nora, however, is unique in remembering visiting those places. "My parents took me there...Vienna was such a multicolored blend" (Nora, p.21).

Volkshochschule where young writers found a first audience for their work,

What is the *Volkshochschule*? In a *Gymnasium*, there were evening classes in literature etc. for workers and unemployed workers. Musil and such people, who later would become big in literature, read there. (Leo, p.9)

Of course, one was young and prone to idolization,

...I was 18 years old, and I had just gone through that period of movie star adoration, *Wiener Staatsoper* standing room and waiting at the stage door--that really made use of our youth adoration of our big stars...And Marta [Eggerth] was among them because first of all of her movies. There wasn't a movie that I missed from the time I was 12 years old. And there wasn't an opera I missed where her husband²⁶ sang. And she was in the car, and he was on top of the roof of the car--the famous story, after the performance, and all the people, all the young folks standing around him, and he had to sing from his movie hits. (Hilde, p.1)

Robert offers another reminiscence of a great performer,

I have great memories of Maria Jeritza. In my times, she was the star of the *Wiener Staatsoper*. The Viennese youth used to give her torchlight processions after her performances. Silent torchlight processions because in Vienna after 10.00 PM one was prohibited to make noise. And she appeared on the balcony of her house in the Inner City in which also Chancellor Dollfuss lived, and the people applauded silently and threw roses towards her. All of this took place

²⁶Marta Eggerth's husband was Jan Kiepura. Beatrice, too, remembers the great tenor, "Kiepura was really marvelous. We knew him in Vienna when he sang at the opera...He had a marvelous voice" (p.25).

in absolute silence. (Robert, p.14)

Leo, introduced to the world of literature by his older brother, the poet Friedrich Bergammer, belonged to the circle of "youthful admirers" around Karl Kraus.

Karl Kraus was a weak, thin figure with a humpback and with beautiful hands. He was one of the best readers I have ever heard. When he read from his book Die letzten Tage der Menschheit (The Last Days of Mankind), it was shattering. He read other things as well. He even sang Offenbach's operettas. Whole operettas...It was breath-taking. (Leo, p.8)

The recollections of a past life in Vienna have so far not included a range of experiences that became existentially important by 1938, and to which I will now turn: the émigrés' Jewish experience. After the *Anschluss*, the question of one's Jewishness imposed a defining significance, no matter how important the Jewish religion or culture was in one's life, no matter whether Jewishness had any meaning at all.

II.2. THE EMIGRES' JEWISH EXPERIENCE.

The émigrés' stories which reveal the Jewish side of their lives in Vienna are varied and complex, mirroring a Jewish consciousness that spans the range of knowing and

fostering its traditions on the one hand, and, on the other, allowing them to recede to a far distance.

Before 1938. I believe there existed three different groups of Jewish people: The ones who were especially conscious, who could not put anything before their Jewishness...Then there were some who were rather assimilated, but, on high holidays, they, nevertheless, were very Jewish in their hearts. And then there were those who had to be reminded that they are Jews, who never knew anything about Jewishness. There were many of those, but they were not the majority. (Erich, p.15)

Picking up Erich's three distinctions, none of the émigrés who participated in this study fall into the first category, where Jewishness assumed an all encompassing importance. A couple of émigrés, however, place themselves at the other end of the spectrum, where Jewishness has lost its meaning altogether.

My parents were not religious. We had a Christmas tree as the most natural thing. I found out only when Hitler came that I am Jewish. I didn't know what it meant, really. I had no idea. Just something that they didn't like. So, Jewishness never played a part in my life. (Hilde, p.13)

Similarly Marthe and Andreas assert that Hitler made them into Jews and that there was never more to it than a definition imposed on them from the outside.²⁷ Andreas,

²⁷Carola who also says, "My half Jewishness was forced on me by Hitler", developed a different attitude. "...as many young people I went to the extreme, I associated with my persecuted part...I said to myself, 'Well, since I cannot cut myself in half I identify with my Jewish part" (Carola, p.15).

who was raised a Protestant, says,

I knew that my mother was of Jewish descent, but that didn't mean anything to me. The only thing I knew about Judaism was that my Jewish classmates had a couple of holidays in the beginning of September. That was all. Why, why so--no idea.
(Andreas, p.26)

And Marthe, who calls her Jewishness an "accident of birth" (p.13), reports,

I was baptized from birth, my father was baptized, too, but he was Jewish. My mother, there was so much: her father was Jewish, her mother was not. She was a Protestant, baptized from birth and raised a Protestant. When my parents got married, my father converted to Protestantism, and so I was baptized a Lutheran. Well, none in my family was actually religious, neither my father nor my mother. We celebrated Christmas but that was more a folklore festival than a religious celebration²⁸ ...I always meant to become undenominational for political reasons but somehow it was never worth it.
(Marthe, p.6)

Yet, most of the stories relating the Jewish experience in Vienna before 1938 unfold within the middle of Erich's categories, where people "were rather assimilated" but "very Jewish in their hearts" (p.15). Within this category, however, one observes a complexity of behavior and

²⁸On another occasion Marthe remembers her paternal grandparents' discomfort with the Christmas ritual. They left the room when the Christmas tree was lit.

internalization of Jewishness.

Leo displays a unique connectedness to his Jewish identity, depicted, for example, in the sentences with which he describes the predominantly Jewish neighborhood of the Leopoldstadt, where he grew up,

The big Danube flows past Vienna. There is an island, which used to be the neighborhood of mostly Jews, particularly *Ostjuden*, who had come during World War I. This island was called Mazzesinsel--Matzah, the bread of the Jews...
(Leo, p.1)

Leo speaks with great fondness of his grandfather, who, blending Jewish Orthodoxy with the Enlightenment, was influential in shaping his own Jewish identity. As an orphan, the grandfather had come to Vienna from Moravia. He went to the *Gymnasium* and supported himself as a street vendor of used things. Later he began dealing in arts and antiques, and established the family business that Leo's brother would eventually continue in New York. A child of the 1848 revolution and Austrian liberalism, the grandfather, nevertheless, continued to practice his religion, even when that meant not serving an aristocrat after sunset on a Friday evening. This grandfather is evoked when Leo reports,

...he was reading the bible in Hebrew, and he said to me: "You know, Leo, I was just reading the greatest love poem that has ever been written." He meant the Song of Songs. And that

was typical of him. A very pious Jew would never have said "love poem," because all descriptions of the body had to be explained symbolically, they could never mean anything erotic...And while he is talking to me about the greatest love poem, I see on his table Thomas Mann's Die Buddenbrooks.--This unbelievably interesting blend of private religious belief--nobody needs to know--on the one hand, and so open in terms of art and love and such things on the other hand. (Leo, p.4-5)

There are others with a religious upbringing. Vera relates, "My parents were religious. My husband was not religious, but I come from a religious home" (p.19). And Kaspar, who, like Leo, grew up within the Jewish environment of the Leopoldstadt, remembers,

We kept a kosher house with separate dishes and silver for milchig and fleischig and had a separate set of dishes for Passover which were kept in a big wooden case in the cellar. On Friday evenings mother lighted candles and blessed the chalah. (Kaspar, Memoir, 1969, p.3)

Most, however, maintained a greater distance to their Jewishness, and related to it as Beatrice did--cognizant of the Jewish background, though not necessarily practicing its culture or religion,

We were proud to be Jewish but we didn't do anything about it...we wouldn't change our religion, but that was how far it went. (Beatrice, p.20)

In Vienna, "...the Jewish identity was something that you didn't stress at all" (Hilde, p.12-13). "I was an Austrian

with the Jewish religion", says Liliane (p.14-15) speaking for many. The assimilated Viennese Jews defined Jewishness in strictly religious terms, and as a religion Judaism was considered "a private matter" (Leo, p.47). This Jewish community, which was the Jewish community in Vienna, was called the *Israelitische Kultusgemeinde*. "These people didn't call themselves *Jews*" (Robert, p.19). Instead, they reserved the term *Jew* to denote the new immigrant from the East who not only openly exhibited a pious attitude, but who also adhered to a more encompassing definition of Jewishness by, for example, speaking Yiddish. However, "Among Jews there existed a great discrimination against these *Ostjuden*" (Leo, p.4).

The *Yidden*, the Jews,...always felt second class. They were indeed, contrasted with the assimilated Jews in Germany, France, and England. Those were the British, the French or the Germans or the Austrians of the Mosaic or Israelite faith.
(Robert, p.19)

Marie, who was raised "totally assimilated" (p.12), further testifies to the internal Jewish prejudice, "We looked down at Jewish people" (p.38). In sharp contrast to Leo's "island," Marie recalls a Vienna of social ambition and status consciousness. "In Vienna one asks, 'Which district are you from?'--So, he is Vienna One, the best.--I am Vienna Four, very good.--Vienna Two is horrible..."

(p.20-21).²⁹ When she was twelve years old, Marie had moved to Vienna from Melk, a small town north-west of Vienna known for its baroque style convent above the Danube. "I am not from Vienna. I am from Melk. That's even better...that a Jewess came from Melk. Because most Jews were from the East" (p.12-13). This rift in the Viennese Jewish community between the *Ostjuden* and the assimilated Jews is further evident in an anecdote Marie recalls about her parents marriage. An uncle felt the need to investigate why a young, well educated, excellently employed man (Marie's father) wanted to marry a beautiful but poor Viennese (Marie's mother). When the uncle learned that the groom was "A *Polnischer*," he had found the blemish on the otherwise immaculate young man. "A *Polnischer*" alluded to the recent immigrant from the East who hoped to quickly assimilate by marrying a Viennese. (p.38)³⁰

But there also existed outright external discrimination against the Jews, and the large influx of war refugees after World War I helped to spread that populist sentiment.

²⁹"Vienna Two" or the "second Bezirk" were different names for the Leopoldstadt.

³⁰The first Friday following their wedding, Beate's mother set out candles on the table in preparation for the Sabbath prayer, when her father stopped her, "Are you crazy? That's exactly what I ran away from!" (Fieldnotes)

However, as with poverty and the political unrest of the First Republic, this group of Austrian Jews experienced anti-Semitism mostly from a distance.

Of course, there was anti-Semitism. Mayor Lueger who said "I decide who is a Jew". That is, the Jews who gave him money, he accepted and ennobled... (Robert, p.20)

But rarely was one directly affected. "There existed anti-Semitic groups but I didn't have anything to do with them" says Erich (p.16).³¹ Fascist groups ignited demonstrations and fights at the University (Marie, p.4, Beatrice, p.9), and the riots on the streets that Kaspar reported had an obvious anti-Semitic direction (From Vienna to New York, 1994, p.9). Georg's father lost his job in the 1934 workers' uprising, and after 1934 with the establishment of the *Ständestaat*, young Jewish doctors could not be employed.³²--"But one didn't feel threatened", rather "...you took it in your stride because the Jews had very good positions, they were highly regarded" (Beatrice, p.9). This sense of being protected against the populist, anti-Semitic craze is probably one of the reasons why the ideas and political implications of Zionism do not feature in the stories told here. Though the study participants

³¹Though he made sure to not give the anti-Semites any occasion to assault him. (Erich, p.16)

³²This regulation, however, did not apply to Marthe, a doctor, since she had been baptized and raised a Protestant.

describe a variety of social, political and cultural activities they engaged in while living in Vienna, Zionism was not one of their projects.³³

³³A reference to Zionism appears in four recollections:

1. Marie recalls utter astonishment when her friend Teddy Kollek, the eventual mayor of Jerusalem, refused to enter the university and decided to join a kibbutz instead. "What are you doing? What is a kibbutz?" she asked him, and added how Teddy's parents were outraged (p.46).

2. Robert remembers the first Zionist congress in Vienna. "My parents and I returned from a vacation. With our luggage we drove from the Südbahnhof through the Ringstrasse to the Graben where we lived....and next to the State Opera there were the German Nationalists already then, shouting 'Go back to Palestine!'" Robert continues to discuss Herzl and his politics and holds that Zionism played into the hands of the nationalistic movement and contributed to the growing anti-Semitism (p.19).

3. In 1925, Kaspar took a three month trip to the Near East. He had much respect for the kibbutzniks when he saw under what difficult conditions they labored to make the land fertile. "I walked around a piece of weed; to step on it would be a hostile act" (From Vienna to New York, 1994, p.7). Yet, he never expressed a further involvement with Zionist ideas nor a desire to live in Palestine.

4. And Beatrice observes, "Austrians [Jews] didn't want to go to Israel. They wanted to stay in Austria. They really felt Austrian" (p.17).

CHAPTER 5

THEIR ARRIVAL TORE OPEN THE NIGHT

Their arrival tore open the night.
There were curt commands;
The jogging of booted feet;
The gleam of helmet and gun;
The shuffling of the herded ones...

The neighbors who had peered
Through drawn blinds
Went back to their beds...

Herbert Kuhner (1993, p.18)

INTRODUCTION

Since the meeting between Hitler and the Austrian Chancellor Kurt von Schuschnigg in Berchtesgarden on February 12, 1938, the air was filled with rumors about Austria's political future, and tensions grew. There were daily demonstrations, street fights and riots between the officially illegal Austrian Nazis who felt increasingly confident enough to pressure publicly and violently for an Austria united with Germany, and supporters of the Patriotic Front who backed Schuschnigg's fight to maintain independence. In this chaotic, civil war-like situation, Schuschnigg announced a plebiscite for March 13 to decide the question of Austria's independence. However, Hitler did not wait. Before the plebiscite took place, the *Anschluss*

was put into effect during the night of March 11, 1938.

That which was played out between 12 February and 11 March 1938 in mobilizing and galvanizing the Austrian National Socialists was a result of Hitler's demands of 12 February, and in the last phase--the seizure of power by Austrian National Socialists--a result of Hitler's and Göring's ultimate reactions to the plan for a popular referendum. (Stourzh, 1995, p.30)

Though historians generally acknowledge that the plebiscite would have given Schuschnigg a majority, (Stourzh, p.30), the days following the *Anschluss* displayed an overwhelming enthusiasm for the new regime, accompanied by

...an increasing terror that was beyond all rational explanation, to be understood only through means of mass psychological explanation. The situation was like an earthquake that suddenly makes the arm of the seismograph swing widely. (v.Klemperer, 1990, p.465)¹

¹The image of the earthquake appears well chosen. Austria was overtaken by National Socialism with unparalleled immediacy and force. "In Austria, it happened so quickly" (Liliane, p.12), in contrast to Germany, where laws persecuting Jews and other foes of the fascist regime had been comparatively gradually enacted since Hitler's rise to power in 1933.

I. "WHEN HITLER CAME..."

As soon as the rumors of the *Anschluss* were confirmed, people began to stream into the Inner City. "...for three days they were in the street and yelling and screaming 'Judah verrecke!'"², Beatrice remembers (p.10). And Nora recalls, "A lot was happening in the beginning. Demonstrations. And everything against the Jews, the Jews" (p.21). Robert captured the events of March 1938 with the gripping voice of an eyewitness, possessed with a journalist's awareness and precision.³ His report testifies to his transformation from a blameless citizen to an "outcast" in one's own home--a gradual and painful realization, particularly since, as Erich describes, "one cannot understand that this should happen in one's hometown" (p.14).

The crowd was drunk and bewitched. All Patriotic Front pins were exchanged for swastikas. The police, who until yesterday had tried to control

²A slogan used by the Nazis to address the Jewish people in its entirety (Judah)--Its English translation, "Judah, croak!", however, doesn't convey the bitter edge of the extremely nasty German remark.

³He sent the manuscript to Stefan Zweig, who was then in exile in London. Zweig advised Robert to wait fifty years with its publication, and in 1988, Robert's book Nacht über Wien was published in Vienna.

the Nazis, now appeared with swastika arm bands and were greeted with lifted right hands and loud cries of "*Heil Polizei*"...(Robert, Nacht über Wien, p.31-32)

For days Vienna didn't emerge from the frenzy. The masses appeared to be psychotic...I could pretty well observe what was happening in the city. There were hardly any people without a pin. Only the foreigners and the "*Herren Israeliten*" remained without a visible sign. Soon the foreigners began to wear their own emblems--and finally the person who was walking through the streets without a sign was immediately "marked" a Jew. Sunday morning, when two Nazis bickered with me, "See to it that you go to Palestine!", I realized that suddenly I had become an outcast, a parasite, and a third class human being. The same thing at the next corner; a well dressed gentleman disdainfully turned around and called after me, "Jew!" Slowly one had to get used to living in one's own birthplace and hometown as an outcast, and being helplessly exposed to terror. (Robert, Nacht über Wien, p.43-44)⁴

The hysteria Robert described⁵ made all Viennese Jews at once a target for discrimination. "How many thousands of lives showed a striking resemblance all of a sudden! How suddenly were all differences eliminated between poor and rich, high and low..." (Nacht über Wien, p.48). "When

⁴All subsequent quotes from Nacht über Wien are my translations from the German.

⁵Looking back in 1994, Robert says, "Who was to blame? The loudspeaker. That was suddenly the power. Loudspeakers were installed on top of all the lampposts. Every maid, every worker, everybody listened, 'The *Führer* comes. Everybody to the Ringstrasse!' These were orders" (Robert, p.26).

Hitler came...",⁶ the sheltered lives, even of the most established Viennese Jews, fell apart. "From one day to the next" (Hilde, p.5), they were singled out and stigmatized as Jewish. "Neighbors, different people you knew and with whom you had grown up, looked at you differently" (Liliane, p.15), and "all of a sudden, the best friends and acquaintances were enemies" (Stella, p.11). Beatrice recalls her father's secretary,

His secretary couldn't write German properly. My mother insisted, "Why don't you fire her?" and he said, "How can I fire her, nobody would hire her." She didn't know the difference between *dem* and *den*. Whatever. And she denounced him, it turned out she was a Nazi. And denounced him... (Beatrice, p. 11)

The benches in the city were marked, and in movie theaters there were separate seats for Jews and non-Jews. (Carola, p.15) Jewish students were separated from non-Jews. "...immediately, after you had been together with all your schoolmates, you couldn't talk to them, you had to sit on separate benches," as it happened to Hilde (p.5), or you had to attend separate schools as it was the case for Georg and Liliane.

They immediately threw me out of school... Within two weeks one was destroyed. Morally...It was the

⁶This is the phrase (with few variations such as "When Hitler marched in" or "First day after Hitler"), the study participants almost universally use to depict the moment when the National Socialists assumed power in Austria, and a wave of persecution set in.

greatest shock that one could inflict on a young person. (Liliane, p.12)

Ann's father immediately lost his job. "The owners closed the business. They had transferred all their money to Switzerland and America and they closed" (Ann, p.8). Robert, too, was immediately out of work since the newspapers he had written for stopped publishing. And Marthe lost her job at the hospital a few weeks into the new regime only because the administrators weren't sure whether the Nuremberg Laws applied to her (p.7).⁷

Yet, for some study participants, the dread unleashed by the events following March 11, 1938, went beyond mere discrimination.

When Hitler marched in...they got people to wash the floor and the street. It wasn't safe for you to go out, they would stop you and make you wash the floor, or anything. Really horrible. (Beatrice, p.10)

While Robert was visiting with relatives, SA-men⁸ raided his apartment in search for him. A few days later, SA-men picked him up at a bus stop to clean up a SA-camp in the Inner City. "What was better: stay at home or go out on the

⁷Jewish doctors were asked to not return to their jobs the day following the *Anschluss*.

⁸SA, *Sturmabteilung*, (storm troopers or Brownshirts), were the strong-arm men who, together with the SS, *Schutzstaffel*, (Blackshirts), comprised the para-military arm of the Nazi movement.

street? One wasn't safe, neither here nor there" (Robert, Nacht über Wien, p.54). Leo, too, was arrested on the street while with his Polish girlfriend. The perpetrators, members of the Austrian Legion,⁹ made him paint the ceiling of an abandoned factory building in a rundown industrial neighborhood at the outskirts of Vienna.

Through a little window I saw a twig with leaves in the wind. And all the time I was thinking that'll be the last time I see a tree. This was my continuous thought, but I painted as if I didn't care. (Leo, p.13)

Carola's father was arrested twice because, as a Jew, he had refused to wear a swastika, and only with difficulty was Carola able to have him released from prison. (p.6)

Beatrice, too, had to intervene on behalf of her father who was in jail after his secretary's denouncement that he was preparing to leave the country. "At first they wanted all the Jews to leave, but then they said that there's danger that they are leaving...You never knew, it was such a cat and mouse situation" (p.11). Georg's father's run-in with the SA and SS at least was prompted by "illegal" behavior. The family's apartment had been used as a gathering place

⁹The Austrian Legion refers to the Austrian Nazis who, after being declared illegal during the *Ständestaat*, had survived in Germany, and had now returned to Austria pursuing their goals with a vengeance.

for a group of people listening to foreign radio stations.¹⁰

I.1. PREPARING TO LEAVE.

Life in Austria which, after the *Anschluss*, now was called the *Ostmark*, became increasingly insupportable. "We slowly began to get used to the unimaginable: Where should we emigrate?" (Robert, Nacht über Wien, p.48)¹¹ However, it was the exception that people could choose their country of asylum freely. The surrounding European countries had

¹⁰Fortunately, when the radio was taken away, the trunk the family had been packing all week in preparation for their illegal emigration, was not noticed. (Georg, p.9)

¹¹The study participants show a wide variety in their readiness to leave Austria: Marie, for example, applied for an American visa the day following the *Anschluss*, (p.2), in contrast to Marthe, who, after having lost her job in the hospital, thought that everything would be over in two years. "In the meantime I'll just have my own practice as a doctor" (p.7). Similarly, Erich said, "When I was in school in Vienna--that was already in 1938--I never thought that I had to leave, nor that I should or wanted" (p.14). For Andreas, who was of mixed Christian and Jewish background, it was the experience of *Kristallnacht*, November 1938, which convinced him that he, too, was threatened. In retrospect, Gaby's story is especially ironic. In April, 1938, she and her parents went on an "exploratory trip" through the United States where they wanted "to take a look." As law-abiding citizens they returned to Germany in order to seek an orderly emigration which, unfortunately, also meant the experience of *Kristallnacht* for Gaby's parents (p.12).--However, the fact that some of the study participants stayed long enough to experience *Kristallnacht* is usually not so much founded in their naive judgement of the fascist regime, but rather in the enormous bureaucratic hurdles that took months to overcome.

closed their borders, and besides, as Kaspar pointed out, a look at the map showed that no country in Europe would be able to guarantee safety from Hitler (From Vienna to New York, p.11). Other countries enacted strict immigration regulations. Thus, with the decision to emigrate, an odyssey began that had to navigate through complicated bureaucratic terrain. People pondered possible destinations while they wandered from consulate to consulate, following a trail of rumored information about the availability of visas.

I believe, after the *Anschluss* the Viennese Jews learnt more about geography than during school. No country on earth wasn't considered: Haiti, Honduras, Australia...And how about Panama? Uruguay is said to be possible, too. And Kenya. A little hot, though, but better than Vienna. (Robert, Nacht über Wien, p.64)

For many, the United States was the most obvious location. Based on legislation from 1921, 1924, and 1929, legal immigration to the U.S. was organized by a quota system which assigned different quotas to different countries. The country of birth determined the quota relevant for one's case.¹²

In order to come to America, it was important where you were born. There existed a quota. If there were still open quotas, one could come. After the *Anschluss*, Austria and Germany together had one large quota. Therefore I could leave. My

¹²For more see Dokumentationsarchiv des österreichischen Widerstandes, DÖW, Vol.1 (1995, p.30).

father was born in Poland which had a very bad quota. He couldn't leave. He was killed by the Nazis. (Erna, p.1)¹³

People had to register with the American consulate for their quota number and fill out a questionnaire. In addition to other required documents such as the passport, birth certificate, marriage certificate, police clearance, and an ocean liner ticket, U.S. immigration required an affidavit of support assuring that the refugee would not be a burden to the American public.¹⁴ For those who didn't have connections to an American citizen, the affidavit meant another hurdle. Kaspar was not alone when he searched the New York telephone book at Vienna's Chamber of Commerce for

¹³The U.S. immigration policy was the most liberal between March 1938 and September 1939, and the combined quota for Germany and Austria was used up fully. When World War II broke out, the U.S. State Department established a *Special War Problems Division* led by Breckenridge Long, which also handled visa matters. In accordance with public opinion, Breckenridge Long set into place the increasingly restrictive visa policy of the State Department. Due to this policy, the quotas for Germany and Austria combined ceased being fully used up and decreased each year through 1942: 1940-95.3%; 1941-47.7%; and 1942-17.4% (DöW, Vol.1, 1995, p.31).

¹⁴The consul had a lot of leeway in interpreting the regulations. Eppel points out that many decisions were characterized by "the misunderstanding of the European situation, isolationist xenophobia, bureaucratic ambitions, and open anti-Semitism" (in DöW, 1995, Vol.1, p.33). The people involved were not free of corruption either. For example, the quotas of Stella and her brother were sold, and they had to register again. They left with the last train out of Vienna, only to be stranded in France because the war had just broken out.--Stella's parents' visas were delayed because her mother, "a highly intelligent business woman," failed a test. Her parents died in a concentration camp. (Stella, p.6-7)

his namesakes.¹⁵

I wrote to all of them. "You are my last hope. I won't be a burden to you...", and I asked for the affidavit of support which was necessary for the American visa. (Kaspar, From Vienna to New York, p.11)¹⁶

The Nazi regime added its own bureaucratic requirements for leaving the country. Particularly malicious was the "*Steuerliche Unbedenklichkeitsbescheinigung*", a document which involved several municipal offices certifying that one didn't owe taxes and that there were no outstanding bills. In order to receive it "one had to go to the former Rothschild palace which used to be owned by the Jewish Baron Rothschild...There of all places, the Gestapo had put up its office. And there one had to stand in line..." (Marie, p.10). Leo, whose father almost couldn't get his "*Steuerliche Unbedenklichkeitsbescheinigung*" in time because

¹⁵Erna, for example, used an address book at the American consulate and wrote to people with the same last name. "I never claimed that I was a relative. I told them my life story. And I received an affidavit from strangers and that allowed me to come to the U.S. in 1939" (Erna, p.1). Leo, too, remembers a friend who received an affidavit following the same strategy. See also Robert's description in Nacht über Wien (p.64-65).

¹⁶There were three answers to his pledge--one from a postal worker from Newark who had less money than Kaspar himself, another from the personnel manager of a big New York hotel, and the last from a millionaire who, in the affidavit, answered the question concerning his profession matter-of-factly, "I am a capitalist" (Kaspar, From Vienna to New York).

of one Government official who wished to harm him, recalls,

The most important paper, it decided between life and death...In order to get it, one had to have this and that paper which, however, was valid for only one week. One was waiting day and night in front of an office and one was beaten. When one finally got the second paper, the first wasn't valid anymore. They continuously set up these deadfalls. (Leo, p.16)

The necessity of the "*Steuerliche Unbedenklichkeitsbescheinigung*" caused many nerve-racking, if not fatal, delays, and added more chicaneries and humiliations to an already tense life.

...then they would come, "You owe taxes", and they would come for instance and said they had to auction off our furniture because we owed taxes. And they got an auctioneer, you had to sell off your furniture, for a dollar or something, the whole dining room, or whatever, and we used to have some very nice, a library with glass doors and all very nice, so we had a friend who was an Aryan, and we gave him some money so that he should buy the furniture back. So naturally these people paid, and they brought some people who would offer him a dollar for the whole or something, but our man would offer ten dollars, so he was able to buy the furniture back for us. So far so good. But then this Commissar came two weeks later, and he said, "How come the furniture is here?" because he thought that this guy had bought it. Then you didn't know what to do because you couldn't get this guy into difficulties, I mean we felt the poor guy he was good to you, he tried to help, so you didn't know now what to do with the furniture, where to put it, because when the Commissar would come again and see it in four weeks he would arrest him for, you know and say that he was with us. I mean all these things was really not so bad but it was unbelievable what they could do to you while you were still there, and while you knew you had to leave, and you tried to get a passport and everything, on the one hand, and on the other

hand they made it so impossible for you to really get this from the income tax, to get the okay from them that you were cleared and you could leave. It's unbelievable. You really don't feel at home there anymore... (Beatrice, p.12)

The bureaucratic maze made "waiting in line" a full time occupation that filled out the days in the months following the *Anschluss*, until one finally possessed all the documents needed for a legal emigration.¹⁷ "You were so busy, you couldn't meet anybody or anything, because all you did was running around with things" (Beatrice, p.8). The "long lines" appear as a theme in almost all the stories told here. "There were terribly long lines...And as far as I remember, I was then standing from seven in the morning until late in the evening" (Liliane, p.12). One was exposed and at the mercy of the new rulers while in line. Robert describes,

About fifty people were wandering on the

¹⁷Some chose illegal emigration:

Georg's family was helped by an international socialist network through Switzerland, France, and Spain before they reached the United States.

Kaspar and his bride, who had boat tickets from Antwerp to New York, but whose French and Belgium visas had been denied, were aided by Kaspar's connections as a Freemason.

In contrast, Leo and his brother's attempt did not succeed. Following a rumor, they travelled to Cologne where in a Jewish coffeeshop they contacted the Gestapo. For money, the Gestapo drove the brothers through the *Siegfried Wall*, the German fortification at the Western front, and dropped them off at the Dutch border. Here, they were turned back by Dutch border guards. The brothers returned to Vienna one week before *Kristallnacht*.

pavement. One was not allowed to stand in line before 7.00 AM. At exactly 7.00 AM the waiting people formed a line. At 7.30 AM a police officer emerged from the house and sized everybody up with a stern expression: "Did you cause a lot of riots again--what? We are going to show you!" He made sure that one stood rigidly on the sidewalk--silent and motionless." (Robert, Nacht über Wien, p.67)

And standing in line was used in a discriminatory way as, for example, experienced by Marthe,

Nobody thought that I was Jewish. Once it was even awkward when I was standing in line for my passport. Somebody immediately picked me out of the line and called me to the front. I didn't know why. When he noticed that I was thought to be Jewish, I had to stand in line again. (Marthe, p.28)

"Our lives consisted of waiting, hoping, worrying, despairing" (Robert, Nacht über Wien, p.68). In the meantime, to prepare for emigration, training courses in all kinds of practical matters enjoyed great popularity. Andreas remembers,

...after the *Matura*¹⁸ and between standing in line for a visa etc., I was an apprentice in machine fitting, and I began to study welding in an evening course. (Andreas, p.14)

Nothing appeared to be too far fetched. "People learnt

¹⁸*Matura* is a diploma, granted after nine years of *Gymnasium* and is the requirement for university studies.

simply everything." For a couple of weeks, Robert's kitchen became the place for baking and confectionery classes (Robert, Nacht über Wien, p.102-103). Kaspar's bride, who had the *Matura*, visited a school for hairdressing and privately studied arts and crafts. Kaspar's friend, a lawyer like himself, learned skills regarding orthopedic devices for feet (Kaspar, From Vienna to New York, p.15).¹⁹

However, as much as one made use of the time while one was waiting, it was not safe. The Nazi regime's grip on Jewish life increasingly tightened and threatened to strangle it altogether. *Kristallnacht*, in November 1938, unleashed a new wave of terror and destruction. "It was horrible what happened then. When you lived through that, the *Kristallnacht*...God, one was terrified" (Stella, p.11). Half of the study participants had to live through the experience, yet most of their recollections are void of a detailed reference to the event, with the exception of Nora, who recalls that all Jewish families in her building were deported,²⁰ and Leo, who, with his brother and father, was arrested and tortured for days. "We went through the whole

¹⁹Besides practical skills people learned languages. Most who had gone to the *Gymnasium* had studied Latin and French. Now Spanish and English were in great demand and teachers difficult to find.

²⁰She attributes the fact that she and her family were spared to her beautiful baby daughter she was holding in her arms when the SS-officers knocked at her door (Nora, p.3).

shit. It was terrible...It was pure horror. And there were many cases when surviving was a mere accident" (Leo, p.13).²¹

With the beginning of World War II in the fall of 1939, legal emigration came to a virtual standstill, and was stopped altogether by Himmler's decree in October 1941.

²¹Leo's recollection of the experience repeatedly points out what he calls the "Nazi humor": the grotesque situations when suddenly the beatings were interrupted for a cigarette break, or a sandwich, or, questions of concerned SS-doctors as to whether one was feeling all right (Leo, p.14).

CHAPTER 6

A LAST LOOK

There I was, alone with these empty walls--a last look at the rooms which had been my home for almost thirty years. Then a last look down at the Graben which evoked so many memories: the Emperor's funeral, the workers' uprisings in 1918, the processions, and at last the National Socialist "revolution"...The home was lost. A world--childhood, youth--had perished...

Robert Breuer (1988, p.106)

INTRODUCTION

The émigrés set out on a journey that for some would last many years, with sojourns in different countries, before they finally settled in New York City. (see Table 2) Marie, Marthe and Clementine "were the Mayflower of the Hitler refugees," as Marie put it, arriving in the U.S.A. in 1938 "before *Kristallnacht*" (Marie, p.3). Most of the study participants (Erna, Kaspar, Andreas, Leo, Gaby, Stella), however, came in 1939 via France and Britain. Immigration to the United States became difficult when the war broke out, and many refugees found themselves trapped in the warring countries. Also, by then the Atlantic crossing had become dangerous because of German torpedo attacks. Still, two study participants (Georg and Robert) arrived in 1940

Table 2.THE JOURNEY TO THE U.S.A.I. The émigrés who came to the U.S.A. directly:

Clementine	(1938)
Marthe	(1938)
Marie	(1938)
Gaby	(1939)
Andreas	(1939)
Kaspar	(1939)
Erna	(1939)
Stella	(1939)
Leo	(1939)

II. The émigrés who came to the U.S.A. indirectly:II.1. Before the end of the war:

Robert	(1940, via Britain)
Georg	(1940, via France)
Hilde*	(1941, via Britain, and France)

II.2. After the war:

Beatrice	(1947, via Britain)
Nora*	(1950, via Italy, Hungary, Poland, and Italy)
Ann	(1951, via Shanghai, and Austria)
Erich	(1952, via Switzerland, and Britain)
Carola*	(1956, via Yugoslavia, and Canada)
Liliane	(1959, via Lithuania, Russia, and Germany)

* Those who spent time in a concentration camp.

after a stay France and England, respectively, and Hilde arrived in 1941 after she had first emigrated to Great Britain later moved to France. Immigration to the U.S. came to a virtual standstill after the United States entered the war in late 1941. Beatrice was the first of the study participants to come to the U.S. (1947) as soon as immigration resumed after the war, followed by Nora (1950), Ann (1951), Erich (1952), Carola (1956) and Lilliane who arrived as late as 1959.

What might look like a superficial distinction--the arrival year in the U.S. as an organizing principle--carries, however, important implications. Although the United States periodically passed anti-immigration laws and set restrictions, nevertheless immigration to America was, until 1939, a relatively easy, straightforward enterprise. But with the beginning of World War II, immigration policies tightened dramatically or were suspended altogether, threatening the lives of those who had not reached a safe place by then. And in 1942, the Nazi regime began to enact the Final Solution.¹ Thus, a discrepancy of experience hides behind those years of arrival, ranging from a direct and uneventful Atlantic crossing to a nightmarish journey

¹In October 1941, all emigration from Austria was prohibited after the National Socialist leadership decided to extinguish the Jews. The last group of émigrés left Vienna on November 2, 1941 (DöW, Vol.1, 1995, p.8).

which subjected those refugees to political forces that left them stranded for years. The attempt to forge out of this diversity some kind of a collective story, therefore, encounters formidable problems. Each individual story possesses its own set of circumstances, choices, dramas, and solutions. The search for commonality would require one to extrapolate from the particulars which, in this case, I am afraid, will strip these recollections of the journey of their meaning. That is why the presentation here preserves to a large degree the integrity of each émigré's story--having a beginning and an end, as it was narrated in the interviews. Still, from the individual narratives, themes emerged which I have categorized as THE DIRECT PATH, DETOURS, and STRANDED.² These categories also describe the degree of disrupture that the journey provoked in the émigré's life.

It must be noted that despite the uniqueness of each journey, there is one experience shared by all study participants: separation. Leo describes,

Our parents weren't yet finished with their papers. My brother and I wanted to wait...We had a very decent American consul who had the affidavits for the whole family. He said, "The boys are ready. Mr. and Mrs. Glückselig, get them

²These categories only make sense in retrospect. They do not mean to convey the idea that all exiles had New York City as the final destination. To the contrary, their new homes were often the result of chance and the vicissitudes of war.

out! They are the most threatened ones. You do not wait one day. Whoever is done should go. I'll split the affidavit for you."--which was an unbelievable favor. We didn't want to go, but our parents insisted. And there was a logic in that. (Leo, p.10)

Separation could become a question of survival. At times it required a choice too inhuman and too hard for some to make. Andreas relates the story of his mother. An old friend of hers and his wife, who were both Jewish, had visas for Australia. When the wife suddenly died, the friend offered to marry Andreas's mother so that, in place of his first wife, she could leave Austria. Andreas recalls the conversation with his mother urging her to seize that opportunity.

I told her, "At once! He is a nice guy. He is not going to beat you. It will be alright. At once..."--"But how can I do that? I can't leave my sister."--"I don't know, she must help herself. But see that you get out. If possible, one of you. When you get out, perhaps one can help her."--"I can't leave Frieda!" So, both died. (Andreas, p.25)³

The experience of exile pulled families apart, often for years to come, and some never united again. Half of the study participants lost one or both parents. The narratives

³Stella's parents were confronted with the same alternative. Her mother's visa had been postponed for six months after she had failed a test at the American consulate. "My father did not want to leave her alone, so he stayed with her. They were both put into a concentration camp. And that was that. And the rest of the family, uncles and aunts, everyone's gone" (Stella, p.7).

of the study participants reflect the experience differently. In some narratives, separation and unification is the organizing thread of the story. In others, separation and loss is mentioned as a footnote only, dryly and matter-of-factly. "The parents stayed behind. They died in Auschwitz" (Kaspar, From Vienna to New York, p.14).

I. THE DIRECT PATH.

It was a combination of foresight, connections, and financial resources, but also of ingenuity and luck that proved to be decisive for a speedy and safe journey to America. And, if necessary, one also had to be willing to "bend the law."⁴

Kaspar's journey represents a fine example illustrating how several of these factors worked to his advantage. He left Vienna with his bride, possessing American visas, but both having been refused French visas. He remembers,

I had heard of a French smuggler who was living close to the German border, and who would bring us to Paris. In Saarlautern, while we were sitting on a bench in a park, we were approached by a lady who had already noticed us the day before. She told us to seek advice from the local rabbi. We went to him, and he recommended that we cross the border just like a French couple very much in love. I should wear a beret, and my bride should carry a totebag showing some food.
(Kaspar, From Vienna to New York, p.12)

At night they crossed the border and found the isolated house of the smuggler, who drove them to Paris the next day.

⁴For example, Andreas who emigrated from France to Chicago where relatives had given him the affidavit. "I had a visa for two weeks to visit my sick aunt in Paris. It was true that I had an aunt in Paris. That she was sick was not true, and that I would return after two weeks, wasn't true either" (Andreas, p.24).

We were carrying our boat tickets, Antwerp-New York, which we had bought in Vienna. Paris was full of refugees. I was greeted by my sister and her husband who had come to Paris legally a little earlier. Refugees had to report to the police, and most of them were sent away to the provinces. I took advantage of my connections as a Freemason. The chief of the immigration police, himself a Freemason, allowed us to stay in Paris while we waited for our American visa. (Kaspar, From Vienna to New York, p.13)

Finally the visa was granted in February, 1939. They still needed the Belgian visa which allowed them to travel through Belgium to Antwerp, and which was usually not granted to refugees. An employee at the Belgian legation, also a Freemason, helped, and within ten minutes he issued the visa.

In general, however, the journey to America itself doesn't figure prominently in the recollections of those who came before and in 1939. After one had gone through the drama of getting all the necessary documents, the anxiety concentrated on that moment of crossing the Austrian border.

Finally, we had everything, and we drove to the station. And there comes this concentrated fear-- will we still make it across the border? You never knew what could happen with the Gestapo. Even if you had all the papers and you felt so secure, things still happened. And we watched such incidents... (Leo, p.9)

After the border, the journey became for many an uneventful and straightforward matter, many times not even

talked about.⁵

One exception was Marthe, whose recollection of her journey touches on a sense of danger. Marthe's father, who was living in Palestine, had written on behalf of his daughter to Adolf Meyer, the founder of the Mental Hygiene movement and a professor of psychiatry at the Phipps Clinic at the Johns Hopkins University.⁶ Meyer offered Marthe a job.

⁵The "dramas" pertaining to the journey which are related here exhibit a more anecdotal and humorous quality. Kaspar reports: It was customary that the passengers came up with their own program to entertain themselves during the long crossing of the Atlantic Ocean. Kaspar participated with a demonstration of his hypnotic talents which were quite impressive, as he knew, from earlier presentations at parties in Vienna. A young man in the audience volunteered. "Everything moved according to plan, when all of a sudden a penetrating scream from the audience interrupted my performance. The horrified mother of my young subject was observing her son at the total mercy of the hypnotist. I was deeply concerned. After all, I was responsible for the welfare of the young man, and I knew that a shock resulting from the scream could petrify the man's state of trance." Kaspar's worst fears didn't come true, and he could safely lead the young man back to consciousness. "Since then, however, I have never displayed publicly my hypnotic act" (Kaspar, From Vienna to New York, p.13-14).

Marie's "drama" occurred when she was not allowed to go on land in New York City. During the journey she had moved into the beautiful first class cabin of her fiancé and was now accused of "moral turpitude." She needed some hours to convince the authorities "that I was only a fool. Then they said to me, 'Come right in, we have 220 million idiots in this country, you'll fit in very well'" (Marie, p.35-36).

⁶For a while, Marthe's father had been the president of the Austrian/Viennese section of that movement.

My father wished to see me and wanted me to first come to Palestine where I could wait for my American visa...My father lived in Tel Aviv. I had to go to the consulate three times [which was located in the Arab section of Jerusalem]. It was already very dangerous then. One had to take a taxi. There were land mines all over. The buses used to explode all the time. Somehow, the taxis could drive through the mines...I was so white and blond. The Arabs were crazy about that...to cut a long story short, nothing happened. I survived everything. I boarded a boat to Paris in Haifa, stayed for 1-2 days in Paris because I had friends there, and then I came across the ocean with the Holland-American Line. (Marthe, p.9-10)

And Stella, who was caught in the onset of the war, relates the fear and the stress she experienced.

I left with my brother in August, 1939. It was the last train to Paris, and then the war broke out. No money--we had left with 10 Marks--and our passports were taken away. One was an enemy alien...We were stuck in Paris because we were enemy aliens. We stayed there for 14 days. That was a catastrophe. (Stella, p.6)

A man from a refugee organization arranged for them to receive a transit visa to get to the Channel at Cherbourg, from where they left for Southampton. In Southampton they boarded a boat, painted grey, and set out to cross the Atlantic Ocean, a dangerous enterprise since by then the Germans had begun to torpedo Allied boats.

II. DETOURS.

Britain and France were common exile destinations for many Hitler refugees.⁷ Robert, Erich, and Beatrice are those among the study participants who stayed in Britain before they came to the United States. Georg and his family sojourned in France, whereas Hilde spent some time in both countries.

Robert, whose first attempt to leave Austria failed at the Danish border where he was sent back, followed his mother. He spent 18 months in Birmingham, England, where people were already experiencing "a full blown war--many goods were rationed," before he came to New York on April 1, 1940 (Robert, p.2). Like many men exiled in Britain who usually didn't receive a work permit, Robert wasn't allowed to work. Instead, he wrote a few articles about his impressions of English life for Swiss newspapers, and, for a Birmingham paper, he wrote a couple of articles about his

⁷In Europe, France took in most of the refugees with 150,000 German-speaking émigrés living there temporarily between 1933-1940, among them 10,000 Austrians after 1938. Most of them stayed only a short period before they moved to the United States. The fate of the refugees in France represented a special phenomenon: The same people who had fled from National Socialism had to flee again in 1940, after France's partial occupation, and again in 1942, after France became fully occupied. (For more on this double persecution, see Fabian, Coulmas (1978) Die deutsche Emigration in Frankreich nach 1933. Also, Editions Alinéa (1984) Les Camps en Provence. Exil, Internment, Déportation 1933-1944.)

experiences in Vienna after the *Anschluss*, thus adding to the local understanding of the refugee problem on the continent.⁸

Refugee women usually found work in the house. Beatrice, who left Vienna in March 1939, remembers,

...the only permit they would give you was if you work in a household as a maid or cook or something. And finally I got such a permit in London, to go to London. This I did, and after two days the lady broke down in tears. I mean for me it was bad. I couldn't do it. You weren't used to it. You had to light a fire, there are these open fireplaces, you don't know how to light a fire so that it properly starts. And then you have to make a nice cup of tea and serve it in the bedroom, and meanwhile the fire didn't work. And I didn't know how to make porridge. I didn't know what it was. To make bacon and eggs, porridge, they wanted to have breakfast. Nothing was ready. Anyway the lady broke down in tears and said, "It's easier to give money to a good cause than to see an unhappy refugee in your house." And I could understand. (Beatrice, p.6)

Beatrice was fired. She then joined her brother in Manchester, a doctor, who had come on a student visa. Beatrice found a job in a factory. "I changed my permit to work in a factory and it was better. I couldn't make any money either, at least you felt better about it" (Beatrice, p.7).

Her brother left England for New York before the war.

⁸In fact, his reporting led to job offers in Birmingham and visas for some Viennese Jews and thus saved their lives.

Beatrice, however, spent the war years in England.

We had air raids, so we knew exactly when we came from work to get to the shelter, and I knew exactly, it's a certain feeling if you didn't experience it you don't have it, you know what it meant to have planes overhead, and they dropped flares, and how it feels...all the air raids we had, every house was damaged. It was really something to go through the war. (Beatrice, p.19)

Erich came to England in 1939 after a one year sojourn in Switzerland.⁹ "And then I was in England for 15 years of which I spent 6 years in the British army" (Erich, p.6). He became a British citizen and worked as a draftsman in a publishing company. "Before the war we designed movie posters, and then I joined the army, and afterwards I worked again in a publishing company" (Erich, p.6).

It was because of his parents and his sister who had spent the war years in Santa Domingo and were now living in New York, that Erich and his wife, an émigré he had married in London, moved to the U.S. in 1953. "And so I came to America" (Erich, p.7).

⁹To leave after the *Anschluss*, Erich joined a theater and cabaret group that was performing in Switzerland. He got a contract as a master of ceremonies and *Schnellzeichner* [caricaturist] which needed to be renewed every two weeks. When the group left for Holland Erich stayed in Switzerland. However, the restrictive Swiss immigration policy made it difficult for Erich to claim refugee status, and only with the help of a lawyer did he receive a temporary residence permit. For one year he lived in Lucerne--"I met many people there, it was good"--until his sister was able to get him a permit for England (Erich, p.7).

Hilde came to England by way of the "Children's or Young People's Transport" early in the year of 1939.¹⁰ She got a job as a governess, "but they made me do maid's work" (Hilde, p.2).

Not long before Hitler assumed power in Austria, Hilde had met her future husband, Henry, in the standing room of the opera. They were engaged by the time they knew they had to leave. She was now longing to see him. In her own words,

My fiancé who had gone to France to his parents, and all I wanted was to be reunited with him. So I left England at Easter vacation. I said, "I have Easter vacation. I want to go to France." And I found out that if you don't apply for a return visa you can't go back to England anymore. When I found that out I didn't apply, so they would not be able to get me back there. But the sad thing was, and you know, when you are going through emigration you take your most precious things with you if you can, and you have to be selective. And I left my best clothes, whatever there was I was fond of. And I had to leave it there because I did not want them to know that I was not coming back. And I was reunited with my fiancé, and I stayed with his parents very properly, not with him...And we had the most romantic time in our lives in Paris. But for just a few months because, that was in April, and by September the war broke out in Europe. And then it was very dangerous. We had to flee from Paris, and I had very wealthy relatives who took me to Vichy. But Henry decided to enlist in the Foreign

¹⁰The "World Movement for the Care of Children from Germany" which included Austria, and which was managed in Austria by the *Israelitische Kultusgemeinde*, was the response of the British people to the terrors of *Kristallnacht*. The first transport of 320 children arrived in Harwich on December 2, 1938. Until the war broke out, 9,354 children and young people came to Britain, among them were 7,482 Jewish children and young people. (For more, see Gershon, 1988, and Bader Whiteman, 1993)

Legion, because he was a foreigner, and all the foreigners were put into camps, and he didn't want that. So he enlisted in the Foreign Legion rather than going to a labor camp. I was in a lot of luxury in Vichy, in a hotel with my father's relatives, and I was the most unhappy person because my future parents-in-law went all the way down to Nice where most of the refugees went who had to leave Paris. I told my relatives, "I cannot eat a bite here and know that they are living that way. I want to join them. I don't care for all that." And they reluctantly let me go...And of course what happened was, we were sent to a camp. And I was sent to Gurs, a camp for foreigners, you know, with the whole story when you were transported in trucks and people on the road, mixed in with the Germans, the Nazi Germans, and they threw stones at us and rocks and treated us like the enemy that we had escaped from. The irony of this craziness of this world. And I stayed for two months in Gurs, the usual, sleeping on straw mattresses in big bunkers and surrounded by guards...--Anyway, my father's relatives from Vichy found out. I wrote to them where I was. And they were able to get me out. "You see. If you would have stayed with us." I said, "Well, I was with my mother-in-law. I was glad I could help her overcome this terrible period." "But now you got to go. Now you can't wait any longer. You gotta go to America."--They got me the tickets, and I had to leave...But before I left, I was able to get my future husband out of the Foreign Legion. In Marseille I went to the general, and I told him my story, and he was so impressed that he said, "Love like this has to be rewarded," and he got him out. And we were united once more... (Hilde, p.2-4)

Hilde left in June, 1941, and again met her parents who had gone ahead of her to America. Henry followed in September with his brother and his parents, and they got married in November, 1941, a month before Pearl Harbor and America's entrance into the war.

Georg's detour took him to France where he and his

family stayed for two years.

He was thirteen years old when he and his parents left Austria illegally in October, 1938. Under the protection of darkness, always on the brink of being caught, often mastering situations by guile and simple luck, a socialist underground network channelled them through Germany and Switzerland to France, where, in Paris, they found an active Austrian socialist émigrés community. The family was supported by the *Mateotti Komitee*.¹¹

My parents couldn't work. My mother took all kinds of jobs. I went to school. French was very difficult. In Paris, there existed a foreign branch of the Austrian Party. There was a children and youth group with weekly meetings. We then became true young socialists. We sang the songs and we discussed. (Georg, p.10)

When in the summer of 1939 the war broke out, Georg's father was put into an internment camp for enemy aliens. "Though he wanted to win the war against Hitler Germany as the other allies, he was treated as a Hitler supporter. The internment camp was not as bad as the concentration camp, but bad enough--slough, dirt, disease" (Georg, p.11).

The mother stayed in Paris, and Georg was sent to a youth home for refugees in the vicinity of Paris. The home "was led by Ernst Papanek. It was a nice gathering...We could

¹¹Named after the Italian socialist leader who was killed by the fascists, this committee was led by the prominent Austrian socialist leaders Friedrich Adler, Julius Deutsch, Hans Seiler, Otto Pollak, and Manfred Ackermann.

participate in the decision making. They taught us democratic behavior in groups" (Georg, p.11).¹²

In the meantime, the family received the affidavit of support to go to America, and, again, the socialist network had helped: The affidavit was provided by Josef Buttinger, the former leader of the illegal socialist movement in Austria in the years between 1934 and 1938 who was married to Mary Gardiner, a wealthy American.¹³ But Georg's father was still in the camp.

When the German army closed in on Paris, the *Komitee* decided that the circle of Austrian socialists should move to the unoccupied South of France to Montaubon near Toulouse.

¹²Ernst Papanek, a follower of Alfred Adler's ideas of progressive education, was later active in New York City's youth welfare system where he was in charge of several homes for juvenile delinquents.

¹³Mary Gardiner Buttinger cared for a number of political refugees. A wealthy woman from Chicago, she had moved to Vienna in the Thirties and became involved with the Social Democratic movement, helping many Social Democrats after that party became illegal. She published her story in 1983 under the title Code Name "Mary". Memoirs of an American Woman in the Austrian Underground. Her story was also the subject of a Hollywood movie--"Julia"--with Vanessa Redgrave and Jane Fonda in the leading roles (Georg, p.11). See also, Gardiner, M., & Buttinger, J. (1978). Damit wir nicht vergessen. Unsere Jahre 1934-1947 in Wien, Paris und New York. Vienna: Verlag der Wiener Volksbuchhandlung.

And outside of the town there was a column which looked just like the *Spinnerin am Kreuz* at the outskirts of Vienna. Every afternoon, in Montauban, my mother went there. She believed that she would find my father there. That he would come down that road. And we always said to her, "What are you doing there for three hours? This is unnecessary." (Georg, p.12)

A month went by before Georg's father joined them again,¹⁴ and after two years in France the family now continued its journey to America. They travelled through Spain where a small Jewish congregation helped them with money and clothes, to get to Portugal. In Lisbon, they took a Greek boat that brought them to America.¹⁵ "On that boat there was an Austrian group which we knew earlier...and we sang our songs again. And that's how we came here" (Georg, p.13).

¹⁴After his camp had dissolved, he had followed the rumor that Austrian socialists were in Montauban. And, indeed, he came down that country road passing the column, but that very day the mother was not waiting.

¹⁵In the Lisbon harbor, they met again with Otto Pollak, one of the leaders of the *Komitee*, and the former editor in chief of the Arbeiterzeitung in Vienna, the official organ of the Social Democratic Party. He and his wife were on their way to Britain. After the war and his return to Vienna, Otto Pollak continued being editor in chief of the Arbeiterzeitung.

III. STRANDED.

"America had its doors closed tightly..." (Liliane, p.4)
to those lacking the connections or the financial resources.

Naturally there were people who received the visa
and were allowed to immigrate, but that was not
meant for the masses. (Liliane, p.4)

The study participants (Liliane, Ann, Carola, and Nora),
who did not receive an American visa ran a much larger risk
of finding themselves entangled in the unleashed forces of
World War II. Forced to look for ways to escape from Nazism
under the condition of extremely limited choices, and lucky
to get out at all, they went wherever circumstances allowed
them to go. All stories of those caught in the tightening
grip of Nazism and the turbulences of the war are, in every
facet, idiosyncratic, but share the recounting of numerous
life threatening events of dramatic survival. And, not
surprisingly, they assume center stage in the narrative of
the individual life story.

It was Liliane, still a teenager, who soon after the
Anschluss visited the Lithuanian consulate and inquired
about visas for herself and her parents.¹⁶ The consul

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¹⁶Liliane knew the consul from a visit to the consulate a few
years previously when she helped a Lithuanian acquaintance of
her family. She now pressured her parents, "If you don't go,
then I will go with the Children's Transport to England"
(Liliane, p.12).

could only supply them with tourist visas, and in the summer of 1938 the family left for Klaipeda, a vacation town on the Baltic Sea. Their visa expired in November, and they had to leave. "But where? We knew if we don't get out, they'll deport us to Germany, and we knew already then what that meant" (Liliane, p.12). With the help of a bribe they crossed the border to Latvia and settled in Riga.

In 1940, Latvia became occupied by the Russians. In that case, it helped all of us because we could work...Nothing great happened at that time. 1940. Already a week before the war between Germany and Russia broke out--it was June 21, 1941, I believe--German airplanes overflew Riga. One week before that I got married. And the day the war broke out, the Russians deported my parents to Russia because as Germans they were enemies. We had German passports, you know. In that case, too, they were lucky because they survived the war. Ninety-nine percent of those who stayed, died. All of them, the camp in Riga was well known. What I didn't know then, but what I know now: 4,000 Jews from Vienna were deported to Riga, and of the 4,000 only 40 survived. (Liliane, pp.4-5)

When the Germans began dropping bombs on Riga, and when "the Latvians began to shoot at us from the windows even before the German army was there" (Liliane, p.13), Liliane and her husband ran for their lives and fled to Russia. The Soviet government provided cattle cars to transport the great number of refugees that had crossed the border. And

...bread and hot water for tea. They distributed this at each railroad station, and at some stations there were tables with bread and soup for the refugees. They couldn't do more. (Liliane, p.3)

The refugees landed in a kolkhoz¹⁷ south of Moscow from where they were sent into different villages.

That was a catastrophe. There was no food. The peasants had hardly enough for themselves. I mean, one didn't actually starve. They daily distributed bread, milk, grits, and for that one had to labor in the fields. Very hard field labor. Especially when one wasn't used to it and when one used to play the piano. But if one didn't work, one didn't get food. (Liliane, p.13)

Liliane and her husband ran away. By train--cattle cars with boards for sleeping--they travelled from Kazan in the Tartar Republic to Alma-Ta in Kazakstan and to Frunze in Kirghizia where they found work in a factory. "Who had heard of those places!...This is not a world a European can imagine! Completely unimaginable. And we stayed there until the end of the war" (Liliane, p.14).

For many years after the war they lived in the Soviet Union. When the German Chancellor Adenauer negotiated a treaty with the Soviet President Khrushchev, enabling former German citizens living in the U.S.S.R. to return to Germany, Liliane seized that opportunity and she and her family left on June 15, 1958. They moved to Germany, and in 1959, Liliane's parents, who had been living in the U.S. since 1949, provided the necessary documents for Liliane's and her family's immigration to America.

¹⁷Kolkhoz were collective farms established after the Soviet revolution.

Actually I wanted to return to Austria. But as it was, I hadn't seen my parents for 18 years, and it was the only logical way. Although it perhaps contradicted our wishes--but we didn't offer much resistance. (Liliane, p.6)

Although Ann's father had a job in Australia, the Australian bureaucracy had denied the family a visa. So, in February 1939, Ann and her parents left Vienna for the only place where no visas were required: Shanghai.¹⁸ The journey by boat lasted 28 days and took them from Genoa to Naples, to Port Said and through the Suez, through the Red Sea to Aden, to Bombay, Colombo, Manila, Singapore, Hong Kong, and finally to Shanghai.

Soon, a refugee organization arranged for Ann to live with a wealthy British family and go to school, a happy arrangement which, unfortunately, lasted only a year because of the woman's death. Through the same connection Ann's father found employment with the Shanghai Gas Company, a job he held until their departure in 1949.

When the war broke out, all refugees were confined to living in one Shanghai district. Ann had to quit school and began working, first at a workshop that manufactured shirts

¹⁸Shanghai was an open city where, after the *Anschluss* and *Kristallnacht*, 20,000 Central European Jews fled and settled in a poor section of the city known as Hongkew. (For more, see Kranzler, D. (1976). Japanese, Nazis, and Jews: The Jewish Refugee Community of Shanghai, Tokayer M., & Swartz, M. (1979). The Fugu Plan; The Untold Story of the Japanese and the Jews during World War II, and Heppel, E. (1993). Shanghai refuge. A memoir of the World War II Jewish ghetto.)

and ties, later as a waitress in a *Kaffeehaus*. Aside from the living confinements, however, Ann's family experienced the war mostly from a distance.

Then came 1945. The war in Europe had ended in the spring, and it was then that it started with us. Now the Americans had the time and they bombed Shanghai [which was occupied by Japan] ...every day we could set the clock when they came. Exactly 1.00 PM. I believe, these were B 29s, I am not exactly sure anymore. When I talk about it, I can still hear that muffled sound. That, I will **never** forget. (Ann, p.9-10)

A few bombs hit the refugee district, once narrowly missing Ann's parents. But usually the Americans aimed at the outskirts of Shanghai, providing a popular spectacle for the young refugees who used to climb up the roof for a better view. "I was also always up...", Ann remembered. (p.10) And one day in July, she and a young man, Hans, found themselves alone on the roof.

Hans approaches me, "Miss, are you looking at the ruins of Shanghai?" I say, "Yes."--This was exactly 49 years ago...And we got married in 1947. (Ann, p.10)

They waited for an American visa. In the meantime they worked. Hans, a commercial artist, designed clothes; Ann was employed in one of the PX stores that provided American military personnel with American goods. Shortly before Mao's troops seized power, a concerted effort began to transport the Hitler refugees to Italy, to one of the United Nations' Camps for Displaced Persons established after the war. Ann's

family left in 1949 on one of the eastbound boats that brought them via Hong Kong, Manila, Ilo Ilo, Guam, and Hawaii to San Francisco. But America had granted only transit visas.

From the boat to the train. Two detectives were in each wagon, one for the day, one for the night, to make sure that nobody got out. We came to New York to Ellis Island.¹⁹...All our relatives and friends were allowed to visit us on Ellis Island. My father had a sister here, my mother a niece, and Hans had an aunt, an uncle and a cousin, and they all came and visited us on Ellis Island.

Then we were bundled off again on a military ship to Naples. There, the Italians put us on a train--also locked, so that we didn't get out--and we rode to Bari. And close to Bari was Trani where during the war there used to be a barracks. There they collected all the people from the concentration camps. (Ann, p.12)

They spent "two wonderful weeks" in Trani--"we went to the *Kaffeehaus*, we went to soccer games in Bari, we rode in a carriage from Trani to Bari" (Ann, p.12)--before they moved on to Vienna. In 1951, the American policy of family unifications finally allowed Ann and Hans to immigrate to the United States, thus joining Hans' parents who, using the Czech quota, had come to Chicago directly from Shanghai. They soon moved to New York where they were joined by Ann's parents a year later.

¹⁹The highly publicized train ride attracted many onlookers. Wherever the slowly moving train passed by, "thousands of people came and brought us cigarettes, nylon stockings, tooth paste and tooth brushes, chocolate, you name it. In Trani we lived by selling cigarettes for two weeks" (Ann, p. 12).

Carola's father, who was Jewish, left Vienna in 1939 after he had been imprisoned twice for not wearing the swastika. He received a visa for Yugoslavia where he had worked during the time of the Hapsburg Empire. Carola and her mother, who was a Catholic, decided to stay in Vienna; her brother had already left for America.

My mother wasn't able to deal with the situation emotionally. She was convinced that since they knew that my father had disappeared, they would arrest us as well, and she broke down physically.
(Carola, p.6)

Carola and her mother joined the father in Yugoslavia where, in Ljubljana, Slovenia, they lived in a modest apartment, and where Carola met her future husband, a Slovene. During the war, the Italians occupied Ljubljana first. "They were quite good-natured. They mostly flirted" (Carola, p.6). In 1943, the Germans came.

My father was already working for the Freedom Movement which later became Tito's. As a Jew, he felt obligated to do everything to help Yugoslavia get rid of the Germans. He was an elderly man already, and he got the few Jewish families in Ljubljana, 8-10 families, which were all quite wealthy, to give money to the Freedom Movement. And one day, one [the Germans] did not only arrest these Jewish families over night, but also people who were on a list of *collaborators*. And my father was on **both** of these lists.
(Carola, p.6)

Carola and her mother were spared only for a short while. Then, "Mother was put into prison in Ljubljana, and I came to Ravensbrück. I was labelled "political." They didn't have

the courage to give me the star. That was that! Enough!

(Carola, p.6).

After the war, Carola set out for Ljubljana where she hoped to find her mother.

I had left her in Laibach [the German name for Ljubljana], and there I had to look for her again. On my way back home, which lasted three months, I learnt from other prisoners that my father had died, and I was now obsessed to find my mother. And I did find her in Laibach. A Slovenian family had taken her in. She had lived with a Slovenian family. (Carola, p.6-7)

Carola married and stayed in Ljubljana. But she began to detest life under communism. "I told my husband, 'I can't bear it any longer.' And our marriage began to suffer..."

(Carola, p.7). In 1951, she went back to Vienna to her mother.²⁰ In 1952, her brother was able to bring her and her husband to Canada, and in 1956, finally, to the United States.²¹

After *Kristallnacht*, Nora and her husband decided to flee Austria with their few months old daughter. They had heard of a Swiss who agreed to smuggle them across the Swiss

²⁰Carola's mother had already left Ljubljana for America in 1947 to be with her son. "But she didn't bear it there. She went back to Vienna because she was too old. She was too lonely" (Lisa, p.7).

²¹They couldn't come to America directly because they fell under the Yugoslav quota which, at that time, had a 5-year waiting period.

border. "'But that costs you a lot of money.' And we didn't have that much. 'Perhaps you have jewelry?' So my husband gave him his fine *Schaffhausen* watch." (Nora, p.3). At the designated meeting place, the railroad station in Karlsruhe, a city in South-West Germany, however, they never saw the Swiss. Instead, they were picked up by the *Gestapo* and sent to prison. Nora spent about four weeks in the women's prison. She was released with her child who, during her mother's imprisonment, had stayed in an orphanage. Nora's husband went to the men's prison from where he was deported to Dachau. When Nora was freed it took her months to bring her husband home.

Later in 1939, the family set out for another attempt to escape from Austria. At that time, it was possible to travel to Italy without immigration documents. They moved to Milano. However, the Italian policy soon changed and required from foreigners a visa for another country to ensure that they used Italy only for transit. Lacking that document, Nora, her husband and child joined a refugee group in its attempt to reach a large Jewish refugee camp in Nice. In the darkness of the night the group tried to cross the French border by boat only to be captured by French police. With the promise to guide the refugees to Nice, the French police lured them out on the rough sea again.

...and the boat returns. And the French followed us and watched how our journey continued. Suddenly the motor stopped. And they were

standing there, just standing. Naturally we were anxious.--And since then I am not very fond of the French.--We called out to them, SOS, SOS. They didn't move, just watched. (Nora, p.24)

The refugees finally returned to Italy, and soon the war broke out. Life for those without papers became impossible. Nora and her husband understood that it was now time for them to go separate ways. He escaped into the Italian underground, and Nora and the child returned to her parents in Vienna.

In a small hotel we said goodbye. Like a movie, so dramatic, because we didn't know if and when we would see each other again. It would last six full years... (Nora, p.25)

In Vienna, Nora and her daughter shared a small apartment with her parents. Because of Nora's father being a disabled soldier from World War I, the family was spared the worst encroachments of the regime for some time. The father still maintained a newsstand, and Nora went to work --illegally-- at a Christian friend's house. This came to an end in 1942, when the *Gestapo* raided their home, and Nora and the child were held in a school which was packed with people. One morning, at roll-call, the child approached the SS-man. "Dear *Herr Scharführer*, why do I and my Mommy have to sleep

work, thus saving her from deportation.

And today I could publish a life story just as "Schindler's List" which became a movie: "Nora's List"...They handed me a book in which I had to write all the names and where they were sent...Each time when there was a transport I trembled, frightened that they would take me and that I would never in my life see my child again.
(Nora, p.6)

Suddenly Nora was told she could return home.

I don't know whether to thank my child or my father because he was a war invalid...He had gone to the building which housed the Gestapo, and had thrown away his artificial limbs. "Take these artificial limbs, too, take my life, my daughter, my children..."--Well, somebody showed mercy.
(Nora, p.6)

Nora knew that she had to leave Vienna immediately. Disguised as a peasant and with her child in a backpack, she travelled to the Hungarian border which a smuggler helped to cross by hiding them in a small carriage under a pile of hay. They reached Budapest where they stayed in a camp for Jews.

And then the Germans came closer and closer. And I knew--today, tomorrow, any day--now they'll come to Budapest. And the same thing will start again...When it became so bad, I took my child on my afternoon off and went to the Jewish orphanage in Budapest. Under tears I told her, "You must stay here. We will see each other again. For now you will be with other children."--That was on May 3, 1944. I did not see her again until 1947. And us--they came the next day or the day after the next, and cleared out the whole camp, into the train, and we came directly to Auschwitz by

train. (Nora, p.7)²²

After her liberation and in the safety of a Parisian hospital recovering from a nervous breakdown, Nora wrote her poem.²³

After Being Released from Auschwitz
Concentration Camp.

Paris, 1945

Is it really true? I can hardly realize it.
I am free again!--released from that Hell,
That horrible place where every day people were
burned-
People whom I knew and loved.
I should not think of it, otherwise I might go
mad
and I will be unhappy again in spite of my new-
found freedom,
and the goal for which we struggled and hoped
will be in vain.
I feel as though new-born.
And we, the ones who came back, have actually
returned to life again,
Because anyone who survived Birkenau-Auschwitz is
prepared for anything-
Those who had to go through that suffering, that
horror,
Where every day one had to see hundreds of people
marched to the crematoriums.
The flames rose high, and we saw those flames day

²²Nora knew that Auschwitz was a death camp. But "I didn't care--no parents, no husband, no child" (Nora, p.7). From the start she didn't hold back her outrage about how the Jews were treated, and thus impressed some SS-guards. When she encountered a guard from Vienna she appealed to the proverbial Golden Viennese Heart (p.9). He responded and put Nora's life under his special protection, saving her more than once. "But here I must mention: He raped me also, he raped me also. What should I say!" (Nora, p.10).

²³Nora wrote the poem in German. The English translation was published in the PAN AM Journal The Clipper in July, 1957.

and night.

People had to see their own relatives marched to the crematorium.

There was nothing they could do to protect themselves, their relatives, their friends,- And they knew that in a short time they might suffer the same fate.

The *Special Command* was changed, and then everything started all over again.

Yes, in the Concentration Camp one's life was not worth a penny.

Suddenly one would hear the summons sounding through the entire prison camp-

"Roll Call!"--and we were taken to the great hall and the *Selection* began.

There we had to stand, hundreds of us in rows, unclothed-

Already practically dead, although still living. And mothers, the sick, the weak, tried to protect themselves from the approaching death, hiding behind those who were younger or stronger.

Then the beast in human form would appear--then the decision would be made whether one was condemned to death or would go on living.

Within a few minutes men would lose their wives, children, parents.

Yes, that is what we suffered and lived through.

And of other sufferings I won't even speak-

The hunger, the forced labor-

In our wooden shoes we had to march, singing--left, 2,3,4,-

We marched like puppets, almost starving, but singing-- small groups, large groups.

Outside Auschwitz we could see free people, children playing,

And often my heart almost stood still, as I thought

What has become of our children?

What is happening to my small daughter?

Alone in a strange land, in an orphanage--will I ever see her and my family again?

These were my thoughts as I wept, but I had to keep singing,

I had to keep marching--otherwise there would be a blow with a stick.

No, I will never forget that terrible time.

We went through every imaginable suffering-

Hunger, cold, brutality, but still we kept hoping that one day we would be free,

Would be reunited with those of our families who were still left.

At least there was one small saving factor-

To most of those who died, death came quickly,
abruptly.
And now, the miracle!--the time of *Nazi Kultur*
has passed--
**I live like a human being again--and I am
actually free!**

Nora's husband could quickly be traced. He had survived the war in Italy and now held a job with the British army in Salerno. "He had a small room in a house of an Italian family who was wonderful and decent to us. And there we were together. There was a tree in the garden which gave me such joy" (Nora, p.15). In 1947, they found their child, still in Hungary. She had survived with a farmer's family after the orphanage dissolved when the Germans began to bomb Budapest. Still, it took until 1950 before the family could finally emigrate to the United States.

CHAPTER 7

LANDING ON HIS FEET IN THE MIDDLE OF TIMES SQUARE

...landing on his feet
in the middle of Times Square...

But a certain lightness
has, as with a bird,
remained with him.

Hilde Domin (1987, p.212)

INTRODUCTION

In America the refugees began to pick up their lives again, and an existence which Robert called his *Kofferleben*, his suitcase life, finally came to an end. On this expansive continent they settled down, married, became American citizens, and started "to live decently again" (Nora, p.18).

"It was an entirely different world" (Beatrice, p.20),--a new language, different customs and very much removed from Europe. Mostly in their twenties and early thirties, unmarried and without children, and not quite settled in their careers, the study participants were young, independent, and professionally flexible enough to take on the challenges of building a new life. Their recollections may record difficulties and hardships in the beginning in

the United States, but lack the traumatic quality of some of the accounts in the literature. (i.e. Bendix, 1990, Härtling, 1991, Maimann, 1981)¹

Accustomed to a mostly urban life, the refugees preferred to settle in the urban centers of the East and West coasts of the United States.² California was appreciated for its pleasant climate and Hollywood, with its movie industry, offered plenty of work opportunities for writers, musicians and directors (Kaus, G., 1990; Schnauber, C., 1992). Chicago, too, was chosen as the new place to live, whereas the South remained largely avoided.³

New York, the artistic and cultural metropolis with its large Jewish community and many charitable organizations,

¹A somewhat dissenting voice comes from Liliane who characterizes her beginning in New York as "terrible." First, she had to give up hopes of becoming a music teacher because she couldn't afford the schools' tuition. And having a ten year old son limited her job search to part time work. "So I mostly worked as a saleswoman, but the wages were appalling. At that time, we were still the *Emigranten*, that was something as if we had never lived! As if we had never been another class of people!" (Liliane, p.16)
See also Carola's account concerning her mother as to being too old for a life in the United States and who returned to Vienna.

²The policy of refugee organizations to disperse the newcomers to lesser populated areas largely failed. Resentful of being sent somewhere to find some kind of work regardless of one's profession or aptitude, Robert expressed the view of many when he criticized the policy. "I didn't feel fit to be a farmer in Iowa" (Robert Breuer, 1988, in Medien & Zeit 1, p.29).

³For more see Dokumentationsarchiv des österreichischen Widerstandes, DÖW, Vol.1 (1995, p.43).

educational institutions such as the New School for Social Research and Columbia University, and major émigré organizations and publications such as the Aufbau and the Austro-American Tribune, developed into a veritable center of exile. And New York, with its large and diverse industry, offered plenty of job opportunities as reflected in what Beatrice describes.

Everybody comes to New York...First I stayed in Connecticut. But I could see you couldn't get a job, whereas in New York I could immediately... get a job here in an office. So actually I got a job the first day in New York...New York was very attractive, I mean it was a place where you can meet again the people you hadn't seen in a long time...most of our friends have stayed in New York, they came here and were working. They came from wherever they came and settled in New York. It's a very cosmopolitan city. (p.7)

Though relieved to have escaped the Nazi terror, the worries about the loved ones many had left behind cast a shadow over the refugees' efforts to rebuild their lives. But information about their fate was hard, and eventually impossible, to get. "We didn't know anything. One didn't know where they were, how and what" (Stella, p.12).

When America entered the war, many felt that she was fighting "our war," and were eager to participate. "I believed, when America entered the war, that I belonged there, too", Andreas explains. (p.8) Leo, though an ardent pacifist throughout his youth, and despite his blindness in

one eye, forced himself to go into the army.

I used to have a horror of the army. But at that time I needed to participate. Why should American soldiers fight or die for my cause if I was not willing to do it myself? From this point of view, but also from the point of view of my religious fellow-men in Europe who could not fight anymore... (Leo, p.25)

Henry, Hilde's husband, and Stella's brother, also joined the American military, while Erich, in exile in England, joined the British army. Fritz, Leo's brother who couldn't participate because of the tremor in his hands, "...was sometimes the only man in our circle", as Gaby describes. "It bothered him, he was ashamed, and a bit hurt. Most of the men had joined the army" (Gaby, p.14).⁴

Clementine participated in the war effort at her job at the British Listening Post, where speeches by Hitler and other Nazi leaders were recorded and translated into English. When she became an American citizen in 1943, her participation continued at the American Office of War Information at their radio station in London, which broadcast to the European countries occupied by the Germans.

⁴A foreigner who joined the U.S. Army immediately became a citizen.

I. ARRIVAL.

The refugees usually entered the United States through New York City⁵ where they were greeted by the spectacular view of Manhattan. "One arrived here by boat at the harbor and one saw the skyscrapers", Marthe recalls. "It was two days before Christmas, and the lights and everything was very impressive" (Marthe, p.15).

She had read Sinclair Lewis, Upton Sinclair and Dreiser, and knew that the U.S. was "not only a rich country." Nevertheless, she came with high expectations--"skyscrapers everywhere," something "fantastic" and "most of all modern" (Marthe, p.14). "I did expect very much, I was a bit manic" (Marthe, p.15). Other study participants arrived with little or only scattered knowledge--"I did not know much about America" (Erich, p.8). And Andreas, always interested in technology, knew about the elevated trains in New York. "The first thing I did, I went to Sixth Avenue and waited for a train. I wanted to see how that thing shook," as his English teacher used to say. "It didn't shake!" (Andreas, p.15). Georg knew about the treatment of the blacks and about Roosevelt's social programs, and that "everything was big here...The greatest thing was that it wasn't Europe"

⁵In this study the only exception was Carola who spent three years in Canada before immigrating to the United States, and who arrived in New York via land, well prepared for U.S. realities by her brother. (See Footnote 17.)

(Georg, p.19). A notable exception is Carola, informed in great detail about daily life in the U.S. by her brother who had been living in America since 1940, and who did not want his sister to come with unreasonable expectations.

He was so afraid that I expected too much...he was terribly afraid that I hoped to find gold on the streets. He sent me one letter after the other--"Please, don't expect too much! It is a country where one has to work hard, and where one has to save. Study English! See that you get rid of your accent!" He wrote down the exercises for the *th*, the *r*, and the *l*, and I don't know what. I had known English, and I went to an English language school. And again and again, "Don't expect too much!" And he sent me the prices of things, and the incomes, and how the rent is, and all kinds of things. Well, it helped. But not all of it sank in fully. I mean, one can receive a lot of good advice... (Carola, p.14)

Immigration procedures went smoothly. Only Robert, Leo, and his brother Fritz experienced delays. Robert had reached New York on the *Britannic* in 1940 on a Saturday, but because of union regulations the boat could not dock. For two days, the *Britannic* was lying in the harbor in the shadow of the Statue of Liberty while its passengers marveled at Manhattan's imposing skyline, the endless line of automobiles along the Brooklyn shore, and the busy traffic of ferries between the South tip of Manhattan and Staten Island (Robert, 1988, Nacht über Wien, p.122). However, despite the wonderment one senses a feeling of

disappointment, too, when Robert recalls,

And we who waved excitedly at the passengers of those little boats were taken aback to not find our greetings returned; we were impatient and also shocked that no feeder boat brought newspapers to the *Britannic* in order to inform its passengers about the latest on the war.
(Robert, Nacht über Wien, p.122-123)

Leo's and his brother's entries into the city were delayed for health reasons.

My sister picked us up at the boat. We were speaking to her. Suddenly we were called back and all of a sudden we found ourselves on one of those little boats to Ellis Island...At the moment it was a terrible shock! We arrived at Ellis Island, very concerned. We entered that big hall where hundreds of people were sitting, and with those huge barred windows and the skyline of New York City in the distance. And I halted and said to my brother, "We travelled thousands of kilometers to get from one prison to the next."
(Leo, p.21)⁶

The brothers' tension, however, soon eased when a police officer who had overheard Leo's remark, approached them, and they began to fathom how different, indeed, was the world they had come to. Leo remembers,

I thought, "For God's sake, what happened?--A uniform!"--He put his hands on our shoulders and in Yiddish he said that we mustn't be afraid...He used Yiddish words, I can still remember that

⁶By the late Thirties, immigrants usually did not go through Ellis Island anymore. Only those requiring special examinations were sent there. Because of Fritz's tremor and Leo's blindness in one eye, the brothers had to stay on Ellis Island for four days until they were bailed out by the woman who had provided their affidavits.

today...We should not be afraid, we would not be sent back, everything was going to be alright.--I looked at my brother and said, "If a uniform speaks Yiddish, it can't be too bad." (Leo, p.21)

At the piers, many were welcomed by relatives and friends on whose aid the newcomers depended, since they had been allowed to take only a few dollars out of Austria.⁷ In addition, there were organizations offering their services, most prominent among them the Hebrew Sheltering and Immigrant Aid Society of America, HIAS. Their "volunteer ladies were on the boats and accomplished incredible things without raising a hue and cry" (Leo, p.23).

You know where their shelter used to be? At the present Papp Theatre. When you go there today you will see a sign saying that this was the shelter of the HIAS...And the fact that one got something to eat and had a roof above one's head in the midst of an icy winter in New York, with only \$8 at one's disposal, was terribly good. (Leo, p.22-23)

Others turned to the HIAS for help as well. Kaspar and his bride who had spent their first night in New York at the *Lombardi*, the four star hotel at 56th Street where their affidavit donor was the personnel manager, found their first room on the Upper West Side through this organization and

⁷That is why, for example, Marie and her husband arrived with "...a very good and expensive wardrobe. Because we used to have money and were not allowed to take it out. One could buy clothes. He, for example, owned a tuxedo and a tail-coat and a fur. And I, too, was very elegant" (Marie, p.13).

continued to be financially supported by it in the first weeks. HIAS helped Marie and her husband in the beginning with money, and later provided the kerosene heater for their apartment on 42nd Street. HIAS found an apartment for Nora and her family, "a simple apartment, naturally...", (Nora, p.18), and when their daughter became seriously ill, HIAS took care of her medical bills and also paid for her prolonged convalescence stay in the country.

Prompted by job opportunities and personal relationships Marthe, Andreas, Ann and her husband were the only ones among the study participants who continued their journeys to others places in the U.S.

Marthe went to Baltimore to work at Johns Hopkins.--"And then it turned out that the job wasn't paid" (Marthe, p.10). A family friend set up a fellowship, and "then I received a salary" (Marthe, p.11). But Marthe never felt comfortable--"Baltimore is not at all like New York...a horrible city, dirty... Johns Hopkins was in the middle of the slums, not the university, but the hospital, those awful red brick houses. Then those brownstones, not elegant like here" (Marthe, p.15).--and after two years she moved to New York.

I went to New York because the Viennese I knew were all here...I believe, many of us went to New York also because we had the feeling that it was closer to Europe. There was the harbor... (Marthe, p.18)

Andreas went to Chicago where he had relatives. After a short visit with them, Andreas enrolled at the University of Illinois in Urbana to study engineering, supporting himself with jobs at a department store and at the university.⁸

Soon after he finished his studies, the war broke out, and when Austrians, along with Germans, Italians, and Japanese, were declared enemy aliens, it became difficult for Andreas to find work in an industry that had largely switched to war production. He moved to New York hoping to land a job in its important service industry.

Very shortly, I got a job as an electrical engineer with a company that did work mostly for the Pennsylvania Railroad, where I designed overhead leads. (Andreas, p.2)

Ann and her husband Hans also went to Chicago where Hans' friend, who had provided the affidavit, helped Ann find a job. However, for Hans, who wanted to find employment in his profession as a commercial artist, the job situation was dire. He decided to try his luck in New York. Ann stayed behind.

I said, "You know, I have a job. I don't earn much, but enough for me to eat. I'll stay here."

⁸During the summers he travelled extensively. "One summer, I hitchhiked from Illinois to Seattle. Through the national parks, Glacier Park and Yellowstone. Then down to California to Los Angeles where I had relatives. And back to Illinois, a whole summer long" (Andreas, p.16). The next summer he ventured a different trip. "I was in 43 of the 48 States at that time" (Andreas, p.23).

When you find out in New York that we can make it there, then write to me, and I will come."--We didn't have anything. We lived in a furnished room with each of us only a suitcase... (Ann, p.16)

A few months later Ann was able to follow her husband to New York.

II. WORK.

Since most of the émigrés had arrived with empty pockets and relied on the initial support of friends, relatives, or charitable organizations, they were eager to fend for themselves. Leo, for example, recalls,

I immediately told my brother that we must find a job so that we would not slide into a life where one is dependent on welfare. (Leo, p.23)

This most urgent task, however, meant to some émigrés a true challenge to their persistence and ingenuity. Not only were they confronted with the normal difficulties of the newcomer to a foreign job market--language problems, problems with the acceptance of diplomas, lack of experience, different customs and styles--the émigrés of the late Thirties also had to deal with an economic reality still affected by the Great Depression, a situation which slowly began to change only when America entered the war in December, 1941.

In this environment it was the rare case to begin working in one's profession. As Marthe, the doctor with a job at the Johns Hopkins University, rightly observed, "I was lucky. Not only did I have a job, but in my profession! That was an exception" (Marthe, p.11). She worked in the outpatient department, and, in the beginning, she remembers having difficulties with English. "Especially the children were

difficult to understand...But there was a colleague who was a New Yorker...he always helped me until I knew enough English" (Marthe, p.16).

Gaby, a goldsmith, was equally lucky. She quickly found a job in a retail jewelry store and made enough to live comfortably.⁹

When you earned \$15 a week, which was normal, though some made only \$12, then you could buy yourself a skirt or a blouse or a hat every Friday. At that time one still wore hats...And on Sundays, the Glückselig lads came over for lunch, and we had a wonderful banana split. That was extremely inexpensive. If you had to support a husband and three children with \$15, it was a different story. But I didn't have a husband or three children. We were all unmarried... (Gaby, p.13)

After interludes at Mitzi Otten' Enamel Studio and at Gem Creations, a jewelry magazine on 47th Street, Gaby was offered a job at Art Carved. "Mr. Debler, who hired me, said, 'If it's O.K. for you, it is a lifetime job'", (p.11),

⁹Though she didn't last there.

There was a hold-up, for real, with shootings and everything...The police shot above our heads, and it was reported in the evening papers...The following weekend the store owner handed me my pay check and fired me. She probably thought that I belonged to the robbers...And then I immediately began to work in Mitzi Otten's Enamel Studio... (Gaby, pp.10-11),

where she met the Glueckselig brothers, Leo and Fritz, the latter her future husband.

and indeed, Gaby worked for Art Carved for fifty years until the business moved to Texas. "I was there from the beginning to the end!" (p.13).

Beatrice and Erich reported a similarly "easy" professional start in America. Their story, however, differs from Marthe's and Gaby's since they arrived after the war when the U.S. economy had overcome the Depression and was booming. Having spent years in England they pointed at their language skills as advantageous in their search for a job. "Coming from England, I could speak English well enough, and I could get a job here in an office", Beatrice says (p.7), and Erich recalls,

For me it wasn't very difficult. No. I don't have a hard-life-story to tell about America...But, of course, after I had lived in England for so long, I already knew the language. That was an advantage over other refugees who came to America in 1938 and didn't know English. So, I had certain advantages. I worked as a commercial artist. I did all kinds of things. Then, for 20 years, I was with a company that made classical packaging... (Erich, p.8)¹⁰

In contrast to Marthe and Gaby, and Beatrice and Erich who arrived after the war, Robert's story is more typical

¹⁰See also Ann, who arrived in 1951, and to whom, after ten years in Shanghai, English didn't present a problem, either. She got her first job in Chicago within days.

for many émigrés when he, as a job seeker in the land of opportunity, quickly encountered its limited opportunities.

I was pounding the pavements in New York. I had some "recommendations" for firms where one listened to me politely but advised me to rather try at company X or Y which in turn continued the game... (Breuer, *Der lange, mühevollen Weg ins Exil. Als Wiener Journalist nach New York*. In: Medien & Zeit 1/88, p.29)

Any hope of finding work in one's profession had to be discarded. The journalist continues,

Finally, I found a job as a packer in the shipping department for radios, and with the minimum wage of 30 cents and with overtime I made a weekly salary of \$16 - \$18. (Breuer, *Der lange, mühevollen Weg ins Exil. Als Wiener Journalist nach New York*. In: Medien & Zeit 1/88, p.29)¹¹

Stella who had managed her father's office, started out in a factory "folding things. Then I was trained at a machine, and when I worked at the machine, I earned well" (Stella, p.8). Hilde, having left Austria just after she finished the *Gymnasium*--"had no profession"-- found work in tailor jobs--"What did you know? You know how to sew. Every girl knows how to sew...That's how I started out" (Hilde, p.11). Leo, the former student of architecture, found a job as a messenger boy for \$12.50 a week, a small sum since it

¹¹Sacrificing his evenings and weekends, Robert continued to write, first mostly for émigré publications and, after the war, increasingly for German speaking European newspapers. In 1960, he was able to make journalism his sole profession again.

had to suffice for both brothers.

We learned all the tricks. There were bars where you could have a beer for ten cents, but there were also eggs and pickles and such things, and one could have lunch that way.--One learns.--Then we went to the delis downtown where there were round plates with the end pieces of sausages sitting on the counter and a sign, "A Nickel for a Stickl." For a nickel one could have a piece of salami. That way we fed ourselves. (Leo,p.25)¹²

But not everybody was willing to do just anything. Marie's story is a case in point. Holding a doctorate in economics, she and her husband, the lawyer, were introduced to two elderly gentlemen who wanted to hire them as a couple.

Him as a butler/gardener, me as a housekeeper/cook. That was absurd. I was not a housekeeper, I was not a cook, and he was certainly not a butler... (Marie, p.36)

At the interview, they behaved in such a way that they didn't get the jobs. Instead, Marie became a governess and her husband started to work at the department store S. Klein at Union Square.

S. Klein was a cheap clothing store. There were these dressing rooms, and the women who shopped there were not very cultured, these were cheap dresses. They tried out 20 dresses and dropped 19 on the floor, perhaps bought one or none at all. And the *Herren Doktoren* from Austria and Germany had to pick up those rags and put them orderly

¹²After a few months their parents arrived, and Leo's brother began to work with their father.

back on hangers. (Marie, p.34)

He lasted only one week, and Marie, too, didn't stay long at her job as a governess. Instead, the couple started their own business--a solution for which other émigrés opted, too.

II.1. BUSINESS VENTURES.

Shortly after the *Anschluss*, Marie had flown to Zürich to save her fiancé's valuable stamp collection from the grip of the Nazis. In New York, she checked the telephone book under import-export-business. She started with a Rumanian business at 500 Fifth Avenue. While her husband was waiting outside, she went upstairs, dressed in her elegant clothes.

"We are Hitler refugees, and we would like to start a stamp business. Could you give me some new stamps. You probably have new packages." He said, "What?" "You probably have packages from all over the world." "What do you mean? This?", and he pulled out a large drawer filled with stamps. "Serve yourself!", he said. "How many can I take?" "Take all, every four weeks I'll have that many."--So, I was happy. If the first had thrown me out, I wouldn't have had the guts to continue. (Marie, p.15)¹³

They started their business in a small cubicle in the rear of a shoeshine parlor on Fifth Avenue. "There we were

¹³They also wrote letters to the rabbis around the world. On the envelope to the rabbi of New Zealand, they marked "Near Australia." Marie recalls his answer when he sent stamps. "You don't have to say 'Near Australia', we are quite well known" (Marie, p.15).

perched. We had uncomfortable stools so that people wouldn't sit for too long" (Marie, p.15). Soon, they became well known stamp dealers. They moved across the street to 505 Fifth Avenue.

The building still exists. We used to have an office on the sixth floor. That was a difference. In the beginning, we *schnorred* [mooched] stamps, and then we were already in an office. My husband was a stamp dealer for countless years, and now we still have one customer, a Russian baron, who owes us a lot of money. Each month he comes and pays off a little. (Marie, p.16)

Leo's father, the art and antiques dealer, whose business trips to New York in the Twenties had been hugely successful, was able to open a gallery. "We were lucky. Somebody helped us to open a small gallery on 57th Street" (Leo, p.25). Leo's brother, the poet, began to work with their father, while Leo stayed at his first job as a messenger boy for almost a year until he joined the American army.

Hilde and her husband Henry also chose self-employment. While Henry served in the American army where he took courses in tool making, his brother established his own clothing manufacturing business. After the war, Henry joined his brother where, in the factory, he could make good use of his tool making skills. Hilde recalls,

We started out very, very small. And his

brother's wife and I were bookkeepers in the office...We went through years and years and years building up the business... (Hilde, p.11-12)

Kaspar, the lawyer who never thought of practicing law in the United States,¹⁴ started a few business ventures before he finally succeeded. He tried to build up a postcard publishing business similar to his father's in Vienna.

The New York Times allowed me to use its photographic archives without charge, and Radio City Music Hall allowed the reprint of the scores of the popular song "Our New York" on the postcards. I found ten customers in Coney Island, and the Southern Pacific Lines ordered two hundred cards. (Kaspar, From Vienna to New York, p.15)

Yet, the business remained unsuccessful, and after only six months Kaspar closed it down in 1939.

Like many whose existence was threatened after the *Anschluss*, and who prepared for emigration by learning practical skills, Kaspar's wife had privately studied arts and crafts before coming to New York. Now, she used her newly developed skills and produced a collection of belts

¹⁴Instead, he initially hoped to make a living as a journalist. "I felt very much encouraged in this idea when my first article, which I wrote in German about the propaganda leaflets that the British Intelligence Service dropped over Germany, got published instantly in the New York Times" (Kaspar, From Vienna to New York, p.14-15). However, this would be the only article to be published.

and flowers made of leather. Kaspar, as the partner of the Company, tried--unsuccessfully--to sell the products.

Then his wife had the idea to create little animal pins from thin fur. Her first design was a squirrel made of brown fur with a brown tail, about two inches high. Very soon, these lapel pins could be seen on display at Lord and Taylor, Best & Co., and most other department stores on Fifth Avenue. Little dogs, cats, donkeys followed. Finally, in 1944, Kaspar's Company had a huge success with Stinky. Stinky, a skunk made of black thin fur with a white tail, was a brooch that became very fashionable among teenagers. Even an American military plane was named after Stinky, and all ten crew members received this little animal as a good luck charm. Kaspar started a broad marketing campaign. Each Stinky came with a note which said,

"My name is Stinky. I am a skunk--but a good one. People will look at me on your lapel, but you won't have to be ashamed 'cause I am house broken." (Kaspar, From Vienna to New York, p.16)

Once a month, Kaspar sent out the Stinky News, a letter to his customers. In the fashion magazine Mademoiselle he announced a competition, "Stinky who brings good luck." The readers were asked to send in descriptions of events when Stinky brought them luck. The reward was \$100 for the best story. The competition led to a flood of letters with the most fantastic stories. Also, for window displays, Kaspar had an electrical apparatus constructed by which several

Stinkies were moved in a circle while a squeaky female voice sang "The March of the Tin Soldiers," and after which the voice recited, "My name is Stinky. I am a skunk..." Soon the demand was so great that Kaspar had to hire several refugees to work in his shop at 22nd Street. Stinky's success made news. Nancy Pepper, a journalist with the magazine Calling All Girls, wrote a column about Kaspar's Company. She also lectured at the New York Advertising Club about the marketing strategies lying behind Stinky's success. One of the well established advertising firms on Madison Avenue was interested in hiring Kaspar and made an attractive offer. However, Kaspar rejected it.

I was afraid of losing my independence, but I was also worried that the company was anti-Semitic because when I toured the firm I did not see one Jewish face. (Kaspar, From Vienna to New York, p.17)

III. THE SOCIAL-POLITICAL LIFE.

The exile community centered itself upon Manhattan's Upper West Side. Austrian refugees preferred the area between 72nd Street and 96th Street, whereas refugees from Germany largely chose Washington Heights.¹⁵

The *Eclair*, a restaurant that existed until 1996 on 72nd Street, was the popular spot for Austrians to hang out.

The *Eclair* used to be a place where you could meet all the refugees. They have changed, lately. ...but when I came over the *Eclair* was a great meeting place. It was most famous of all the places. (Beatrice, p.15-16)

Since one could sit for hours and meet with friends, it came closest to the *Kaffeehaus*, the Viennese institution painfully missed in New York and to which the cafeterias--though popular for their inexpensive fare--could not compare. Leo humorously relates an anecdote from his first day in New York: He and his brother Fritz had visited the Frick Gallery. On their way back to the refugee shelter, they were looking for a *Kaffeehaus*. They found a cafeteria.

...that did not look like a Viennese *Kaffeehaus* at all! But for a nickel one could have coffee. We sat down, and my brother immediately took out six books and began to read. At 4.45 PM the manager came over and politely said, "Soon there will be rush hour, I am sorry, but I need the table..." My brother didn't understand a word, I

¹⁵Reflecting the large influx of German émigrés, the area became known as the Fourth Reich (Lowenstein, 1989).

had to explain everything to him. He packed his books away. On the street he said, "In this Kaffeehaus I will never come back!"--Later we used to laugh about that. God, how quickly did we learn how different everything was!" (p.24)¹⁶

The Barbizon Hotel maintained a German theater "many years ago," (Beatrice, p.31), and a German cinema existed on East 86th Street. There were two or three record stores on Sixth Avenue which sold German and Austrian records, where "...my friend and I used to wallow about", Georg recalls (p.3). And "There existed many social groups", Stella remembers. "On Sunday afternoons, one could go dancing and one met many friends" (Stella, p.12).¹⁷

Especially the young and single of the émigrés engaged in an active social life and enjoyed a lightness of being--"we used to sing and whistle" (Ann, p.17)--a joy they hadn't

¹⁶Fritz became a regular patron of the *Eclair*.

¹⁷Of all the study participants, Carola's story is exceptional. Following her brother's advice she made the deliberate effort not to partake in any such activities. Lisa reports,

...the bottom line of his advice was: don't do what so many Austrian immigrants do, that is, go to an Austrian group and speak again and again about the same things, and keep your roots still at a place where you are not, and where you don't want to be anymore. Rather, integrate yourself. See that you can find a job, that you have work, and hopefully you will be successful... So we followed his advice and tried to become Americans as soon as possible... (p.1-2)

known for some time. Gaby who lived under Hitler in Germany between 1933 and 1938 and whose life had been severely restricted, describes her early time in New York,

The real fun that young girls normally have, I started to have in New York. The gatherings with a large number of young lads and girls who all were more or less in the same situation, holding their \$15 jobs...On Sundays we went hiking, and Julian, Mitzi Otten's son, already had a car for \$60 which sometimes broke down, but which took us up the Hudson on Sundays where we went swimming. And it was only after the bad news trickled in, the concentration camps etc., that the fun came to an end. In the beginning, we had a hell of a good time. (Gaby, p.13-14)¹⁸

Stella, too, recalls with fondness, "It was very, very good, very beautiful. In the beginning." (Stella, p.12) She shared a big apartment on Central Park West with her brother and her cousin.

There was always open house. That was wonderful! In the evenings, people used to come over. One didn't need to be invited. The cousin's friends came without calling first. She always had coffee and cake. When there was no cake, somebody went downstairs and got one...There were only the worries about our parents... (Stella, p.12)

And Georg attended Haaren High School at 59th Street

¹⁸The situation was different for those "...who came here and who were already married with a child, and whose husbands had to study again, or whose husbands were businessmen and had great difficulties and were forced to take minor jobs. For those it was much more difficult, naturally..." (Stella, p.12).--Gaby also distinguishes her story from "...the reports from other people. They always tell you, how terrible it was and how they had to struggle here" (Gaby, p.13).

(presently John Jay College) where he met many émigré students and delighted in soccer competitions between students from Germany and students from Austria (Georg, p.3).

These networks of both informal and formal groups that sustained the émigrés--providing friendships as well as cultural and recreational activities--were particularly important to those who had arrived in America all by themselves, and who wished to connect to people with whom they shared some experiences and familiarities.

Erna remembers her early loneliness. "The beginning was very hard. I lived somewhere in a furnished room. I was alone..." Then she went to an organization, "...I forgot what it was called--where immigrants met once a week, a club which organized events. There I met my husband", who had studied the violin with her father (Erna, p.4).

Marthe felt isolated in Baltimore, a feeling aggravated by her insecurity interpreting the different American customs.¹⁹ She moved to New York to join the professional circle of Viennese doctors and psychoanalysts, a group she

¹⁹ For example, she didn't think the solicitations to *drop in* were meant as honest invitations since they were expressed so casually. Similarly, she didn't know whether she could seriously ask for any help or support (Marthe, p.24). She was also offended by the custom at Johns Hopkins of addressing patients by their first names. "Then I realized that in general it was customary to address people by their first names. One always addressed me that way, too" (Marthe, p.16).

was well acquainted with back in Vienna--"The Viennese I knew were all here..." (Marthe, p.18).

Stella's future husband enjoyed the *open house* on Central Park West. "Every evening he was there...He was so lonely. He was alone...", (Stella, p.12), and after only six months they were married.²⁰

Georg and Clementine participated in the exile community by way of their involvement in political groups.

From the beginning Georg entered the network of Austrian socialist groups established in New York. He initially joined the Austrian Labor Youth, but when the small organization dissolved because some members moved away from New York, Georg associated with the Austro-American Youth. He describes the two groups,

The Austrian Labor Youth was founded by Austrian socialists in New York. The Austro-American Youth was a broader, more social organization without a political focus. Social gatherings were also important for the Austrian Labor Youth, but in addition they organized lectures, talks, and discussions within the socialist framework. There

²⁰Loneliness contributed to the decision to marry, as Stella explains, "I believe he would not have married in Vienna. He had women. You know, a man who was doing so well and was good looking, a dashing man. He used to have gorgeous women. But he fell in love with me. He said, 'A sweet Viennese girl. A lovely girl'" (Stella, p.12). Many study participants (10) found their spouses within the exile community. Six arrived in America already married or engaged. Only two, Georg and Carola, among the youngest, married outside of the community.

were lectures by old Austrian socialists who were still alive...Wilhelm Ellenbogen, Julius Deutsch, Alfred Braunthal, a high ranking union leader, Ernst Papanek, the former president of the International Socialist Youth Organization in Vienna, Otto Leichter, whose sons are living here in New York, Walter Sonnenfeld, my father...Then afterwards, I was with the Austro-American Youth, full of people from Vienna and Viennese culture which also helped the healthy development of a teenager. It allowed me to be comfortable in two worlds. (Georg, p.1)

Georg spent many weekends and vacations at the *Naturfreunde* camp outside New York City.²¹ "In the evening, around the piano, we sang our songs, either political songs or *Wanderlieder*, ranging from "*Horch, was kommt von draussen rein*" to the songs of the fighters for the republic in the Spanish civil war" (p.2).

While an undergraduate at City College, Georg continued to move within a leftist Viennese circle. He was the president of a house, a college club that could be formed if there were more than 12 people. "We were enough Viennese lads to form our own house, our own club. Wherever Viennese were, they noticed each other, they found each other..." (Georg, p.3). The group had to pick a name from a list of accomplished City College graduates. Somebody suggested *Quesada*. "'That sounds so exotic.'--*Quesada* was a Mexican revolutionary. And the person who suggested that name, was Fred Morton, the writer" (Georg, p.3). The group met at the college's cafeteria at its "own" table.

²¹A leftist organization of nature friends.

That was the Viennese Table. There, we used to meet...We sometimes went to the movies, had parties, went to the *Naturfreunde* camps, we also went dancing...about 20 of us were always together, but perhaps there were more on paper. That was until the beginning of the Fifties. Then many of us married or went to other schools. And the house more or less dissolved." (Georg, p.3-4)

Whereas Georg, a teenager and young adult, mostly enjoyed the social side of the different political groups on the left, Clementine, at thirty-three a lawyer with experience, was actively involved in exile politics. Clementine, who arrived in 1938, remembers,

When I came, there was nothing here. There were only Germans, no Austrians. I didn't know anybody...And then after about a year, in 1939, many organizations were founded. After people had been here for a while and had acclimated a little, they formed into groups. And interestingly into the same political groups they used to have in Austria or in Vienna.--For example, there were Monarchists.²² Here, the Monarchists were a stronger group, because of Otto von Habsburg who lived here in a hotel in Manhattan on 59th Street. And we had very good connections with him since he was the leader of the Monarchists who called him "*Kaiser Otto*"...--The Socialists had a group under General Deutsch. He was a general in the Spanish Civil War on the socialist side...--Then there were the followers of the former Austrian government, the Christian Socials. They were led by Secretary Rott. Rott had a Christian Social union background, and used to be a secretary under Schuschnigg. He came via Canada and organized a group which was rather important,

²²Another, frequently used name for those favoring the establishment of the Monarchy was *Legitimisten*. The *Legitimisten* viewed the Monarchy as the only legitimate form of government with the successor to the throne as the sole legitimate leader of Austria.

but didn't have many members.--And then there was the largest group, and that was the group with which I was involved. It was called Austrian Action and was led by the son of the last Austrian Secretary of State. His name was Ferdinand Czernin...Czernin founded the Austrian Action which was decidedly apolitical. He intended to unite all political groups into one. He said, "We are all refugees."--He was not Jewish, of course. He was democratic, though his family was not, his brothers were Nazis...He founded that group with more than 1,000 members, and as I always say, "He was the head, and I was the body."--I was the manager of the office...We organized concerts, plays, we helped the refugees in any possible way. At that time, there existed very little help. We actually were, as we always claimed, a small consulate...(Clementine, p.1-2)²³

After Pearl Harbor, December 1941, President Roosevelt issued a proclamation to control enemy aliens. The personal freedom of those declared enemy aliens--about 1,100,000 Germans and Italians living in the U.S., as well as American-Japanese (DöW, Vol.1, 1995, p.175)--became restricted. For example, the possession and usage of short-wave radios, cameras or firearms were prohibited. Also, a change of residence or occupation, and travel or movement from place to place, required the permission of the Attorney

²³The Austrian Action (1941-1946) counted 1,500 members in 1945 and maintained, in addition to New York, several branches in the United States--Boston, Detroit, Philadelphia, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Portland--as well as outside the U.S.--Brazil, Argentina, Mexico, South Africa. As Clementine pointed out, the Austrian Action did not only pursue political goals but engaged in a variety of cultural activities as well, attracting some famous émigrés, among them Franz Werfel who organized the literary events, and Paul Wittgenstein who was responsible for music.

General.²⁴ Austrian refugees were not treated uniformly by the American bureaucracy. Their legal status depended on whether the United States recognized the *Anschluss* or not.²⁵ Thus, it became a major objective of Austrian political exile organizations to convince the U.S. State Department to not recognize the *Anschluss*, and to declare Austria the victim of Germany's expansion, instead. By the same argument Austrian refugees should not be restricted as enemy aliens even if they held German passports.²⁶ Clementine remembers some of the Austrian Action's activities organized to draw the American public's attention to their cause.

In March of 1943, we organized a blood drive in memory of Austria that benefitted the American Red Cross...300 Austrian refugees donated blood! That was a big deal because none of us was a blood donor. I was terrified like crazy, but

²⁴Enemy aliens living in the states closest to the Pacific war --Washington, Oregon, California--experienced further restrictions: most seriously affected were the American-Japanese, who had to endure internments and expropriations. The Germans and Italians were only restricted by curfews between 8.00 PM and 6.00 AM. (DöW, Vol.1, 1995, p.175)

²⁵"While *de jure* recognition [of the *Anschluss*] has never been accorded, successive administrative decisions have seemed to waver between treating Austria as a country temporarily subjugated and a country that has become permanently part of Germany." (Letter of John Wiley to the Secretary of State, May 21, 1942, in DöW, Vol.1, 1995, p.207)

²⁶Many did have German passports having left Austria with papers issued after the *Anschluss*.

since I was the leader I had to go first...Then among other things, just to tell you the great things we did, we had a parade of the occupied countries on Fifth Avenue. Starting with Austria, it included Belgium, Holland, Poland, Norway, Denmark, and I, dressed in a *Dirndl*,²⁷ marched in front with the Austrian flag... (Clementine, p.2)

The U.S. position remained ambiguous until the Moscow Declaration of November 1, 1943 when the U.S.A., the United Kingdom, and the Soviet Union declared Austria the first country to fall victim to Hitler's aggression, and agreed to create a free and independent Austria after the war.

It was one of Czernin's greatest successes, and I must say, though it's being claimed again and again by others, I saw it with my own eyes: Czernin had the best connections to the State Department because he was intelligent, spoke excellent English, always a gentleman. Yes, he succeeded in that Austrians were no longer considered enemy aliens, rather, in the exact wording, citizens of a non-enemy country. That was of enormous importance then...The moment we were citizens of a non-enemy country, we could live just as Americans. Finished. The Germans remained enemy aliens...And this *Moscow Declaration* of 1943 was also the foundation for Austria's special peace treaty in 1955. And I always say, everything goes back to us and Czernin. And I think it is a great thing which is totally forgotten...Then the Austrian Action dissolved somehow... (Clementine, p.3)²⁸

²⁷A costume worn by women from Austria's mountain regions.

²⁸In fact, most exile groups had worked for that goal, as well as the many émigré jurists who had educated the American public on the legal status of Austrians and Austria. Otto Habsburg with his influence in Washington can also lay claim to accomplishing the shift in American policies. (See page 34)

The political exile in New York generated the only significant Austrian publication. The Austro-American Tribune--initially named Freiheit für Österreich [Freedom for Austria]--however, quickly breached the boundaries of a strictly political organ, and during its short existence, 1942-1946, it was widely read, reaching exile communities as far as the one in Havana.

Robert, whose career as a journalist had been suspended in his early years in New York, began contributing regularly to the Austro-American Tribune in 1943. Although he could not earn a living with this work, it nevertheless allowed him to revive his journalistic career.²⁹

Although Robert's observations did not speak for everybody, turning to them today offers an immediate and direct look at the experience of adjusting to a strange land, and evokes, at times, a poignancy that the recollections in the interviews fifty years later do not always render.

²⁹After the war, Robert wrote increasingly for German language European newspapers and was able to carve out a niche for himself by stilling the hunger of Europeans for news from America. He specialized in reporting on the New York music scene, but, in addition, wrote also on different aspects of the American way of life. Supermarkets, drive-in movie theaters, fast food, and motels were, among other things, new and curious phenomena to the European reader (Robert, p.7).

IV. EXCURSUS: THE AUSTRO-AMERICAN TRIBUNE.

In early summer, 1942, the Austrian monthly Freiheit für Österreich began publication in New York City. In her brief study of this newspaper, Viktoria Hertling (1992) traces the reasons for the paper's conception to the rivalries between political factions dating back to Austria after World War I, when a new and a much smaller nation emerged from the ruins of the Hapsburg Empire. These rivalries continued through World War II, with most of the political leaders in exile disagreeing strongly over the future for Austria after the war, and competing for influence in the exile communities dispersed in different countries. The *Legitimisten* championed the establishment of a Constitutional Danubian Monarchy. This group counted prominent conservatives among its members: Martin Fuchs, Guido Zernatto, Hans Rott, Richard Nikolaus Coudenhove-Kalergi and, most important, the last heir of the Empire, Otto Habsburg. The Social Democrats, under Joseph Buttinger and Otto Bauer, and in America under Julius Deutsch, advocated the unification of the remainder of Austria with a democratic Germany, though they had sharply criticized Austria's *Anschluss* to fascist Germany.³⁰ The Communists wanted self-determination for

³⁰The goal of unification with a democratic Germany sprang from Otto Bauer's Austro-Marxist concept of an independent European path between the Western capitalist allies and the Stalinistic Soviet Union.

the Austrian people, and rejected both unification with Germany as well as the monarchistic restoration.

In the American exile these group rivalries flared up in the quest for political influence and representation. The progressive forces were particularly concerned with the political impact of the *Legitimisten*. Due to Otto Habsburg's high connections in Washington, and due to the infatuation that American Society felt for the heir of the Hapsburg Empire and his mother Zita, the *Legitimisten* had become unduly influential in American public life. Otto's idea, for example, to found an Austrian Battalion to fight along the Allied Forces for the liberation of Austria, was supported by American politicians in Washington. In a radio broadcast from November 1942, Dorothy Thompson exposed the plan,

Now, this week in the U.S. another political event has occurred which is giving rise to speculations all over the place. A private visitor in this country...celebrated his thirtieth birthday at the Essex House in New York. Five hundred persons attended a birthday banquet.

...His followers call him "His Imperial" and "Royal Majesty," "Emperor of Austro-Hungary." And it looks as though he got a birthday present, for it happened that on the day before his birthday the American Department of War announced that it was going to create an Austrian legion inside the American Army to work for the liberation of Austria. And according to an exchange of letters that were read at the banquet, the War Department intends to cooperate in this purpose with a committee set up by Otto, who calls himself, not Otto Habsburg, but Otto of Austria...

Indeed, Otto's birthday party was an immense celebration of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. The hall was decorated with the Star Spangled Banner, the Red-White-Red colors of postwar Austria, and the black and yellow flag of the Habsburgs. Three times during the evening the old Habsburg anthem "*Gott erhalte unsern Kaiser*" (sung to the same tune as "*Deutschland über alles*") was played--"God Preserve the Kaiser"--the Austrian Kaiser. Otto...said he looked forward to the day when, under the waving of the Austrian flag--he didn't say which flag--the Austrian unit would march into Vienna; and then read a letter from Mr. Stimson, the American Minister of War, also sent on November 19, accepting Otto's services in helping to form the Austrian unit...

Thompson went on to sharply criticize the project and concluded, "This bloody war over fundamental issues is not a Viennese operetta" (Thompson, D., 1942. In DÖW, Vol.2, 1995, p.90).³¹

To counter the *Legitimisten*, the Assembly for a Democratic Austrian Republic was founded April 25, 1942, and it represented a mostly communist and left-wing constituency. The Assembly's goals were to strengthen the

³¹The plan was also unpopular with the Austrian émigrés, precisely because of Otto's involvement, and did not succeed. For example: Leo heard about Otto's Austrian Battalion while serving in the American army and strongly rejected that idea. He remembers explaining to his captain, "I was born in a country where the Monarchy was put away with...Before I serve under an Austrian Monarch I will go over the hill, you can throw me in jail. I will fight it as much as a free soldier can do..." (Leo, p. 29-20).--In the same vein, Andreas, when he learned that Otto von Habsburg wanted to organize an Austrian Battalion, said, "This is totally out of the question. We threw him out in 1918, what is he doing now?" (Andreas, p.1).

opponents of fascism; to work for the self-determination of the Austrian people; to reject the *grossdeutsche Regelung*, (the Social Democratic resolution aimed at the unification with Germany); and lastly to reject the establishment of a Hapsburg Monarchy. The Assembly also wanted a publication, and therefore Freiheit für Österreich, the "Anti-Nazi Monthly," was founded. The physician, Dr. William Green, formerly Wilhelm Gründorfer, became chief editor. In Austria, Gründorfer had been a member of the illegal KPÖ, the Communist Party of Austria. He had repeatedly been imprisoned since 1927, and, after the *Anschluss*, he was one of the first pursued by the Nazis.³² Though not committed to any particular party, Freiheit für Österreich became known as a Communist paper, and to this day enjoys that reputation among the émigrés. Nevertheless, many non-Communists and even conservatives were among its contributors, and under Green's leadership the Freiheit für Österreich developed quickly into the organ representing the liberal forces of the Austrians in exile.

In July of 1943, Freiheit für Österreich changed its name to Austro-American Tribune (AAT). The editors assured

³²Through lucky circumstances Gründorfer and his wife were able to escape on skis into Switzerland, and finally reached the United States in 1940. Here, he officially changed his name to William Green, and practiced as a physician in Manhattan and New Jersey, until he returned to Vienna shortly after the war. (Hertling, p.38)

the readers that the original orientation of the newspaper would remain the same, though the drive had lost some of its urgency with the State Department's acceptance of Austria as the first victim of German fascism. Thus, one important goal that the newspaper had set for itself--to correct this "most dangerous Nazi lie" about the *Anschluss*, that Austria was a willing subject of inclusion into the German Reich, (AAT, July 1943)--was achieved. But more than anything else, the name change reflected the émigrés' changing attitude towards their host country. Unlike the other countries where Austrians had previously stayed--France, Switzerland, Czechoslovakia--³³the United States was a country of immigration, and here the processes of integration accelerated. The editors explained,

We gradually cease to be refugees...We new Americans--we Austrian-Americans--are intransigent enemies of fascism. Our sons and brothers are good soldiers...We work hard in the factories where the weapons for the great European offensive are being forged...The war can only be won by making use of all our energies and forces...The Austro-American Tribune, as the voice of Austrian-Americans, will try to add its modest but necessary contribution to this final battle against Hitler. (AAT, July 1943, in

³³Many of the Communist and Social Democratic leaders had been living in exile since Dollfuss' establishment of the *Ständestaat* in 1934, when the leftist parties were declared illegal. Paris, where Otto Bauer lived, and Prague were centers of the Austrian political exile.

Hertling, 1992, p.38)³⁴

But the meaning of the AAT was not confined to the fight against Hitler and fascism. In addition to being an information board for upcoming meetings, sports events, and lectures, the newspaper offered advice and guidance to the newcomers.

Beginning October 1943, the AAT published the *Kulturbeilage*, a supplement concerned with cultural affairs. In the following years the *Kulturbeilage* became an important forum for Austrian poets and writers. Poems by Ernst Waldinger and Theodor Kramer were published, as well as excerpts from works of Carl Zuckmayer, Alfred Polgar, F.C. Weiskopf, Alex Wedding, Günther Anders, Raoul Auernheimer, Ernst Lothar, Franz Theodor Czokor, Stefan Zweig, Mascha Kaléko and Heinrich Mann. By enabling these authors to continue writing in their native German and providing them with a readership, the AAT, in the judgment of Hertling,

...saved a larger group of writers from moral despair...The AAT stabilized and strengthened the shattered identity of the exiled and émigrés in the USA...Though the writers could not make a living by writing for the AAT, their experience of exile, however, was most certainly eased by the opportunity to write and publish, (Hertling, 1992, p.45).³⁴

³⁴My translation from the German.

True to his principle to not write about political matters, when Robert joined the AAT he became a regular contributor to the *Kulturbeilage*. For four years he wrote mostly book reviews, music critiques and interviews with artists. He celebrated Arnold Schoenberg's, (AAT, September 1944), and Fritz Kreisler's, (AAT, February 1945), seventieth birthdays, and Bruno Walter's fiftieth anniversary of conducting, (AAT, February 1944). He introduced his readers to the American magazine world, (AAT, May 1944), and provided orientation in the great variety of American radio shows, (AAT, March 1944).³⁵

However, he found his original voice in articles reflecting the émigré's experience. His first articles which looked back to Europe evoked images of exile, alienation and betrayal. They also alluded to the author's naiveté back then without any foreboding of the events of 1938.

In July 1943, Robert created his own column, the "New Yorker Sirk-Ecke."³⁶ He introduced the new column,

³⁵Robert wrote that there clearly existed favorites "among our circles", and he quoted a survey according to which a large number of the émigrés listened regularly to the philharmonic concerts on WABC, (AAT, March 1944).

³⁶*Sirk-Ecke* (literally Sirk-Corner) referred to a place in Vienna where, at the crossing of Kärntnerstrasse and Opernring, there existed a store with the name Sirk. The name is reminiscent of Karl Kraus who had also picked the *Sirk-Ecke* for his scenes in Die letzten Tage der Menschheit (The Last

First, a few clarifying words to introduce this new column: we won't bemoan the past, nor the things we lost or were robbed of. *Sirk-Ecke* is only a symbol to us. Once it encompassed everything that belonged to a world capital... everything that was new, interesting, more or less important, the gossip corner of a city. We would like to translate the *Sirk-Ecke* into New York. To be sure, many things have changed, mostly to our benefit and advantage: Over there we would sneak around the *Sirk-Ecke* either wearing the Star of David or with our heads lowered--if at all. Here we are new and free people in a free country. (AAT, July 1943)

He continued to express the themes he articulated before--exile, alienation, gratefulness towards America, concerns about the people left behind. Yet, faithful to its original purpose, the *Sirk-Ecke* always had space for a light-hearted humorous anecdote as well as some gossip about prominent Austrians in exile. The reader learned, for example, that Anna Freud received her British citizenship, (AAT, July 1943), and that a young man was healed from depression by sucking on a milk bottle for two weeks (AAT, April 1947). The *Sirk-Ecke* kept track of the cultural activities of Austrian artists and writers, and informed its readers about their performances, as when it announced the appearance of Marta Eggerth and Jan Kiepura on Broadway in "The Merry Widow" (AAT, July 1943).

But above all, the new column *Sirk-Ecke* became Robert's

Days of Mankind).

vehicle for his observations of, and his engagements with, daily life in America. The brief vignettes collected here document the process of the newcomer--"I was a stupid greenhorn" (Interview Robert, p.2).--adjusting to the new environment, and through those vignettes one can observe the shift of an identity which has focused on the experience of expulsion and exile to one that begins defining itself increasingly as American.³⁷

In 1944, Robert reported that the prevailing question among émigrés had changed from "When did you arrive?" to "When will you receive your American citizenship?" (And give up Austrian citizenship.) Apparently, as soon as possible--after five years of living in the U.S.--the refugees applied for citizenship,³⁸ and with American citizenship the

³⁷The re-naming of the *Sirk-Ecke* to *New Yorker Notizen*, which translates as Notes from New York, in June 1944, underscores this process of Americanization. Similarly, in 1943, Robert had described how he missed the *Feuilleton*, the section of the European newspaper which does not deal with the news, but rather with thoughtful deliberations on theatre, books, and the wonders of some foreign country. (*AAT*, October 1943) Less than a year later, he now referred critically to the "long winded, winding, pedagogic style so common in the *Feuilleton* section of a European paper," and praised instead the "short, concise and straightforward style" of American journalism. He especially recommended Newsweek, The New Yorker, Saturday Review of Literature for the émigrés to look into further. (*AAT*, May 1944)

³⁸This observation is emphasized by Davie's (1947) comprehensive study which found among other things that many of the refugees were already American citizens, or were in the process of becoming citizens. (See **CHAPTER 1**, the "Research on Exile")

obligation arose to familiarize oneself with some "American facts of interest," (AAT, 1944). The list Robert subsequently presented contained such facts as the highest waterfall in the United States, the number of employees at the *New York Public Library*, the difference between the Presidential and the U.S. flag, and the first Jewish congregation in New York City (AAT, 1944). Robert also encouraged his readers to tackle one important icon of American culture: baseball. Acknowledging his general ignorance of this sport, "... we understood everything about soccer, but we still have a lot to learn about baseball!" (AAT, October 1943). He visited a ballgame in Brooklyn and returned with the not too fervent recommendation, "It is a fresh, interesting and lively sport. Want to try it? Go and see for yourself!" (AAT, June 1944).

Robert humorously packaged the difficulties with the new language, the serious side of which has been described in the context of professional writers by Maimann (1981). He delighted in the fact that the literal translation of German into English, with heavy help of the dictionary, often resulted in incomprehensible nonsense sentences: "My expensive lady! In my room is a terrible train. If you cannot fix the ceiling, I have to undress tomorrow!" For a while, the creation of nonsense phrases became a fad among many émigrés who enjoyed playing this language game--to come up with ever more confusing or funny literal translations.

Another element is added to the language confusion by the inclination of Americans "to spell everything," often with such amazing speed that, instead of creating clarity, it left the newcomer bewildered (AAT, April 1945).

However, the joy of conquering the New World and the excitement of being an American citizen--shown, for example, decisively on November 1944, when Robert's column consisted of only three sentences: "This is election month. Sorry, we are all out. Out--for Franklin Delano Roosevelt."³⁹--was tempered by the recognition of anti-foreign and anti-Semitic feelings expressed in parts of the American press, and more frequently in *Letters to the Editors*. These voices argued for a limit to immigrants, and the Daily News, for example, asked for a Palestinian solution to the Jewish refugee problem instead of allowing the refugees to come to the United States (AAT, April 1944). Again and again, Robert pointed his finger at these publicized, more or less subtle manifestations of xenophobia--for example, a company advertising itself as owned and operated in America by **Americans**, (AAT, June 1946, emphasis by Robert)--and countered them by appealing to the idea of America as a melting pot. The true strength of this country, he argued,

³⁹In contrast to the other articles which were written in German, this note appeared in English in the original.

"exists only because of the thousands and thousands of elements having melted harmoniously in it" (AAT, October 1944).

There is another reason why the émigré could feel alienated in the new surroundings, one which was grounded in his or her continuing integration of a European perspective. Robert considered, for example, the headlines in the New York press towards the end of the war--"Meat Famine in New York!" "City without Cigarettes!" "Dangerous Butter Shortage" "Pleasure Driving Forbidden"--as obscenely exaggerated in the face of Europe's destruction and misery, (AAT, January 1945). And in January 1946, "the first New Year in peace," Robert noted how quickly life had become normal again. There were bright lights at Times Square, no more rations on food, cigarettes, alcohol and fuel. "Who thinks of the hungry and cold in Europe, and who thinks of the many whose deaths allowed the return to normalcy?" (AAT, January 1946). When he reviewed Erich Maria Remarque's book Arch of Triumph, he wrote, "America won't love this book since America does not know the putrid smell of decay, since it does not know the loss of home and homelessness and the suitcase life wandering from hotel to hotel, since it can't imagine a sub-human being ..." (AAT, February 1946).⁴⁰

⁴⁰See **CHAPTER 10** for a fuller discussion of *Heimat* which is the German word for this profound sense of home.

This was the description of the refugee's life, which, as Robert suggested, was incomprehensible and alien to American experience.

It is in this context of ambivalent emotions--gratefulness for having been given a new home in America, and alienation towards America based on a different orientation and experience--that the remark of a refugee becomes intelligible. "Ja, happy bin ich, aber nicht glücklich!", (AAT, March 1946).⁴¹

⁴¹"Yes, I am happy, but I am not glücklich!", where *glücklich* is the German word for the English happy. The utterance apparently reveals the truthful irony of the émigré's experience, to be unable to feel fully happy. He or she may be happy in the American sense, but not in the Viennese sense, because that world is forever gone.

CHAPTER 8
BETWEEN REMEMBERING AND FORGETTING

INTRODUCTION

In 1942, Siegfried Altmann, Frederick Taylor, Guido Zernatto, and Irene Harand founded the AUSTRIAN INSTITUTE for Science, Art and Economy in New York City. But unlike the Austro-American Tribune, which grew out of the leftist faction of the political exile, the AUSTRIAN INSTITUTE was formed "within the framework of the Austrian National Committee" (Letter from the founders to the U.S. Department of State, April 22, 1943), an umbrella organization uniting the bourgeois-conservative faction.

Never consolidated, this bourgeois-conservative faction consisted of ever new political reconfigurations, manipulated behind the scene by Otto Habsburg and his allies.¹ After the United States entered the war, attempts at joining all exile forces were made to counter the stigmatization of Austrians as enemy aliens. One last effort occurred in February, 1942, when the Austrian National

¹Otto Habsburg's influence began to diminish only with the failure of his Military Committee to assemble an Austrian Battalion to fight along with the American forces.

Committee, ANC, was founded with Hans Rott and Guido Zernatto, both former cabinet members in the Patriotic Front of Kurt von Schuschnigg, Austria's last chancellor before the *Anschluss*, as co-presidents. Calling upon all Austrian factions, and defining itself as a non-partisan and non-membership-organization, the ANC vowed to fight for Austria's independence and liberation from Nazi occupation, and counted among its members Dietrich Hildebrandt and Walter Schuschnigg as representatives of the Free Austrian Movement, Martin Fuchs, an exponent of the Young Conservative Austrians, and Ferdinand Czernin who represented the Austrian Action.² However, internal

²The Free Austrian Movement, FAM, was founded in 1939 by Hans Rott with the support of Otto Habsburg. Its goals encompassed the recognition of Austria's independence, liberation from its oppressors, and the fostering of the understanding between the Danubian peoples. The German explication of the last goal--the fostering of the understanding among the Danubian peoples--elaborated further "that during the Monarchy the Austrian people were far better off and happier than after 1918", and "The FAM does not hesitate to stress this fact and voice this opinion". (Ingram, 1976, Die konservative Emigration aus Österreich in den Vereinigten Staaten in Amerika, 1938 - 1945, Vienna, DÖW Bibliothek 16794, p.55) In terms of Austria's independence, the explication said that Austria will find its place "within the framework of a federation of Danubian peoples". (p.56) Although Otto Habsburg was not part of the FAM's leadership, he nevertheless maintained continuous contact with its leading members--Hans Rott, Walter Schuschnigg, Peter Paul, Professor Dietrich Hildebrandt, Professor Siegfried Altmann, Professor Erich Hula, and Frederick Taylor--thus suggesting, compounded by the above-mentioned German explications, the hidden monarchistic orientation of the FAM. (Ingram, p.56) Goldner's (1985) account of the FAM adds an observation which speaks to Altmann's involvement with this organization. Altmann, who maintained close connections to Jewish exile organizations (he was chairman of the Austrian Jewish Representative Committee, a group of Zionists and Jewish-

quarrels, mostly between *Legitimisten* and non-*Legitimisten*, hindered the ANC from effectively pursuing its goal of a representative government in exile.³ And, from the beginning, the Social Democrats rejected the legitimacy of this new organization and refused to collaborate. Instead, they soon after founded the Austrian Labor Committee and the Assembly for a Democratic Austrian Republic. Thus, like previous attempts, this last effort at unification of Austrian exile politics remained unsuccessful.⁴ It was only after the war that the chasm between the leftist and conservative factions of exile was bridged, when the Associated Austrian Relief, headed by Julius Deutsch, Hans Rott, and the writer Ferdinand Bruckner, was founded in the united effort to help the defeated Austria.

Nationals who, within the framework of the World Jewish Congress, had taken the responsibility to speak for the silenced Austrian Jews), served on the FAM's board of directors and was supposed to dispel the accusations of anti-Semitism which were repeatedly voiced against the FAM and Hans Rott in particular. (p.146)

³The Young Conservative Austrians and the Austrian Action, which did not have a monarchistic agenda, had left the ANC by the end of 1942, thus reducing the ANC to a mere branch of the FAM.

⁴However, the ANC did not dissolve immediately. A note in the Aufbau from March, 1944, mentioned that the ANC shared its "scrupulously clean and polished offices" with the Christian Social Party, the Free Austrian Movement, and the new AUSTRIAN INSTITUTE. The Aufbau continued to describe the AUSTRIAN INSTITUTE as a group of Austrians consisting of "university professors and some members of the former Military Committee, the Austrian National Committee and the Free Austrian Movement". (DÖW, Vol.2, p.299)

Yet, Austrians in exile could retreat to a realm which they shared despite their notorious differences. Playing down the criticism of Austrians lacking unity, Ludwig Ullmann, the leftist journalist, observed,

The small, unnecessary, and clumsy behaviors that Austrian groups and splinter groups allowed themselves don't take away from the true Austrian unity: that of a feeling for culture and of cultural achievement. (Austrian Democratic Review. Österreichische Rundschau, January, 1944, p.3, quoted in DÖW, Vol.2, p.293)⁵

The AUSTRIAN INSTITUTE was one of several organizations committed to Austrian culture. Though--true to the tenor of the time and the political ferment out of which it grew--the INSTITUTE's early announcement of its existence described a primarily political purpose, by the end of the war, when such distinctions had become obsolete, the political was purged from the INSTITUTE's mission.⁶

But the commitment to Austrian culture was not a straightforward matter. Many émigrés were deeply suspect of Austria, their feelings towards Austrian culture torn between love and resentment. In fact, this ambiguity was

⁵My translation from the German.

⁶See the letter to the U.S. Department of State on April 22nd, 1943, and the Certificate of Incorporation, July 21st, 1947, detailing the INSTITUTE's goals. (**CHAPTER 1**, "The AUSTRIAN FORUM")

conducive to the conception of many cultural organizations emerging from the exile milieu. Alfred Farau, the long time Vice President and literary director of the AUSTRIAN INSTITUTE, asserted,

The Austro-American organizations in New York, Boston, and other cities, were generated from those contradictions and confusions of mind. That wasn't an easy thing. It was a damn hard decision, back then, in the midst of the war, to carry on with the culture of a lost home, against a wall erected by the antipathy of the American public and the loathing of the persecuted. It was difficult to resolve this question of conscience: whether one was permitted to save the good of the past for a wished-for future without being viewed by Christian Austrians as an unconvincible weakling, and by Jewish emigrants as a spineless character. (Farau, 1992, p.20)⁷

Among the study participants, Clementine, on the one hand, and Marie and her husband on the other, exemplify the two poles of the émigrés' attitude and behavior towards the AUSTRIAN INSTITUTE. Whereas Clementine, out of a sense of patriotic duty, joined the AUSTRIAN INSTITUTE from its beginning, Marie and her husband wished to distance themselves from such a cultural organization. "What kind of culture is that, [which can commit such atrocities], in the language of Goethe?" (Marie, p.3). Only after their first trip back to Vienna in 1970 did they seek out the AUSTRIAN

⁷A collection of Farau's German lectures, edited by Harry Zohn, was published in 1992. The above quotation is from his lecture, *Aus dem Tagebuch eines Emigranten*, [From the Emigrant's Diary].--My translation from the German.

INSTITUTE.

It is against this background of mixed emotions that the story of the AUSTRIAN INSTITUTE unfolds. To be sure, there is more than one narrative embedded in the INSTITUTE'S fifty year history. The story in this dissertation is one that made the best sense to me in reconstructing the past of an organization that I encountered only at the very end of its existence. For its earlier years, I depended on other sources of information: archival material, program notes, interviews. Nonetheless, there remained gaps.⁸ In order for the story to come alive, and without the possibility of drawing on my own observations, I needed to make use of imagination, which is perhaps a common task for historians. For a non-historian, however, this represented an unfamiliar and rather adventurous challenge. Though leaping into unknown areas, my imaginative thinking was hardly arbitrary. Rather, it was always checked by the bits and pieces of information available which, as messy as they sometimes seemed, functioned as guideposts in the process of making sense of the past.

⁸For example, the study participants who knew the INSTITUTE from its earliest years--Clementine, Stella, Erna--contributed little. Their memories frail, many of the events from fifty years ago have faded away. Clementine, though a member of the INSTITUTE, was primarily concerned with telling the story of the organization she was involved in, the Austrian Action. (See **CHAPTER 7**)

The material is structured chronologically, organized around the presidents of the AUSTRIAN INSTITUTE--Siegfried Altmann, Irene Harand, Margarete Bush, Marta Eggerth--each of whom left the organization with his or her own distinct imprint.⁹ These distinct imprints can be viewed as the "frames" within which a collective memory, as a "set of ideas, images, feelings about the past" (Irwin-Zarecka, 1994, p.4), is articulated. "Frames of remembrance" were introduced by Irwin-Zarecka who wrote,

Generously borrowed from Erving Goffman's approach to social situations as well as "texts," questions about framing direct our attention to the powers inherent in public articulation of collective memory to influence the private makings of sense. Questions about framing are essentially about limits to the scope of possible interpretations. Their aim is not to freeze one particular "reading" as the correct one, rather, it is to establish the likely range of meanings. (Irwin-Zarecka, 1994, p.4)

In its fifty year history, the INSTITUTE's range of meanings changed. Embarking on a journey that started from self-help and moved through self-expression to nostalgia,

⁹The presidents Frederick Taylor and Hans Bernfeld were not included in this list because of their lesser impact on the INSTITUTE.

Taylor, the INSTITUTE's early supporter and financial backer, functioned officially as its first president, (1942-1959), however, Siegfried Altmann was the creative power in terms of shaping the organization. The AUSTRIAN INSTITUTE was Altmann's project, and after Taylor's death in 1959, he also officially took over the presidency.

Hans Bernfeld's presidency, (1982-1985), though memorable in securing the INSTITUTE's survival, was too short to leave a distinct mark on its culture.

the INSTITUTE, as it lost old meanings and gained new ones, was joined by different people at different times. At the end, the INSTITUTE's disappearance not only signaled the end of an epoch, but was also experienced by many as a personal loss.

There is yet another aspect to the story. From its early years, the INSTITUTE's history was closely linked to official Austria. Austria's representatives, who came to New York City and collaborated with the leaders of the exile organization, had to venture into sensitive political territory, as Nazi terror and the war were only recent history, and the question of guilt lingered underneath the surface of any relationship between an Austrian official and members of the émigré community. That a potentially stormy climate remained calm must be attributed to the people involved. Thus, embedded in the story of the AUSTRIAN INSTITUTE is also the story of people from the two sides of history reaching out to each other.

I. THE SIEGFRIED ALTMANN ERA.

From its beginning the AUSTRIAN INSTITUTE was able to enlist a great number of accomplished personalities, both as members and as contributors to its events. There were world famous scientists and intellectuals, among them the Nobel Prize winners O. Loewi and V.F. Hess, the musicians and composers B. Walter, P. Wittgenstein, and E.W. Korngold, as well as prominent representatives of the conservative political exile.¹⁰ One of them, the wealthy émigré Frederick Taylor, served as the INSTITUTE's first president.¹¹ But it was Siegfried Altmann who was at the center of the INSTITUTE's activities, and who made the organization his own.

Siegfried Altmann had been involved in numerous exile organizations, but it was this new AUSTRIAN INSTITUTE that he was able to shape after his own vision, prompting Bruno Walter to ask pointedly, of Altmann and the INSTITUTE, "Don't I deal here with one and the same?" (Postcard to Altmann in

¹⁰There were also those who kept at a distance. Artur Schnabel, for example, declining Altmann's invitation to perform at the INSTITUTE, wrote, "...because for diverse reasons (perhaps sentimental reasons) I am not yet prepared to participate in some kind of public event related to Germany or Austria. (Postcard to Altmann from March 4, 1948. Leo Baeck Institute: Altmann Collection.)

¹¹For more on Frederick Taylor, see **APPENDIX 2**, p.3.

1949. Leo Baeck Institute: Altmann Collection). In his early fifties when he arrived in New York, and despite being a noted expert in his work with the blind, Altmann was not able to establish himself professionally in America. Instead, the INSTITUTE became his "second work of life" (Mimi Grossberg, 1971, p.110). His commitment and his many connections in the exile community created a foundation for the INSTITUTE to build on, and when, under his leadership, the INSTITUTE shifted its narrowly defined political goals to the broader cultural realm, he helped it stake out an identity and a *raison-d'être* which enabled it to survive the war.¹²

This identity was grounded in a strong patriotic feeling for Austria and the commitment to strive for Austria's "proper" place in the world. The patriotic attitude prevailed particularly in the INSTITUTE's early endeavors where the cultural became a means to the end of establishing Austria's rank among other nations. The introductory remarks to the INSTITUTE's events¹³ were a repeat expression of

¹²For more on Siegfried Altmann, see **APPENDIX 2**, p.1.

¹³I found these introductory notes among the archival material stored in the boxes at the *Austrian Cultural Institute*. Containing clear references, they were easy to connect to individual events. However, their authorship is uncertain. But considering his prominent role in the INSTITUTE, an informed guess will attribute the remarks to Siegfried Altmann. Also, the writing style is reminiscent of Altmann's memoir which he wrote for the Leo Baeck Institute at the end of his life.

that sentiment, which interpreted the recent past to allow Austria to emerge as the innocent victim of German Nazism.

We remember with sadness the world's great silence when the German drill-step trampled Austria down, when the sun above our homeland darkened by bomber wings.--Shortly after, gloom and vileness in the sign of the swastika ruled all Europe... (Introduction to Oscar Karbach's lecture *Die Bedeutung der Juli-Ereignisse 1934 innerhalb der Entwicklung des deutschen Imperialismus* [The Meaning of the Events of July 1934 in the Development of German Imperialism], June 24, 1944)¹⁴

Fellow Austrians in Austria were evoked with sympathy.

In an hour of saddest memories, we gather today around a shared great good: Austria! Worried and tormented, every true Austrian in the homeland will have the same thoughts that we express today; worried and tormented, everybody over there will feel most sincerely, will understand most profoundly, of what we have been robbed... (Introduction to Paul Nettl's lecture *Musik in Österreich* [Music in Austria], April 1, 1944)¹⁵

Those fellow Austrians who went astray after 1938 could be brought back to the right path since they--as Austrians, in contrast to Germans--possessed the redeeming qualities of piety and humanity.¹⁶

¹⁴My translation from the German.

¹⁵My translation from the German.

¹⁶This is said in citation of a Hugo von Hofmannsthal poem according to which the difference between a German and an Austrian is grounded, among other things, in the greater piety and humanity of the Austrian.

The hearts of those to whom humanity is particular can be healed because, when they have forgotten themselves, they are able to receive God's strength either through nature or through His teachings. (Introduction to *Singspiel im alten Wien* [Musical Play in the Old Vienna] with Hertha Maria Rohn and Paul Nettel, December 15, 1944)¹⁷

However, a large segment of the émigré community abstained from the patriotic sentiment expressed at the INSTITUTE, a failure which did not go unnoticed. The introductory remarks to Ludwig von Mises' lecture on *Das Problem der Lebensfähigkeit Österreichs* [The Problem of Austria's Viability], (January 20, 1944), observed with concern "the widespread apathy towards Austria among Austrians living in the United States." The INSTITUTE, therefore, planned a series of lectures "...to change the indifference and at times even resistance against our former homeland into affection and love again."

The INSTITUTE's "frame of remembrance," so far expressed only informally, became an official statement at the end of World War II when the organization formulated its program. The "General Introduction" to this program, speaking of the INSTITUTE's vision and overall purpose, now formally inscribed the patriotic outlook of the AUSTRIAN INSTITUTE.

¹⁷My translation from the German.

This document presented a baffling view of an idealized and pure Austria, a vision projected by the same people who had experienced and barely escaped the wicked forces raging there. Yet, as perplexing as the document reads today, it can perhaps be best understood as an emotional survival strategy: For those who felt both thoroughly foreign in America as well as detached from the Jewish experience, the Austrian side of their being remained the only ground to fall back on.¹⁸

General Introduction of the
AUSTRIAN INSTITUTE Program (circa 1946)

The great turning point for Austria has come; the past does not allow any more doubt regarding Austria's independence, and her historical and cultural rank; the country is finally where Austrian thought has envisioned her to be.

The separating line between the instigators of the world disaster and Austria has been drawn. Austria can finally claim a better future for herself.

Up to now, Austria has unfortunately not been able to show and teach the world what Austria is, her goodness and preciousness, her honesty and diligence, what her traditions mean, and how much force she is able to muster to work on difficult political and social tasks. Austria has thus lost the unforeseeable possibilities that other countries of a lesser rank have been able to fully exploit for themselves.

¹⁸In that sense, the victims of persecution "needed" to project a blameless Austria. In line with this argument, blameless Austria--herself a victim of outside-bred Nazism--thus became the necessary construction to validate an identity that, otherwise, would not have been tolerable.

A country is not only what she makes of herself, but what others make of her. Her destiny depends on how she affects other countries. Austria has become poor but her mission has not diminished, nor has her dignity, her order, her task to function as a bridge between the East and the West, her natural destiny as the heart of Europe.

This is reason enough for the world, and especially for America, to finally draw the correct image of Austria and to awaken the right feeling for her.

A country's reputation is not based on what has developed inside, but rather what has been achieved outside her borders. In order to accomplish this, after many years of experience, we have the vision and the knowledge to follow the right path and finish all the necessary tasks. We have a circle of knowledgable and capable personalities who have the practical understanding to evaluate the present conditions as they are related to the vital questions, the development and the ascension of a country and a people, and thus lead to a better future for Austria.¹⁹

This "General Introduction" was followed by an ambitious outline of the INSTITUTE's future activities which, in its further specifications, easily read as an official governmental task description. Two main areas of work were envisioned: (1) to unite and lead the dispersed Austrian activities in the United States and America as a whole, and (2) to create, among important U.S. institutions and organizations, as well as the general population, an interest in Austria, and to broaden and deepen the cultural and economic collaboration between the two countries.

¹⁹My translation from the German.

It was the spirit of this program that made it possible for the INSTITUTE to receive lecturers and performers from Austria soon after the war. One of the first Austrians to speak at the INSTITUTE was Oskar Heitler, who lectured on citizenship, de-Nazification, and retribution in the new Austrian constitution, (March 23, 1946). Others followed. The surgeon Wolfgang Denk, for example, spoke about *Vienna and Austria*, (April 22, 1948), and Georg Zimmermann, the Austrian Finance Minister, on *Austria's Financial Reconstruction*, (October 6, 1948). That the travelers from the former homeland found a friendly audience in New York City is evidenced by the introduction accorded to Zimmermann.

Thank God, after her seven year long "home coming", Austria has returned to herself and begun to reconstruct her national strength and reconstitute her own public life. Only three years have passed since Austria was released from the darkest period of her history, and has since set about wandering again on the bright path to the top...We want to serve Austria on her path, and we will serve her best by serving the times and her relations to the U.S.A.²⁰

²⁰However, the climate in New York City for these Austrian visitors was more complicated than suggested by the INSTITUTE's welcome. The archival material of the INSTITUTE contains letters addressed to the organization expressing feelings ranging from concern to outrage regarding Austria's past and reviving anti-Semitism. For example, a doctor writing anonymously used the opportunity of Wolfgang Denk's lecture to discuss the anti-Semitism in the Viennese medical profession. Though it was true, he wrote, that there existed a high percentage of Jewish doctors, their number in surgery was extremely limited due to the pervasive anti-Semitic culture of that medical specialty. The author recalled an incident when, in a complicated medical case, he needed the assistance of a

In addition to opening its doors to people from Austria and providing them with a much needed forum, the INSTITUTE served as host to newly established Austrian institutions in New York. The Austrian Consulate, the Austrian Chamber of Commerce and the Austrian Information Service were among those which routinely announced and organized their events in conjunction with the AUSTRIAN INSTITUTE. And Austrian governmental officials served on the INSTITUTE's board, further strengthening ties to the émigré organization. For years, the first consul general, Franz Matsch, was an honorary member, and special envoy Ludwig Kleinwächter was honorary president of the INSTITUTE, establishing a tradition that would be picked up by later generations of the Austrian diplomatic corps.

surgeon, the reason for his encounter with Denk. Denk's behavior was ethically improper, and it was only "the sticky anti-Semitic atmosphere of the pre-Hitler era" that prevented the letter writer from reporting the incident.

Once and for all one should do away with these tendentious lies, according to which Austria was Hitler's victim. Everybody who lived in Austria before the Germans marched in knew too well that Austria's population awaited the German Führer with great impatience. Since Austria became world famous for its anti-Semitic attitudes, Hitler and Göring praised it for being even more dynamic and anti-Semitic than their own Nazi murderers.

(Both quotations are my translation from the German.)

The AUSTRIAN INSTITUTE was a success. The usually monthly events were held at the New Amsterdam Room at Rockefeller Center, which could accomodate 150 people. Often this capacity did not suffice, as program announcements soon began to indicate by asking guests to make reservations early.

I would like to apologize to those of you who couldn't find a chair. We do like to have our guests enjoy the evenings arranged by the AUSTRIAN INSTITUTE in comfort, and for this reason have stopped giving out tickets and invitations days ago. We also have tried our best to discourage people calling us for reservations from coming but as all can see it didn't help very much. So it really is not our fault and I beg you to excuse the little inconvenience for which--I feel certain--the lecture will be ample compensation. (Introduction to Theodore Schmidt's lecture *The Art Treasures of Vienna with Color Slides* by Francis Mayer, April 25, 1951)

But it was not only the cultural outlook and programs that drew people into the INSTITUTE. The organization fulfilled an important social function as well. Especially after the upheavals of the war, the opportunity to reconnect with people from home was appreciated. Beatrice, who knew of the INSTITUTE through an uncle, recalls,

...he was very eager to go to all the events of the AUSTRIAN INSTITUTE, you know, Nestroy's *Einen Jux will er sich machen*, that's the basis for *Hello Dolly*, but it's much better, so he would always call up and say, "Oh, you have to go, you have to go." So then we realized we have to go and we really enjoyed it. You know, at first you thought you tried to be Americanized, we don't want to hear too much. But afterwards I saw how good it was to keep in touch with people...

this was in the Fifties... (Beatrice, p.3-4)

The AUSTRIAN INSTITUTE was funded mostly by its members' contributions. Members paid twenty-five cents, non-members sixty cents for a ticket in December 1944.²¹ For additional financial support, Altmann tirelessly appealed to his wealthy friends. However, as time went by, "...it was tragic to watch how this became increasingly difficult for him since one after the other died" (Mimi Grossberg, 1971, p.110). The introductory remarks to Alfred Farau's lecture *Raimund, Nestroy, Grillparzer über Anzengruber und Rosegger zu Altenberg und Polgar und zu Kraus*, (February 7, 1957), addressed the issue of financial difficulties explicitly.

As you well know, our work depends on the means available to us. In contrast to almost all the other foreign cultural organizations, we work without any official support and try to cover our expenses with member contributions. Today, I would like to ask you to enlist members among your friends, or to provide us with addresses so that we can enlarge our circle and thus intensify our activities.

By that time, 1957, the INSTITUTE's events were no longer held in the New Amsterdam Room, a fact which perhaps illustrated the organization's increasing financial strain. First, (1955-1957), they were held in the Austrian General Consulate at 69th Street between Madison and Park Avenues,

²¹Later the membership fee was collected yearly and increased from \$5 to \$8 in 1965. It reached \$35 in 1992.

then, (1957-1963), the Liederkrantz at 87th Street and Fifth Avenue assumed that function, until the INSTITUTE--under its changed name AUSTRIAN FORUM--found a permanent home in the newly established Austrian Cultural Institute on East 52nd Street.

I.1. THE AUSTRIAN CULTURAL INSTITUTE AND THE AUSTRIAN FORUM.

When, in the 1950s, the Austrian government decided to establish its first cultural institute in the United States in New York City, the collaboration between the INSTITUTE and official Austria became still closer. But this tight collaboration was not without potential conflict. After all, the purpose of the new Austrian Cultural Institute extended into areas that had been the self-ascribed tasks of the AUSTRIAN INSTITUTE, creating an overlap which made it rather difficult to distinguish the two. However, these two organizations did not operate on equal terms. The experience and the connections of the exile organization were eventually offset by the prestige and financial resources available to the official Austrian Cultural Institute. Over time, the INSTITUTE's identity blurred and its original "mission" increasingly eroded. It was owing to the sensitivity of the Austrian officials and to Altmann's wish to secure the INSTITUTE's long-term survival, that this transition--against the backdrop of the recent history--was

accomplished without major misgivings.

In 1956, Wilhelm Schlag from the Austrian Department of Education was entrusted with putting into place the Austrian Cultural Institute in New York City. Schlag set up a provisional office in the Shelton Towers Hotel at Lexington and 49th Street, and immediately began to seek a collaboration with the exile organization. He was particularly fond of Siegfried Altmann, "The soul of the AUSTRIAN INSTITUTE...A comprehensively educated man. Especially literary very educated" (Schlag, p.1).²² This collaboration occurred in an environment where the memories of persecution and expulsion were still very much alive. The émigrés "...related to me cautiously. I used to be on the other side," Schlag remembers (p.7), referring to his service in the *Wehrmacht*.²³ "Of course, personally, I was guiltless, but somehow, one shared a responsibility..." (p.4)

I felt a commitment, personally. I cared very much for these Austrians, for this Austrian colony. These were people who would have never left Austria. Through the events of 1938, they were forced to leave. (Schlag, p.3)

²²All quotations from Schlag's interview are my translations.

²³As a P.O.W. in the U.S., Schlag was interrogated by Austrian refugees working for the Office of Strategic Services, O.S.S., the precursor of the C.I.A.

Schlag found a suitable site for the Austrian project in a townhouse on 52nd Street between Fifth and Madison Avenues. But, first, one problem required a solution: All the cultural institutes that Austria maintained at that time--in London, Paris, Cairo, Istanbul, Rome, Teheran--carried the name Austrian Institute. In New York, this name was taken. Schlag took this problem to the émigré group.

We said, "The best name would be Austrian Institute." And then I got them to agree to re-name themselves AUSTRIAN FORUM and to let us have the name Austrian Institute. But I bound myself--with the Department of Education's approval--that they got an office and the right to have their events in our building. And they accepted.
(Schlag, p.2)

The agreement was not to everybody's liking. After all, the émigré organization had existed and performed pioneering work for twenty years. Schlag recalls voices expressing discontent. "Here come the Austrians and want our established name!--So, they probably weren't happy in the beginning...But the deal had advantages as well, a rent-free space. They didn't have a lot of money, only a small budget"
(Schlag, p.6-7).

After extensive remodelling supervised by prominent architects, the Austrian Cultural Institute opened in the Spring of 1963.

Professor Altmann had his office on the third floor...Facing 52nd Street, there were two rooms.

The left was my deputy's room, and on the right, there was a *Kabinett*, a small side room, Professor Altmann's office. He could come anytime, whenever he wanted. He had the keys. (Schlag, p.2-3)

A close collaboration between the Austrian Cultural Institute and the AUSTRIAN FORUM began. Many programs were organized jointly, and the members of the FORUM were customarily invited to Institute events.

We collaborated very well...With most of them, with those who came to us, I had very good relationships.²⁴ They were always invited to our events. They were always on our guest list. (Schlag, p.3-4)

But the commitment that Schlag felt was not necessarily shared by the administration back in Vienna. The policy of collaboration--though also advantageous as it saved the Institute's guests from Austria, who were often unknown in New York, from the embarrassment of speaking or performing in front of empty seats--was criticized since it interfered with the official purpose of the Institute.

You are not there to win or reconcile former Austrians. It wasn't expressed that way...but these Austrians were not the primary target. Born Americans are the target group, and not homesick Austrians who possibly know more about Austria than we. (Schlag, p.4)

²⁴Schlag was aware that he dealt only with a subgroup of Austrian émigrés. "Those who didn't like Austria and the Austrians, didn't come. Those weren't looking for contacts, even avoided them" (Schlag, p.7).

When Schlag was about to return to Vienna after eleven years, in 1967, he was showered with letters from the émigré community bidding farewell. There were letters by the writers Johannes Urzidil and Ernst Waldinger. The writer Valerie Herz-Stern dedicated her essay *Erinnern und Vergessen* [*Remembering and Forgetting*] to Schlag with the wish that her "psychological study" can perhaps "...unveil to you the mental conflict of us immigrants, many of whom you have met and helped." Herz-Stern argues that the conflict results from the "never ending" tension between remembering and forgetting.

"Reasonable" people always tell us that looking back doesn't make sense, it only hinders the adjustment to the new circumstances. In addition, it means being "unfaithful" towards the new home. Well--we are grateful and also faithful to our new country. And for good reasons. But does that, under all circumstances, require unfaithfulness towards everything that used to be? Towards our former home which has formed our nature through thousands of impressions during many years? (p.2)²⁵

Irene Harand, then president, marked the occasion with a special event at the FORUM, *Dank an Dr. Schlag* [*Thank you to Dr. Schlag*], on February 21, 1967. And years later in a letter to Schlag, she recalled,

...with joy and satisfaction the time when you led the Austrian Institute. We remember your

²⁵My translation from the German.

achievements, and how, in the beginning, the collaboration and the understanding were not at all easy, and how, little by little, an honest friendship developed which was finally of benefit to our goals and endeavors. (December 2, 1971)²⁶

And Ernst Waldinger dedicated his poem *Von der Liebe zur Heimat II*²⁷ to Schlag. In choosing to share with Schlag his deep conflicting emotions regarding his former home, Waldinger's dedication is yet another testimony to the trusting relationship that many émigrés formed with this Austrian official. The poem concludes with the lines,

Und wenn ich auch schon lange nicht mehr schrie,
So stöhn ich doch--das Leid ist nicht verklungen--
Gedenke ich des Unheils Wann und Wie
Aus des Morastes tiefsten Niederungen--

Ich lieb und lob, fall es mir oft auch schwer;
Schmerzt nicht den Liebenden das Unrecht mehr?

And if I have long ceased to scream,
Yet, I groan--the pain has not died away--
I think of harm's When and How arising
From the morass' deepest lowlands--

I love and praise my home, although it often be
difficult;
Doesn't injustice hurt the lover more?

²⁶My translation from the German.

²⁷About the Love for One's Home II is a supplement to the poem *Von der Liebe zur Heimat*. In Waldinger, E. (1990). The English verse is my translation from the German.

From this date (1963) on, the stories of the AUSTRIAN FORUM and the Austrian Cultural Institute were irrevocably intertwined. The program announcements of the Austrian Cultural Institute noted regularly, "Unless stated otherwise, all AUSTRIAN FORUM lectures, recitals, etc., are held in cooperation with the Austrian Institute at the auditorium of the Austrian Institute building."²⁸ And Mimi Grossberg asserted that Schlag had not only provided a locale for the AUSTRIAN FORUM but had offered a "cultural home." "The musical evenings taking place in the Austrian Cultural Institute with the listeners crowded closely around the piano remind one of Old-Viennese chamber music evenings..." (Grossberg, 1970, p.12) With the establishment of the Austrian Cultural Institute, however, the AUSTRIAN FORUM had to change. Its programs increasingly ceased to address issues related to contemporary Austria--a realm naturally occupied by the Austrian Cultural Institute--and it mainly concerned itself with cultural matters in the narrow sense. But the cooptation of the FORUM's original mission by the Austrian Cultural Institute--to work for the recognition of Austria's proper place in the world--led to more than simply the erosion of the FORUM's purpose. Rather,

²⁸In fact, as I learned years later, the first event I attended--the event that begins this dissertation--was organized not by the FORUM, but by the Austrian Institute. I was mistaken because the audience was largely comprised of FORUM members, and the evening had an overall ambience of FORUM gatherings.

the resulting void allowed a new meaning for the FORUM to emerge. And it was Irene Harand, the well known anti-Hitler activist, who began to fill that void by expressing the new significance of the AUSTRIAN FORUM.

II. IRENE HARAND.

After Altmann's death in 1963, Irene Harand became the second president of the AUSTRIAN FORUM. Aided by Alfred Farau, who was in charge of the literary division, and Margarete Bush, who was responsible for the musical part, Harand led the organization for twelve years.²⁹ Under her leadership the AUSTRIAN FORUM's frame of remembrance focussed on the émigrés' experience itself, and, if not making this experience a topic of a FORUM's cultural event as such, references to their shared past began to show in Harand's public statements. On the occasion of the 1964 presidential election, for example, she concluded *An Evening with Rainer Maria Rilke* with poems set to music by Alban Berg, Paul Hindemith and Paul Emerich, with the remark,

Last but not least--as an American citizen I would like you to exercise your right to vote next Tuesday. The AUSTRIAN FORUM is not bound to a party. Therefore I won't make an impassioned campaign speech. The FORUM has never endorsed any one party and will not do so in the future. You, who know me from my work in Vienna, can easily guess which party I will vote for...

When she continued, she evoked the Nazi period, thus adding special urgency to her appeal.

²⁹For more on Irene Harand, Alfred Farau and Margarete Bush, see **APPENDIX 2**, pp.4.

I remember very well how, thirty years ago I was furiously reproached because of my youth. In the meantime I have completely overcome that shortcoming. What did I learn? That a young person can be right. Unfortunately, I was right with my prediction that the Nazis, if they came to power, would give rise to a horrible war. Please, vote on November 3, as your conscience tells you. But, please, vote! (Introduction to the lecture *Ein Abend mit Rainer Maria Rilke*, October 30, 1964)³⁰

Irene Harand broke the silence that had covered the public statements of the INSTITUTE, and gave voice to themes of experience of exile, loss, and political responsibility. It was under her leadership that the FORUM began to define and attribute to the émigrés' experience its historical significance.³¹

In this context, 1968 was a watershed year. In that year the AUSTRIAN FORUM bared its own past in three major events, and for the first time subjected itself to an historical

³⁰My translation from the German.

³¹This was in stark contrast to the statements of the official Austria of that time. For example, the Austrian Cultural Institute's program note announcing a reading by Ernst Waldinger, said,

The work of this sensitive lyricist reflects a life experience that commenced in the Vienna of the Francisco Josephinan era, encompassed the holocaust of World War I, in which Ernst Waldinger was severely wounded, the upheavals and civil strife which shook the First Austrian Republic, and the adoption, in 1938, of his new homeland, the United States. (February 1964)

perspective and understanding. In February, the FORUM held a memorial evening for one of its founders, Guido Zernatto, "poet, writer, and politician, an adversary of National Socialism and Austria's so called *Anschluss*," who had died twenty-five years before, homesick, after only five years of living in exile (Program announcement).

In March, the FORUM commemorated the 30th anniversary of Austria's *Anschluss*. Harand spoke. Her speech not only described her own story of emigration, but exposed the shared émigré experience with poignancy and drama.

My speech should not last longer than ten minutes--or else I would have to speak for hours, even days. I would like to take this opportunity to answer in all openness a question I have been asked again and again, "Why don't you, Mrs. Harand, write a book about your struggle and your experiences?" The answer is: I would have to write a library of books; I can't describe in **one** book the thousand lives I have lived and suffered with others since 1933. For that I am lacking the strength.

It's impossible to describe in words the great shame I felt regarding both the shamelessness of the Nazi thugs and the world's idly standing by. As a human being, I was distressed by the degradation of other human beings. As a woman--though childless, but nevertheless a mother of many children--I felt the desperation of mothers. To this day, I am ashamed that I survived them. As my excuse and justification I can only say that I tried to help from the beginning. In mid April 1933, I organized a mass protest against the Boycott Day in Germany, April 1,³² and at the end I asked the assembly to march with me

³²Hitler had declared that a day to boycott Jewish businesses.

down the Ring. In front of the parliament I dissolved the demonstration. In my office-- Elisabethstrasse 20--every refugee from Germany, [who had fled to Vienna], was able to speak to me if he wished. The organization helped with free lunches. Our members collected clothes and shoes, and provided rooms. Later, when I already had the newspaper, we hired refugees as news-vendors so that we could receive residence permits for them. We helped with the acquisition of tickets and immigration papers for those countries where we maintained either sister organizations or at least working committees. We even helped with visas for America.

And then there was February 12, 1938, the day, Schuschnigg went to Hitler. On February 17, Dr. Franz von Sobek from the Federal Press Office informed me about the early history of this visit and what had happened at the Obersalzberg. In ending, he asked me what I was planning to do. "I will call for a hundred mass demonstrations all over Austria, and I will tell the assembled people what I have just heard. I will ask them, in the interest of Austria, to unite behind the Austrian government, [to resist the *Anschluss*], even though they might have disagreed--justifiably disagreed--with various things that happened in the past." Dr. Sobek replied, "There is no time for that now. We don't fear the Austrian Nazis, but we fear their German support. Go to Paris and London and see all your friends. With their help, try to move the Western allies to warn Hitler so that he realizes that--whatever he will do at the Danube or the Elbe--he is going to receive the answer for that at the Rhein."

The same day, after nine o'clock in the evening, I traveled to Paris. I spoke indeed to all my friends who were somehow influential and who could open doors to politicians, ministers, and the Cardinal at that time, Verdier. And in London I was also able to see and speak to diverse members of parliament and leading personalities in public life. Everywhere I was accepted with geniality and found understanding for the situation of my fatherland. But the only result I got was that Paris referred me to London, and London to Washington. Everyone claimed that his country was already one hundred steps ahead and was waiting for the others to do their share.

And so, March 11, 1938, came. In the evening hours of that day, the German military undertook the invasion of Austria.

Thirty years have since passed. But when we--like today--touch the scars that were inflicted on us then, they hurt as much as if everything occurred only yesterday.

Ladies and Gentlemen, each of us has not only endured his own fate, but each of us has been anxious and trembled about the lives of relatives and friends. And each of us has been ashamed, bitterly ashamed, about the inhumanities that occurred in our own country Austria, or were committed by Austrian guards in the prison and concentration camps. We all tried to bring people into safety, to London or to America. I, too, contributed modestly to that effort. And when I was lucky to see those we had saved, leaving the boat, and I was able to embrace them, I was conscious of my blessing. We were able to rescue far too few from the hell in Europe, and whatever pain we encountered, **it is nothing**, compared to the pain of those who had to drink the cup of sorrow to the dregs. Martyrs of the Hitler insanity. We remember them with love and deep respect. (Speech on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of Austria' Anschluss, March 12, 1968)³³

And a month later, in April 1968, the FORUM organized a series of events in which it recognized *30 Years of Austrian Literature in Emigration* [*30 Jahre österreichische Literatur in der Emigration*]. The series began with the opening of the exhibit *Austrian Writers in the United States 1938-1968*, and a reading from the works of Austrian émigré authors who had already died, (Richard Beer-Hofmann,

³³My translation from the German. For clarity, I added additional information in brackets.

Herman Broch, Oskar Jellinek, Alfred Polgar, Berthold Viertel, Franz Werfel, Guido Zernatto, and Stefan Zweig). The event continued with two evenings of readings by émigré writers from their own works. The list of participating authors included Franzi Ascher, Richard Berczeller, Friedrich Bergammer, Alfred Farau, Alfred Gong, Mimi Grossberg, Norbert Grossberg, Erich Juhn, Margarete Kollisch, Lili Körber, Grete Manschinger, Soma Morgenstern, Frederic Morton, Hertha Pauli, Walter Sorell, Johannes Urzidil and Ernst Waldinger.

With this series, a new literary category was advanced--exile literature, literature in emigration--and with it, an experience, exile, was opened up and elevated to public discourse and reflection. True, writers of that diverse group had read at the FORUM before--in fact, they had been repeat guests--but never had they been put together on the basis of their shared experience and subsumed in the category, writers in exile. The event found a loud echo. People came forward and suggested inclusion of more writers who deserved to be, but had not been, a part of the series. Others contributed with more details about deceased writers and their works. And when the exhibit traveled to Vienna in 1970, it had already expanded considerably.³⁴

³⁴That the project was clearly unfinished was emphasized in the catalogue's German edition. Starting with the New York event, and the publication of the catalogue as a bibliography

If one had to name one person to be credited with bringing about this project, it must be Mimi Grossberg. A writer and poet herself, she undertook the painstaking work of collecting and editing the wealth of biographical and bibliographical material that became the basis of the New York exhibit. She later used that material for her book Österreichische literarische Emigration in den Vereinigten Staaten 1938 [The Austrian Literary Emigration to the United States 1938], (1970), and thus pioneered what eventually became the study of Austrian exile literature.

Austria is a peculiar country. Everyone falls in love with Austria, and everyone has difficulty tearing himself away. Is that because of the language?...Or because of the cool, old, narrow streets in the Inner City, always deserted on Sunday, with its baroque palaces and churches?...Is it the longing for the mountains? The longing for the scent of the cyclamen³⁵ which don't exist in America?...

Homesickness writes the best poems...And it is the homesickness of the Jewish poets, who strangers claimed were "strange" and therefore had to leave Austria, that has written these poems. (Grossberg, 1970, p.13-15)³⁶

This melancholic tone is carried through the whole brief

of Austrian writers in exile, the editors expressed the hope that these endeavors would create an interest in recording and researching that period of Austrian literature, so that an "important chapter of the history of exile literature" could finally be written.

³⁵A pink flowering plant common to the forests of the Alps.

³⁶My translation from the German.

volume. Writing in German in America, the poets and writers in exile found a resonating audience largely limited to the émigré community. Beyond that, back in Austria, most were forgotten. To save these writers from oblivion--and, in a sense, by publishing their words, return them to their former homeland--was Grossberg's concern.

The ranks of the poets are thinning... Some died, others committed suicide, a few returned to the old homeland. There is no rising generation, this is in the nature of things. The descendants of this emigration write, if they do at all, in English. That is why I wanted to report this literature and its authors as long as a last sparkle was radiating from it. If I succeeded in conveying some of the greatness of these poets and writers, and bringing to life again what has been half-forgotten, then, I think, my endeavor was justified. (1970, p.63)³⁷

A strong voice in the chorus of émigré writers belonged to Alfred Farau. "You have a right to your pain," Farau said when he joined the discourse on exile and the émigré experience, shaping the issues with his lecture *Aus dem Tagebuch eines Emigranten* [*From the Emigrant's Diary*].

Where should one begin to describe the heartbreaking experience of emigration, leaving everything that has ever been dear in one's life? Describing the miserable despondency which again and again broke through over whether Hitler after all would win in the end? The helpless hatred. The guilt to have left dearest people behind in terrible agony. And a strange aversion to

³⁷My translation from the German.

oneself, to have survived, mixing in with any feeling of liberation... (Farau, 1992, p.17)³⁸

Farau's lecture, delivered December 9, 1970, represented a powerful essay on the phenomenology of emigration.

The emigrant is not somebody who came as a child or who left his country in later years out of his own free will. The true emigrant is the one who was thrown out, banned. And that is his fate which nobody can overcome. It doesn't matter whether he knows it or not, accepts or denies it, whether he takes it seriously or plays it down. He can't get over it. Emigration is a rupture of life which lasts as long as he lives. Because one's home is a horoscope. One can change one's apartment, but not one's home. (p.18)

At the heart of the émigré's being in the world lay a violation of basic trust.

When it is possible for what happened to happen, then something breaks. Then one feels the ground under one's feet disappear. Because there are certain foundations that one must be able to trust, and if those fail something profound has ruptured that can not be replaced. There are breaches in trust that constitute a psychological end of the world. (p.19-20)

For Jewish Austrians, an existential trust in their country was shattered by the events taking place after the *Anschluss*. As a result, conflicting, heart-stirring emotions regarding Austria were felt by many émigrés, and pulled at them for years. Farau, acknowledging and embracing this

³⁸This and the following quotes from Farau's essay are my translations from the German.

confusion of mind--"...life consists of legitimate hatred and of legitimate love" (p.19)--urged each of his listeners to come to terms with Austria, suggesting that only then could they free themselves from the demons of victimization.

As time passed, the FORUM's programs began to indicate with increasing frequency the death of its prominent members and contributors. Ernst Waldinger (1970), Alfred Farau (1972), the composer Franz Mittler (1973), the actress and writer Hertha Pauli (1973) were among those the FORUM chose to commemorate. When Irene Harand remembered Ernst Waldinger, she recalled her first encounter with the poet one evening in New York in 1939, when a group of émigrés got together to found an Austrian organization.³⁹ Harand's recollection, again, evoked the experience of exile.

In the course of that evening we told each other how we had escaped our persecutors and what we had experienced. We spoke of treachery and friends' betrayal, but we also heard of

³⁹The Austrian American League was founded that evening.

We were about 12-14 people. The place of our meeting was Waldinger's apartment. We were planning to found an Austrian organization for the Austrian victims of Nazism. We wanted the organization to stand by those who had newly arrived, to foster the Old-Austrian culture, and to provide artists with an intellectual home, and most importantly with a forum. (Harand, Introduction to *Literarischer und musikalischer Abend*, February 19, 1970) For more on the Austrian American League, see **APPENDIX 2**, p.6

unexpected help.--It was late. We distributed different tasks among ourselves...and then we said goodbye. Suddenly, Waldinger stepped forward, the former Austrian officer who had been severely wounded in World War I, and who had just told us the experience of his emigration. He said, "Yes, and despite everything, I remain a good Austrian!"--In word and writing, he fearlessly and movingly accused where it was necessary, but he also stressed again and again the pure and beautiful that existed. In short, to his end, he was a great man and Jew and a member of the Austrian cultural heritage, of whom we and his old homeland can be proud. (Introduction to *Literarischer und musikalischer Abend* [A Literary and Musical Evening], February 19, 1970)⁴⁰

Perhaps it came with the vulnerability of age, or perhaps it was the conclusion drawn from Farau's appeal to come to terms with Austria that resulted in the FORUM's beginning to offer more programs evoking a Vienna of the days of old--evenings that seemed to have catered more to the emotional needs of the FORUM's members than the informative-cultural.⁴¹ Alfred Schick, for example, a psychiatrist with poetic talents, who Mimi Grossberg determined had "...not yet stopped dreaming of his lost home", (1970, p.26), contributed *A Viennese Evening "As it Used to Be"*

⁴⁰My translation from the German.

⁴¹Also, perhaps the existence of the Austrian Institute, which took as its mission cultural and educational programs, freed the FORUM from that role and allowed it a more nostalgic bent.

[*Ein Wiener Abend "Wie einst"*], (October 10, 1968). But especially active in this regard was Siegfried Feiner. Feiner mourned for his former hometown--"A Viennese with heart and soul! He only lived for Vienna. He hated this life here. He only wanted to be back in Vienna", his wife Stella recalls. (p.4). Feiner, a psychologist and member of the *Adler Institute* in New York, and an ardent member of the FORUM from its early days, presented a series of popular lectures depicting fond memories of the Old Vienna: *Der Wiener in Wort und Witz* [The Viennese in Word and Joke], (April 10, 1969); *Alt-Wien neu entdeckt* [Old Vienna Rediscovered], (March 1, 1973); *Wiener Lieblinge von einst* [Viennese Darlings from Erstwhile], (January 17, 1974); *Eine Nacht in Wien. Streifzug durch die Wiener Operette von Franz Lehar bis Robert Stolz* [A Night in Vienna. An Expedition into the Viennese Operetta from Franz Lehár to Robert Stolz], (January 16, 1975).

Gaby, the German wife of the poet Friedrich Bergammer, who had been a repeat reader of his works at the FORUM, remembers the distinct Austrian appeal of the organization. "Only Austrians went..." (p.6). But most decidedly she recalls the the FORUM's nostalgic flair.

I would say that the whole affair was always somehow nostalgia...always reminiscent of the good old time in Vienna...looking back at the intellectual Thirties in Vienna...For me, the AUSTRIAN FORUM always meant nostalgia, and that's perhaps why I didn't feel comfortable there. Because it was a retrospective view of a time

which I didn't experience. [As a German] I was an outsider there. (Gaby, p.7)

About the same time, the late Sixties-early Seventies, the FORUM established a tradition of celebrating Advent, Christmas and carnival, highlights marking the Central European calendar. The emphasis on more narrowly defined social events was further advanced with the introduction of the *Wiener Jause* (afternoon tea Viennese style). Margarete Bush, the friend and assistant of Irene Harand, who, after Harand's death, succeeded her as the FORUM's president, organized the *Jause* in 1970. It marked the move of the FORUM to include in its cultural endeavor the social-emotional dimension as well, and with that, eventually completed the FORUM's decisive move from identity conflict to nostalgia.

III. MARGARETE BUSH AND THE WIENER JAUSE.

In 1970, the FORUM's activities expanded to include some Sunday afternoon events, the *Wiener Jause*. These social gatherings with light entertainment were so successful that, by 1971, they had become a regular feature. "The *Wiener Jause* was once a month, on a Sunday afternoon, and there you got coffee and cake and some entertainment, and you had a chance to meet people...this took place outside of the Institute" (Beatrice, p.1-2). Margarete Bush provided the space.

...we invited them to a *Vienna Afternoon* in my studio. It was not my studio, it was the studio of the American Council for Émigrés in the Professions. The American Council needed a studio where refugees could practice and teach in the beginning. They had no money to have their own instruments and this studio which was under my guidance on 72nd Street became the home of the *Wiener Jause* of the Austrians, which was once a month on the gayer line, we had there also lectures, but mostly we had music and amusement ... (Reminiscences of M. Bush, 1979, p.32, in the Columbia Oral History Collection, hereafter COHC.)⁴²

Marthe liked the *Jause's* informal ambience. "There was no auditorium like in the Institute. Four or five people could sit at a table, and one sat where one pleased. It was really a kind of Viennese *Kaffeehaus* (Marthe, p.3). Others, like

⁴²In the original in English.

Andreas, describe the afternoons as a *Kaffeeeklatsch*, "a comfortable gathering, absolutely loose, no lectures," even humorous. "I wanted to organize...a *Graf Bobby* afternoon,⁴³ but that didn't work out..." (Andreas, p.6). Hans Bernfeld, who later became the FORUM'S president, performed little sketches reminiscent of the *Wiener Kleinkunsthöhne*, the Viennese cabaret theaters, (Beatrice, p.4),⁴⁴ while his wife began her famous baking career with the AUSTRIAN FORUM. And there was always music. A popular performer was Fritz Spielman.

He was particularly famous for his song
*Warum spielt bei den Schinkenfleckerl allerweil
 das Fleisch versteckerl, oder bin ich blind, dass
 ich nicht den Schinken find?...He was a composer
 of Schlager hits. He still played very well
 ...*⁴⁵ There was always somebody singing or
 playing the piano, or there was a quartet or a
 trio. Mainly Viennese music, Strauss waltzes,
 Beethoven, Mozart. It wasn't the greatest, but it
 was nice. (Marthe, p.3)

⁴³Count Bobby is the character of numerous Viennese jokes.

⁴⁴The Viennese *Kleinkunsthöhne* emerged in the 1930s in the basements of numerous *Kaffeehauses* where they presented insolent and satiric programs despite the continuous threat of censorship. For more, see Sorell, W. (1996). Meaning and Message Veiled in Merriment. *Austria Kultur*, 6 (4), 18-19.

⁴⁵Another *Schlager* (hit-tune) popular in the émigré circles, and written by Leopold Luipoldi was ...*ich war ein grosser Bernadiner, over there, over there, over there. Mein Stammbaum war ein Zwetschgenbaum, ein grüner, over there, over there...* [I used to be a Saint Bernard, over there...My family tree was a green plum tree, over there...] The song lampooned those émigrés who tended to inflate their social position back in Vienna while, in reality, they had only been rather small dogs. (Marie, p.30)

Bush was the center around which the group gravitated. Her energy, flamboyance, and helpfulness are still legendary among those who knew her. She "had a whole group around her," and some were privileged to be invited to her home. "There was a lot of gossip, who the right **Viennese** Viennese were and who were not...Oh, ja, die Frau Professor Bush!" (Beatrice, p.28).

She was a funny old lady who played the role of Alma Mahler Werfel...In Vienna, she was well known in High Society, always wore beautiful hats and delighted in entertaining ladies and gentlemen with risqué jokes. She was a very witty, very gossipy woman who said many things ...funny things that occurred at a time when I was a boy so I couldn't verify whether she was telling the truth, fantasizing, or inventing stories. (Robert, p.13)

It was because of Bush's work for the *American Council for Émigrés in the Professions* that the "older group from Austria" was joined in its enjoyment of the *Jause* by "newcomers" from Poland, Russia, and Hungary. And there were many Germans as well. "My assistant and great helper is a Berlin girl, Dr. Eva Dworeczky. She is from Berlin and she attracts very many German people" (Bush, 1979, in the COHU, p.34). They formed a closely knit group.

...it became so much a home that among the newcomers there began to form a family...They come with their worries, with their joys. They have been only together as a group. You would not believe how much of a group they are. They are so familiar with each other, helping each other.

(Bush, 1979, in the COHC, p.32)⁴⁶

The *Wiener Jause* eventually attracted forty to fifty people, too large an assembly to be accomodated at Bush's studio.

We had to find another place. And in the next month we are going to have the meetings of the *Wiener Jause* not in my studio, but in another place. It is a FORUM in another place...It will be on the West Side, on 89th Street. It is a community center, actually two steps from Broadway. And we have to pay while until now we did not have to pay, it was my office. (Bush, 1979, in the COHC, pp.32-33)

This solution did not last, however, and, over the next years, the *Wiener Jause* moved to different places on the Upper West Side. For a while, the group gathered at the synagogue on 76th Street, but

...there was a Jewish holiday, and they had forgotten about it, or we had forgotten it, I don't know, and that was very bad, and then we couldn't have the room anymore because they had a few holidays, and it just didn't work out. (Beatrice, p.26)

⁴⁶For some, the closely knit quality of the group was reason to stay away. Irene, who remembers Bush as her piano teacher in Vienna, where, after the *Anschluss*, Bush helped Irene's sister get out of Austria, visited the *Jause* a couple of times. "But my husband didn't want to go back. He felt uncomfortable because of so many people gathering there who were uprooted and who couldn't get established in the United States". (Fieldnotes)
Hilde, too, didn't return after an initial encounter. "...the way it was conducted, I didn't care for it, it was more a coffee klatsch. People that I didn't know naturally, somehow I couldn't connect and I found it a waste of time" (p.6).

and they moved further North to 95th Street and West End Avenue where they were guests of the Salvation Army.

When Margarete Bush died in 1982, it was hard to find somebody to replace her. Until then, the succession of leadership at the AUSTRIAN FORUM had fallen into place rather naturally. All the FORUM's presidents were involved with the organization since its inception either as founders--Taylor, Altmann, Harand--or, in the case of Bush, "when Altmann and Harand had the direction, as a helper and assistant of Mrs. Harand, a friend" (Bush, 1979, in the COHC, p.1). With Margarete Bush's death, then, nobody from the "first generation" of leaders was left to carry on, and it was at that moment that the question of succession became controversial. When Eva, who had assisted Bush in managing the FORUM, claimed the presidency, she was challenged. "A Berliner as the president of an Austrian club, that couldn't possibly be, could it?" (Ann, p.2). But there was more than her geographical background that made her seem unfit for the presidency. Eva had been in charge of the *Jause* at one time, but her style and her programs were not broadly enjoyed.

...people wanted classical music, but she had different programs and she used to tell jokes, and the people found that a little off color ...and we felt you have a certain level and Eva was not in the right Viennese culture...Many people said they didn't come anymore, they didn't feel it was their old group. That she was too

German or too, I don't know what...So poor Eva was voted out. (Beatrice, p.4)⁴⁷

Hans Bernfeld was elected to become the FORUM's next president, and under his leadership the *Jause* continued to be a much enjoyed addition to the FORUM's programs. He put all his efforts into holding the group together, and reaching out to new members. He

...really worked so hard. He would call up people and say, "Oh, don't drop out, we want you all to take part and we are interested in keeping the group together." He was very nice...(Beatrice, p.5) I really felt that Bernfeld was a better person, and that the people he got together, it was a better group, a better program... (Beatrice, p.24)

Hilde, who had felt alienated at her first encounter with the FORUM, remembers when "...Hans Bernfeld took over, it really became very nice. There were nice programs but don't ask me to recall them because I can't anymore. Singers..." (Hilde, p.6).⁴⁸

⁴⁷Feeling that her contributions to the FORUM hadn't been acknowledged, and disappointed and hurt by the outcome of the vote, Eva retreated from any further involvement with the FORUM.--Except for one afternoon visit, she refused to participate in this study and did not grant an interview.

⁴⁸Hilde's interest in the FORUM was rekindled when somebody asked her "...to attend a talk by a famous member of the Vienna Philharmonic, Burghauser. He was an oboist or a clarinetist, and he recounted his times with all the famous conductors and since I was such an opera buff I was very interested in that...I thought what a nice thing to do. At that time it was always in the Austrian Institute. The one I recounted to you before was held on 72nd Street in the...Eva Dworetsky was her name. (Hilde, p.6)

Deeply concerned about the FORUM's survival, Bernfeld wished to involve Marta Eggerth. He hoped that the operetta star, whose name projected (and still projects) excitement and fame, would, with her many connections to the music world, assure the continued attractiveness of the FORUM.

We met in the *Eclair*, and we met in Rye where she lives. And she didn't really want to. And one day, she said, "Well, O.K., I am going to do it"...Then, after Hans' death, we elected her as president. (Ann, p.3)

Under Marta Eggerth the FORUM reached a level of glamour that it hadn't known before. As Kaspar recalls, to be able to kiss her hand could be reason enough to attend. It fell in her time, too, that the *Wiener Jause* was suspended and the FORUM's events moved to Sunday afternoons.

It became increasingly difficult for the people to attend in the evenings, especially with the way things are in New York, with crime, etc. It wasn't people didn't want to get out in the evening. So, with Marta then we were able to switch it to Sunday afternoons. It became packed, sold out every time. We had 98 members which is very nice. (Hilde, p.6-7)

And it was the FORUM under her leadership that I encountered at my visits early in the year of 1992.

IV. MARTA EGGERTH.

Usually the events took place once a month on a Sunday afternoon, beginning at 3.00 PM, and they seldom lasted longer than 5.30 PM. Marian Kiepura, Marta Eggerth's son and co-president of the FORUM, who is also a piano player and who often accompanied his mother, was the master of ceremonies. These events always had a social ending; the chairs were quickly put aside so that people could intermingle freely, while wine and soda and cookies were being served.

If the FORUM's focal point moved towards music under Margarete Bush, it did even more so under Marta Eggerth. Especially opera and operetta now appeared at the center of the FORUM's world, yielding the ideal backdrop for Marta Eggerth's star to sparkle brightly. This particular musical world also provided her with the center stage she was so comfortable with, and from where she charmed her adoring audience--even in her absence, as the following excerpts from my fieldnotes illustrate.

Excerpts from Fieldnotes.

"Arias and Lieder by the Austrian Tenor Peter Czernin and a Piano Concerto Played by Philomena

Moffatt" (Jan. 19, 1992)

I estimate close to 100 people are sitting in the narrow room lined with chairs. I didn't make a reservation, and I am glad to find a seat in one of the last rows. Mr. Kiepura greets the audience, especially acknowledging Jarmila Novotna, the opera singer, who was most famous in the Thirties and Forties, and Gustava Weiss, the teacher of the singer we are going to listen to today. Then Kiepura asks to make a few "personal remarks". He explains in detail the health situation of Marta Eggerth, who had to undergo surgery--though not the serious surgery some newspapers in Austria and Germany reported, he assures. He holds up a huge get-well-card designed by a member, and for everybody to sign after the concert. Kiepura asks to make one "last remark", and continues to describe how his mother, who needed only local anesthesia, was singing throughout the procedure--*Que sera, sera...* When he later told her that this is a sad song, she promised that in case she needed another operation, she would sing *Wien, Wien, nur du allein*.⁴⁹--The audience breaks out in delight.

The concert starts with the British pianist who is having her New York recital debut with Ravel's "Valse nobles et sentimentales." After a short break the program continues with Peter Czernin and his selection of all time favorite arias and lieder, a performance very much appreciated by the audience....

"Professor Hubert Deutsch Will Discuss the Vienna State Opera and his Illustrious Career with this Famous Institution" (Feb. 17, 1992)

...While we are waiting for the program to start, people take pictures. Mrs. Novotna in the first row is repeatedly asked to pose with and for different people. She doesn't seem to mind, quite the opposite, she bears the commotion with a never failing smile.

⁴⁹A favorite Viennese song whose title translates to *Vienna, Vienna, only you!*

Suddenly Marta Eggerth rushes through the aisle to the front. In one quick movement, she turns around and greets the audience with a big smile. She looks radiant in her patchwork jacket of bright colors. The audience responds with warm applause. Marta Eggerth is back, and obviously she is very fine!

Mrs. Eggerth greets us in English making particular mention of "our wonderful diva, Mrs. Novotna". She returns to her operation and explains that she had to sing through the procedure in order to make sure that her vocal cords wouldn't be damaged. She intonates a few notes of *Que sera, sera*...as if to prove her voice is as capable as ever. The demonstration gains her the audience's joyful reaction.

There is a sudden shift in her tone and expression and she begins to solemnly read from a sheet of paper on which she put down her thoughts following her operation. Her reading evokes the image of her sitting by the window, watching her "beloved pussycats" and the Canadian geese outside. She contemplates the meaning of her life. She shares her feelings of gratefulness towards her sons, and continues by thanking the creator of the "most beautiful get-well-card" she has ever seen. She thanks by name the many people who signed the card, and all those whose signature she couldn't decipher...

Kiepura joins his mother. Shaking his head in astonishment, he conveys to us the surprised reaction of the doctors when they heard his mother sing during the operation. Never had they experienced such a lady!...

Finally, we come to the introduction of today's speaker, Prof. Deutsch: His long-time position at the top level of the Vienna State Opera authorizes him in a special way to speak about matters concerning this opera house. Prof. Deutsch is now retired, and has come to New York just for this talk...

Deutsch, a tan and slender man, moves energetically to the front where he bows in the direction of Mrs. Novotna. He expresses his delight in speaking to the FORUM, especially since he is at last able to meet Marta Eggerth, the object of his youthful admiration. The "professor" in the announcement made me expect a

distant academic lecture. Instead, Prof. Deutsch presents a personally colored history of his lifelong involvement with the Vienna State Opera.⁵⁰ His talk, which focuses on the period between the Thirties and the decade after the war, recounts mostly anecdotes of the stars of that time, frequently interspersed by old recordings of these stars while holding up their photographs. Their voices were perhaps not as flawless as the voices of today's stars, Professor Deutsch explains, but they weren't as mechanical either. Instead they showed a lot of character. As a younger person, and somebody who is not an expert in the history of opera, many of the names he mentions and the atmosphere he reconstructs mean little to me. But I observe that Prof. Deutsch's talk is meaningful and entertaining to the people surrounding me. I witnessed again an afternoon at the FORUM that allowed many of the participants to connect with a world they left behind when they left Austria and Vienna. Prof. Deutsch concludes his lecture with a recording of Mrs. Novotna made in 1949 in Salzburg...

"Oren Brown, One of the World's Foremost Singing Teachers Will Be Interviewed by Peter Fox Smith on Opera Singing and Great Singers of the Past. Recordings Will Also Be Presented" (April 12, 1992)

The room shows the equipment necessary for a radio broadcast. This is a repeat visit by Peter Fox Smith, the "famous radio personality of Vermont Public Radio and specialist in opera matters", Mr. Kiepura says in his introduction. The compliment is returned by Mr. Smith who declares the FORUM's audience "one of the finest audiences" he knows, and where he feels very much at home.

Mr. Smith presents Oren Brown, an **American** singing teacher, as he points out. Brown, a man in his seventies, has not only taught the finest

⁵⁰In German. Only at the very end of his talk he says in astonishment, "Now I have been talking in German all the time! Did everybody understand me?" "But of course!" is the reply from the audience.

opera singers, but has also worked as a voice therapist. The afternoon follows the familiar format: Mr. Smith provides the keywords, and Mr. Brown presents episodes of his life concerning singing, the human voice, and famous singers. His talk is enriched by a selection of old recordings of the outstanding singers of this century, many of whom Mr. Brown has personally met. Strangely, his talk remains dry. I wonder whether it's because of his reserved manner or because he is an outsider to the FORUM who doesn't seem to care to bridge the distance.

The atmosphere changes when Mr. Brown describes the case of a famous singer who had lost his voice and whom he could help with his therapy. The singer was James King, and, big surprise, King is in the audience! Mr. King easily connects with the people present. He speaks about his frequent engagements in Europe, especially Vienna, Salzburg and Bayreuth, while now and again throwing in a few expressions in German. James King sings an aria from Wagner's *Meistersinger*, in his opinion perhaps the most beautiful opera ever written. Having said that, King is careful to make a distinction between the music and the person of Richard Wagner, and everybody knows what he means.

The event ends with the opportunity to ask questions. "Is a person who is not at all talented, able to learn to sing?" "Mr. King, what is your favorite opera and aria?" "Is there an age limit to a singing career?" "I went to an audition at the *MET*, and there was not one good singer. Why is that?" "Do you know of any totally accidental discovery of a real talent?"--The final question is reserved for Marta Eggerth: Describing her long singing career, frequently interrupted by little tokens of her abilities, she eventually arrives at her question, "Why is it possible that I can still sing?!" "Because you are a miracle!" is Mr. King's spontaneous answer, earning him a big round of applause. Mr. Brown tries an earnest explanation: Marta Eggerth probably developed her natural voice to its best without forcing it to become something that it couldn't be.--The final applause, and the chairs are being moved away and snacks and drinks are being served....

Marta Eggerth brought new people into the FORUM, many of whom had seen advertisements of her upcoming appearances. Liliane, for example, accidentally saw a notice in the Aufbau. "The name Marta Eggerth fascinated me, of course", (p.1), and Erich who also responded to an advertisement, recalls, "Since we naturally knew Marta Eggerth from her movies in Europe, we wanted to see her, and we went" (Erich, p.1). Georg, introduced to the FORUM by a friend, remembers his first event, "I was at a Christmas party where Marta Eggerth spoke and sang. And from then on I was hooked" (Georg, p.2). They enjoyed what they found. "Everybody liked her and was eager to hear her again" (Beatrice, p.4). "Marta headed it for seven years and one evening was nicer than the next. One month was nicer than the next" (Hilde, p.6).

The AUSTRIAN FORUM provided a social context. Some met a circle of friends at the organization with whom they socialized beyond the programmed events. They joined to celebrate Christmas, or spent weekends in the country together (Ann, p.4).

...you got to know everybody because it was a monthly affair over all these years, and you really felt, and Marta always said it, "I feel I have a family, I have a family, I love every one of you people", and every one of us loved her. So, it was really a love feast and a wonderful, wonderful thing to have. (Hilde, p.7)

Some maintained a looser connection with the other guests, but, nevertheless, appreciated the opportunity to meet like-minded people. Like Erich,

I found people with the same interests...it gives me great joy to meet people with the same views and interests with whom I can exchange thoughts...If, for example, I had to converse with somebody who is only interested in baseball or golf, I wouldn't know much to talk about. I'd rather speak with somebody who is interested in theater or opera. And there is a great chance to find such people at the AUSTRIAN FORUM. (Erich, p.11)

or Georg who enjoyed the company of people with the same background.

One is part of a group of Viennese, one talks things over with other Viennese--naturally about the past and the famous people we knew because about the present one doesn't know that much... (Georg, p.4)

But as valuable as the organization's social side was, people most decidedly appreciated the particular blend of programs of the FORUM under Marta Eggerth.

It functioned on a special cultural level. They always invited prominent people. For example, George Jellinek from the New York Times, and Jarmila Novotna and Bidú Sayão former singers and members of the Metropolitan Opera. But also contemporary singers such as James King used to perform. It was very, very interesting...very interesting people, Dolly Haas, the actress, who unfortunately died this month, Otto Schenk, the famous director. The director of the Viennese theater Theater in der Josefstadt, Tscherda, had a lecture at the FORUM and spoke about his life.

And many, many more.--We are very sorry that the FORUM couldn't be continued. (Erich, p.1-2)

Stressing the cultural ambience, Liliane remembers,

It was a beautiful and pleasant cultural gathering...It was comfortable, and each gathering gave you something...Everything was wonderfully presented, it was cozy. The one and one-half or two hours one spent there, had a certain Viennese atmosphere. (Liliane, p.2)

The performers and lecturers intrigued the listeners with their insider knowledge--as Ann explains, "You learn things of which you haven't the faintest notion when you are merely sitting in the audience" (p.6). But the audience was absorbed the most when the performers evoked memories from the past.

We wanted to be in the old atmosphere and revive pleasant memories. We didn't want anything new, nor did we want to be brought up-to-date. We wanted the old. (Marie, p.29)

At times, "you really felt like being in the old *Kaiserhaus*,"⁵¹ Beatrice says recalling Jarmila Novotna speaking about her life story. (p.25)

And then "*Das alte Wien*" revived with Marta Eggerth. She had some of these very charming films...They were really very lovely. She with Kiepora, her husband, and this was really very charming. (Beatrice, p.25)

⁵¹Literally the Emperor's house, colloquially referring to the Monarchy.

The events which re-created that "Viennese atmosphere," "revived the Old Vienna", or, in Nora's words, "brought back the old homeland [*Heimat*]" (p.2), were successful also because they brought back memories of one's youth. Frank, Marie's husband, when he visited the FORUM, was looking for the Vienna "like it used to be when we were living there" (Marie, p.30). When Hilde listened to Otto Schenk read in Viennese dialect, she heard the language she grew up with-- "I hear that really perfect Viennese dialect! I just melt away!" (Hilde, p.11). When she befriended Jarmila Novotna, she was close to the idol of her youth.

...whom I adored as a singer, and I was at her stage door and I saw her in all her operas. She was the most beautiful soprano. Henry, when we first met, that's all he talked about! Jarmila, Jarmila. And then to be so personally connected to her as we were...She was like a goddess of our childhood. Things like that happening...the idol of the spring... (Hilde, p.11)

The joy of immersing oneself in the Vienna of one's youth could in some "rekindle a belonging to Austria," as described by Hilde (p.7). For Liliane, the experience contained another meaning. She who had hardly begun to participate in the cultural life in Vienna when the *Anschluss* occurred in 1938, appreciated the opportunity to recapture this cultural world she had longed for in her youth, and of which she had been cheated by the events of history.

Especially I cherished the FORUM very much because many of the artists you encountered there had been around in 1938 and had made a name for themselves. But, unfortunately, I had very little opportunity to enjoy all of this. (Liliane, p.2)

However, not everyone shared the enthusiasm. Marthe and her husband Andreas who were never particularly fond of opera music, began to stay away.

...to listen to some opera singer who didn't have a voice anymore...Just so? If at all, I want to see an opera live. It's meant that way, isn't it? So, we hardly went there anymore. (Marthe, p.2)

Robert, the music critic, mocks the FORUM as a "mutual applauding society." "Novotna applauded Eggerth when she sang. Eggerth applauded when Novotna sang. And both applauded Prawi when he lectured" (Robert, p.1). "It was more or less an ego trip for Marta Eggerth," Marie observes (p.6), an assessment corroborated by an episode that Robert relates. He was once asked to lecture on the occasion of opera singer Maria Jeritza's 100th birthday.

I spoke about my recollections of Jeritza's performances with Kiepura and all kinds of things. In the midst of my lecture--I had used only a fourth of my notes--the young Kiepura began, "Now we have heard enough of these memories of Maria Jeritza..." Mrs. Eggerth started to talk about Kiepura, and after half an hour Fritz Spielmann played some funny music as usual.--Later, a few people told me, "That was terrible. You began to lecture about a topic and

they didn't let you talk."--But I am still on good terms with Mrs. Eggerth. (Robert p.15)

Marie harbored ambivalent feelings. Despite Marta Eggerth's "ego trip," and despite her notion that the FORUM was "more nostalgia than anything else" (p.31), Marie and her husband enjoyed going there. "We had a curious attitude towards it, I must say."--"One always hoped to meet somebody one hadn't seen for a long time" (Marie, p.29).

Beatrice expresses some grudging feelings concerning Marta Eggerth when she recounts the FORUM's ending. "I mean, she let us down" (p.25). She holds Eggerth's and Marian Kiepora's leadership style accountable for the FORUM's end. Before Eggerth's presidency there used to be "a whole presidium" (p.2). When "she took over, she did everything, she and her son. They never provided for an outsider to come in and do something" (p.3), leaving the FORUM orphaned when "all of a sudden she couldn't do it anymore" (Beatrice, p.3).

She just came and said, "This is too much, good bye." And nobody was there...And that was the end of the AUSTRIAN FORUM... (Beatrice, p.3)

After fifty years, the FORUM's story ended. "Somehow an era has passed which will never return" (Liliane, p.2), and

with it ended one culture in exile and its embedded "frames of remembrance" (Irwin-Zarecka, 1994) that was "partly nostalgia, partly knowledge". To be sure, "A special kind of knowledge, a special kind of tradition, which is not going to be continued" (Harry Zohn, personal conversation, December 5, 1993).

V. POSTSCRIPT.

There were two people from the AUSTRIAN FORUM who stepped forward and volunteered their time and efforts to continue the organization. They went with their offer to the leadership of the Austrian Cultural Institute; however, they did not find the enthusiastic support to carry through with their project.

We were interested in reviving the FORUM, and we discussed the matter with the *Austrian Institute*. They said that there should be a group responsible for managing the FORUM. We said that we could do that...But I believe the *Austrian Institute* rather wanted to enlist a prominent and famous cultural personality, someone with a reputation... (Georg, p.5)

But they never found this famous personality to continue the FORUM.

In the Fall of 1994, the Austrian Cultural Institute held its last event in its home in the old townhouse on 52nd Street. The event was a big party, attended by members of the émigré community, and official Austria as well. After that, the old house closed its doors, waiting to be torn down to allow a new building to rise. When this is done, the Austrian Cultural Institute will begin a new, historical era, stripped of entanglements with the story of the émigrés that had marked its first thirty years, and which was so much part of the old building. With the fall of the old

structures and their inscribed memories, the story of a group of Austrian émigrés and their organization, the AUSTRIAN FORUM, will finally become a story of the past.

CHAPTER 9

A STRANGER FROM VIENNA IN VIENNA

You don't walk by the Stephan's Cathedral easily.
 It faces you
 when you, the stranger, step into the
 little bistro.
 A stranger from Vienna in Vienna...

Friedrich Bergammer (1971, p.41)

INTRODUCTION

When Alfred Farau urged his fellow émigrés to come to terms with Austria, he said,

I am convinced that every emigrant should go back **once**, so that he can decide for himself. If he leaves then and does not ever wish to return, it is because of his own decision. Then he would leave not because he was kicked out by the Nazis but because **he** himself decided to do so. (Farau, 1992, p.21)¹

In fact, for most of the émigrés, returning to Austria and Vienna became something of a pilgrimage, an enterprise, which took most of them years to realize. The demands of putting a life together again, which, for some, included raising a family, were reasons for the delays. There

¹My translation from the German.

existed, however, a deeper emotional barrier to an immediate return. Most émigrés hesitated in the face of the enormity of the devastation to the European Jews--and to their own families--of which an ever more precise and gruesome picture emerged after the war. Marie describes, "When one learned of the terrible horror stories, one identified with the Jews..." (p.19). Referring to her husband, Marie continues, "He didn't want anything to do with those pigs" (Marie, p.40). Thus, the passage of time, often combined with a special circumstance,² was needed before many émigrés "...finally set foot in Europe again" (Hilde, p.4).³

Whether one chose to mark the occasion with a big, theatrical gesture, as Marie recalls of her distant relative, who rented the suite in the Hotel Imperial with the balcony from where Hitler had greeted the Viennese-- "There, on that balcony, little Sternberg, now patent lawyer

²For example: Beatrice returned for business reasons. "The first time I went alone to look after the business" (Beatrice, p.14). Hilde went to Vienna urged by her brother. "... my brother lived in England, and he...insisted that I go to Vienna...'Go to Vienna and see what it's like'" (Hilde, p.4-5). And Marie and her husband could bring themselves to visit Vienna only after a trip to South Africa where they experienced apartheid. "If other countries are equally crazy, you know what, we travel to Vienna!" (Marie, p.2).

³The majority of the study participants went back for the first time in the Fifties; Hilde and Carola went in 1966, Liliane and Marie in 1970; Leo returned for the first time in 1984 and Georg in 1985. With the exception of Kaspar who has been back just once, the first return often meant the beginning of a string of yearly visits to Austria.

Sternberg, was standing and was, so to speak, digesting Hitler. It was an annulment for him in a way..."

(Fieldnotes)--or whether one chose to privately search out the nooks and crannies of one's youth, the first visit was most likely to stir an experience which Hannah Arendt described as one of "violent emotion" (1994, p.15). And this emotion had an ambiguous quality. "Euphoria and drunken joy alternated with grief for the lost or not fully found again home [*Heimat*]" (Gaby, Memoir Ein Leben mit Fritz, 1993, p.7).

I. JOY.

When Robert visited Vienna on the occasion of the reopening of the State Opera in 1955, he approached his hometown hesitantly. "My first impressions of Vienna...are devastating...Everybody looks as if carrying a great guilt" he wrote to his wife who had stayed in New York (Robert, first letter, Nov. 3, 1955). Soon, however, he surrendered to his elated emotions. "I am home! I am home! I am home!" he exclaimed in his second letter of the same day, a "...completely revised report from Vienna."

I am upset with myself to have judged so quickly...I went downtown and within five minutes I was in seventh heaven. In front of the opera the flags of all nations are flying high, and the whole Inner City is decorated with red-white flags, [the Austrian flag]. Like a drunk I wandered to the Stock-im-Eisen-Platz and then to the Graben where I broke out in tears when I saw my birthhouse. I entered the building. There is a doctor now living in our apartment...The elevator, the staircase, the plaque "Portier" still the same. I was very moved...I bought the London Times at the corner Graben-Kohlmarkt, and when the woman at the newsstand saw me, she called, "My God, Herr Doktor!" For ten minutes I had to tell her about America. (Robert, second letter to his wife, Nov. 3, 1955)

Robert's exuberance is echoed by others. "I was drunken, I was simply drunken!" Carola recalls of her first visit (p.10). Georg remembers similarly. "From the first moment I was tremendously glad that I did go back. I was so happy there" (Georg, p.14). Continuing he explains,

I wanted to find my roots. I was everywhere where I used to be as a child, in grade school, in the *Gymnasium*, at the health insurance where my father used to work, everywhere where I went on vacation as a child, in Styria, in Carinthia...I found everything... So, when I was there, and they led me through the Ringstrasse for the first time, I jumped up, "Here is the parliament!" "Here is the university!" "Here is the museum!" The buildings I remembered as a child. It was a very beautiful experience. I was in the apartment building where I used to live. It wasn't a good neighborhood, but for us it was paradise, with friends we used to play with... (Georg, p.14-15)

Others derived the same pleasure from recapturing the memories of their childhoods and youths in Vienna. But Carola mentions yet another, deeper meaning of her attachment to the city and to the "places where my mother used to take me" (Carola, p.9).

My mother was such a Viennese. Two hundred percent Viennese...I mean, there's nobody who loved Vienna and Austria more than my mother, and everything that belongs to it, and who tried to understand even its negative aspects. And naturally that is all part of my bond in a peculiar way. The bond to my mother equals the bond to Vienna. Because Vienna meant so much to her. And indeed, like with her milk, she filled me with her love of the city... (Carola, p.10)

Andreas observed with joy his intimate knowledge of the city, a thorough familiarity that comes with having grown up there and which has lasted for all these years. "I know the city very well because I used to ride my bicycle all the time. That [familiarity] is something that doesn't go away..." (Andreas, p.26). In fact, many study participants

note with joyous amazement how well versed they were in the geography of the place. "Vienna is familiar at every corner. I know my way about, surprisingly, haven't forgotten anything..." Leo says (p.47), and Carola,

...when other people told me that they didn't know their way around anymore, I immediately knew each streetcar, knew each of the narrow streets, I knew each store. I went there blindly without the name...I know the trees and the bushes in the *Stadtpark*, and I take a look at them. That's my nostalgia. (Carola, p.9-10)

The same enjoyment is expressed in terms of the German language, particularly the Viennese dialect. "It is unbelievable how my language has remained unharmed, so Viennese" says Leo (p.47). Beatrice offers a similar experience,

Everybody knows right away where I come from. But I didn't expect to speak German so free of accent after all these years. I thought that it would require some background. You feel if you go back that you have never left... (Beatrice, p.9)

And so does Hilde, who feels "...immediately at home over there, immediately, I mean it's like shedding everything..." (Hilde, p.10).

Whenever we go over there, and we do go over there every year, then we drop all our English... And I have also a nice story about that to tell, my very good friends over there, the family of Maria Schell... Maria and I were sitting in the kitchen and the mailman comes in and we start talking and I hear that Bavarian accent which is

not too far removed from the Austrian accent, dialect, you know, and we start talking and he then says to me, "Von welcher Provinz sind Sie denn? Wo wohnen'S denn?" - "Ich wohn in New York." Der ist fast vom Sessel gefallen! "Das gibt's doch nicht!" ["From which province do you come? Where do you live?" - "I live in New York." He almost dropped off his seat! "That can't be possible!" - "How long have you been over there?"] - Well at that time, it was ten years ago, I said "about 42 years"... (Hilde, p.9)

And again and again the study participants point to the beauty of Vienna. "Vienna is a very beautiful city, one of the most beautiful cities in the world. And my poor husband was so homesick, I can't describe it to you. It was heart-wrenching" Erna (p.8) says, speaking for many. And, for many, this appreciation of Vienna was not altered by the experiences following the *Anschluss*. Marthe states,

The Viennese grumbles. And nevertheless, for the Viennese, there doesn't exist anything better and more beautiful than Vienna. Everybody, including those who were persecuted and who suffered, somehow there isn't anything other than Vienna. (Marthe, p.28)

What makes Vienna so special is its light, its fauna and flora, the architecture, the Stephan's Cathedral, the narrow streets, the parks and trees, and the vineyards. (Marthe, p.31) And the *Wienerwald*, the green belt surrounding the city.

The *Wienerwald*. I jump into the streetcar, the number 38, and in half an hour I am on the Karlsberg. The city is giving me the physical

freedom, is still giving me the freedom which I can't have in New York...No other big city can offer that, I believe. That green belt surrounding the city which can be reached by public transportation in half an hour. It is also very nice in the winter... (Carola, p.9-10)

But it is the place they love--"It is the city. It is not the people" (Marthe, p.31); "My nostalgia is the city. Not life there, not the people there, it's the city..." (Carola, pp.9-10)--and it is the memory of personal betrayals that denies an easy relationship with the place which was once unambiguously called home.⁴

⁴Leo draws his line even further. His love is aimed at the mountains. "High in the mountains all my sentiments come forth. The mountains didn't betray me" (Leo, p.46).

II. ALIENATION.

Memories of betrayal and persecution form the undercurrent of many of the émigrés' relationships with Austria and her people. A few developed a conciliatory attitude over time, a perspective Hilde was able to express in one of her poems.

Vacation/Ferien

The big machine is settling gently down to earth,
joy floods my being to the core:
out there I shall again become a European
and haltingly take up my mother tongue once more.

The sky a blue immensity,
trees painting green the forest near,
I see all that where I come from,
yet do not treasure it enough I fear.

Soon I feel more at home with words
that memory had blocked so long,
forgotten sounds move me to tears,
lost childhood times, lost childhood songs.

I rest on high in mountain sunshine,
wild flowers dancing in the breeze--
when did I last climb to this glory?
Perhaps as child with greater ease.

The silverswan will take me back soon,
my European days draw to a close:
no sadness needs to fill my heart now,
since I found home for me--is both.⁵

Many more, however, remained somewhat uneasy and cautious regarding Austria. "The relationship with Austria has been a

⁵This English version is by Hilde. She also wrote a German rendering of the poem.

constant problem" Leo says (p.39). After all, there had been nothing frivolous about the events following the *Anschluss*; "The Austrians were not always so charming when Hitler was there...Later they behaved respectably towards me, after they had almost killed me because I am Jewish" Erna poignantly reminds us (p.7).⁶ A visit to Vienna, as joyous as it might have been, also had to stir up memories of threats to life and profound injustice. Liliane describes,

I went for the first time in 1970. That was the hardest, the first time, and as a matter of fact, I didn't have a nice stay because of my personal feelings... (Liliane, p.7).

She visited the places of her childhood, the house she grew up in, her school, the conservatory, and was hit by a rage when she realized that all of this had been taken from her. Like Liliane and Erna, many of the émigrés couldn't escape the memories of 1938. For example, Beatrice states,

...you feel you don't want to have anything to do with them. You know after all your experiences, you feel that they're all Nazis and God knows, I mean they're very nice now but at that time they were not...It's funny, you don't belong there, you know that you don't belong there, that's for sure. You feel quite American.

⁶She says this in contrast to the "...Americans at whom so many swear. They didn't do much for me. They only saved my life...Without these strangers with whom I accidentally shared my name, I would have ended in Auschwitz" (Erna, p.4). [Erna had consulted the telephone book at the American Consulate for her namesakes...See **CHAPTER 5**]

Marie describes how her husband, since the *Anschluss*, had become sensitive with regard to standing in line.

And when we were in Vienna as guests, and he had to stand in line somewhere, he suddenly cried out "You damn Nazis!"...He very much embarrassed me...[The reaction of the Viennese] was silence. Once one person said "We forgot to kill that one." That happened only once. (Marie, p.10)

But Vienna didn't only evoke memories of one's own experiences of menace and betrayal. Inscribed in its geography was also the void left by the destruction of the once thriving Jewish community. That is why--despite every corner being familiar--Leo didn't recognize post-war Vienna as the Vienna of his youth. "It is only a feeble reflection of it" (Leo, p.47). He explains,

Judaism was so Viennese that one couldn't have separated it. Now, when I am in Vienna, I realize the violence with which it was extracted, and what the lack of Judaism does to the overall image of Vienna...In Vienna Judaism belonged to the whole cultural picture, and that knowledge was always very much alive in me....(Leo, p.39-40)

Once I was sitting at the plaza at the Stephan's Cathedral; it was a Friday evening on my first visit in 1984...A group of Jews walked by, and I saw then how much of a strange element they had become. The way they were dressed, an absolutely strange element. Everybody was looking at them, they didn't belong to the cityscape anymore. So, I didn't belong either. (Leo, p.47)

And even for those who didn't strongly identify with Jewish life, it was impossible to miss the void created by

six years of Nazi rule. Returning to Vienna, one couldn't help but be powerfully reminded of the many people who had disappeared. "There wasn't anybody left. All the friends had gone, either they had been killed or they had left... Stella says (p.11). And, recalling her first visit, Beatrice observes,

...when we came back in 1958, and you remember all the people who lived here. On every corner you had some relatives or somebody, and now absolutely nobody. I mean then you really feel you don't belong anymore. (Beatrice, p.15)

As the returning exile exposed herself to an experience that can easily open thinly covered wounds, a sense of vulnerability accompanied such visits, evidenced, for example, in Gaby's remark. When she visited, she says,

...I never came together with people of whom I needed to be afraid. When you are only visiting and you are only getting together with true friends, you are never in danger of meeting people who could harm you. (Gaby, p.18)

This sense of vulnerability led Georg to carefully design his first trip back to Vienna in 1985. He, who had described this visit as such a happy experience that he even contemplated spending parts of the year in Vienna, made sure that there would be a beneficial outcome, undisturbed by painful memories.

...and in the way I had arranged it, I wanted to

connect to the positive things. Naturally I would be also interested in the negative things. If I had the opportunity I would also visit Theresienstadt and Auschwitz, of course. But through the positive things I find my way about very well. With the positive one can live the present and the future more easily. The negative belongs to the past with which one can't do anything anymore. One can remember that some people behaved in a way they shouldn't have....What was also helpful for me: when I returned, one spoke about the Thirties, that is, the time before 1938...And one talked about the time after 1945 and later. But not about the time between 1938 and 1945. One talked little about the Nazi period. So, that was all right with me. Perhaps not politically all right, but emotionally all right... (Georg, pp.14-15)

And so, Vienna being a repository for both happy and painful memories, visiting has been "always very ambivalent" (Marie, p.10). Even those among the study participants who profess a deep affection for their hometown acknowledge conflicting emotions blended in with their euphoria. Carola, for example, who so vividly describes how completely she has taken in her mother's love for Vienna, can't get over the injustice done to her mother. "That they did this to her, for that alone I will never be able to forgive them. Them, meaning the Nazis" (Carola, p.10). And Hilde, who distances herself from people who resent their former homeland, "I'm not one of those people..." (Hilde, p.8), and who, in her poem "*Ferien/Vacation*," convincingly depicts her happy homecoming to Austria, discloses, in another moving poem, the difficult emotional work behind her reconciliation.

Enough:

Do you want me to carry on with the hatred
the hatred which makes everything grey and black?
Which makes me blind
so that I can't see the beautiful things
and which pulls me into the abyss?

I have lost, I have been hurt,
but God allowed me to see the days again.
He eased my pains
and he showed me the way to the light.

I want the time I have been given
directed towards the good things,
not towards the pain,
I will carry my sorrows silently
and show the world a joyous heart.⁷

It is the juxtaposition of seemingly irreconcilable emotions which is so characteristic of the émigrés' relationships to their former homeland. The violence of emotions alluded to by Hannah Arendt is grounded in the tension between the happiness of being at home on the one hand, and the profound sense that this home doesn't exist any longer on the other; the tension between the exultation from being able to immerse oneself in a place so beloved, and at every corner familiar, and the resentment caused by the experiences of injustice and loss. The émigrés' feelings with regard to Austria and Vienna typically move within these tensions. Seldom stable, they shift back and forth between the sense of belonging and utter alienation, thus

⁷My translation from the German.

leaving ambiguity as the only prevailing emotion.

"...everything is not black and white. There exist also grey areas..." (Erich, p.15).

And this experience of exile, with its undermined sense of belonging, has far reaching consequences for the émigrés' identity. The Jewish Rumanian writer Norman Manea (1992), himself an exile in New York since 1988, expresses poignantly,

The term homeland reveals its ambivalent meaning most of all in the course of violent breaking tests, which make the necessity of self examination more urgent and intensive. The world of alienation implies also the alienation from one's own self. (Manea, 1992, p.59)⁸

⁸My translation from the German.

CHAPTER 10

HEIMAT

The "Preliminary Report of a Survey of the Refugee Problem of the United Nations" from 1951 described the refugee as

...essentially someone without a home, someone who has been cast adrift; he is a helpless casualty, the spiritually diminished, pathetic and innocent victim of events for which he cannot be held responsible. This popular conception of a refugee includes an element of emotion of which the sociologist and jurist cannot but be aware. (In L. Grinberg, & R. Grinberg, 1990, p.IX)

The German language employs the word *Heimat* in order to refer to a person's rootedness in a place. Originating from a legal context as the right to settle at a specific locale,¹ *Heimat* in today's German, however, has assumed a much broader meaning with its legal definition having almost completely disappeared.² *Heimat* signifies this discernable

¹For example, the entry to Meyers Konversations-Lexikon (1895) gives only a legal definition of the term.

²The legal aspect of *Heimat*, however, has survived with the *Heimatschein*, the certificate of domicile, an apparently unfamiliar document to U.S. bureaucrats. As Clementine, the

spot in the world which one can claim as one's origin, and where one's family has often lived for generations. *Heimat* encompasses the place and its people, their traditions, memories and stories told in the local coloring of their language. One feels that *Heimat* has left an imprint on who one is, that *Heimat* is somehow a part of oneself. It evokes a sense of safety and belonging. *Heimat's* rich emotional connotation reveals itself most fully to those who have lost it. The *Heimatloser*, the person without *Heimat*, is surrounded by melancholy, lonesome and adrift in the world, his destiny not easily remedied by providing him with a new shelter.³

Heimat is a complex term, though. One of its ambiguities lies in its exclusive quality. Defenses against difference and change are necessarily entwined with a concept that stresses rootedness and belonging to the authentic culture of a place. Not surprisingly, conservative and xenophobic forces have drawn on the meaning of *Heimat* in their attempts to ward off outsiders and foreigners, and to guard against change in general. As David Morley and Kevin Robins (1993) relate, *Heimat*

lawyer, recalls, "Nobody in the Immigration Service knew what a *Heimatschein* was. They knew a birth certificate, a certificate of marriage, a passport. But they didn't know a *Heimatschein*. I came up with a comprehensible translation that allegedly was posted in the Immigration Service" (Clementine, p.4).

³The German language distinguishes the *Heimatloser* from the *Obdachloser* who is a person without a roof or shelter.

...is about sustaining cultural boundaries and boundedness. To belong in this way is to protect exclusive, and therefore, excluding, identities against those who are seen as aliens and "foreigners". The "other" is always and continuously a threat to the security and integrity of those who share a common home. (p.8)

Especially under Nationalsocialism, *Heimat's* exclusive quality was employed to violently discriminate against those who supposedly presented a threat to the "authentic" culture of the place.

The connectedness to a place and its culture associated with the word *Heimat*, and which is touched upon in the literature on "place-identity" and "place attachment", has been torn for those in exile. "For three months she only cried", a husband recalls, talking about his wife at the time of their arrival in New York. She was consumed by her sorrow and melancholy for what she had lost: Vienna, the place that used to be her *Heimat*. (Fieldnotes)

Leon and Rebeca Grinberg (1990), in their psycho-analytical study on migration and exile, allude to the traumatic quality of the experience of displacement, at which core they observe the feeling of abandonment and

isolation.⁴ The grief for one's country of origin may only be worked out through a slow and difficult process--perhaps never to be completely finished. But this process needs to be undertaken, Grinberg and Grinberg argue, in order to integrate the culture of one's origin with the culture of the new country, and without having to denounce either of them.

The AUSTRIAN FORUM played an important role in mediating this process. The home of an educated, mostly middle and upper-middle class, including some great figures of the sciences, literature, music, and art, the FORUM represented a focal point for one cultural milieu transplanted from Vienna to New York. As the FORUM recreated features of the former *Heimat*, it allowed people's place attachments to Vienna to be "retrospectively activated." Setha Low (1992) relates,

Place attachment through loss or destruction is activated retrospectively, through the process of losing the place and the subsequent reminiscing and re-creating through memory of a place that is now destroyed, uninhabited, or inaccessible. (p.167)

⁴The authors see the difference between exile and migration as one of degree rather than quality. Coerced to leave with no possibility to return, exile represents an extreme case in the migratory process. The complex and painful feelings that the migrant experiences are more intense for the exile, and the hard and difficult process of adjustment is more difficult and painful for the person who, "bitter, hurt, and disappointed, was banished or fled somewhere" (Grinberg, & Grinberg, 1990, p.183).

While the FORUM evoked *Heimat*, and one might say because of that, the FORUM indirectly helped to negotiate the process of assimilation to the new culture. Grinberg and Grinberg describe this process of adjusting to a new place and culture as one that moves through different, not necessarily linear, phases. The first phase is characterized by a profound grief for the world left behind, feared to be forever lost. Anxious about the unknown, the exile feels lonely, deprived, and vulnerable. In a second phase, the exile can begin to acknowledge the longing and sadness for the lost world without being overwhelmed by it. He or she can endure the feelings and the pain that had been repressed until now because they were insufferable. The third phase is characterized by a renewed belief and joy in the future. The past life, appreciated for its positive as well as negative aspects, becomes the "past" and doesn't loom as the "lost paradise" that hinders the émigré to fully live in the present. Grinberg and Grinberg hold that any person who experiences some form of displacement has to work through these phases in some way. Only then can migration and exile contribute to an enriched and consolidated re-configuration of the self (1990, p.111).

It is suggestive to view the AUSTRIAN FORUM in light of Grinberg and Grinberg's theory. As the FORUM may be viewed as a looking glass into the émigrés' experience, the three

epochs that I delineated in writing the FORUM's story-- patriotism for Austria, addressing the exile experience, and nostalgia (see **CHAPTER 8**)--can be interpreted as the three phases in the process of grieving for the lost *Heimat*.⁵ The FORUM's early years, which were characterized by a patriotism for a good and pure Austria, then make sense as the construction of deeply wounded people whose banishment from their homes had left them lost, deprived and vulnerable. The FORUM's founding generation had grown up under the Hapsburg Empire, a hierarchically structured society and very unlike the comparatively egalitarian society of the United States. These people were older and had led successful lives prior to their being exiled. Their idealized Austria had reminiscences of the *Old Austria* of the Monarchy where as Jews they had felt secure, an idealization which either denied the events surrounding the *Anschluss* or viewed them as an aberration in the history of an otherwise superior nation.

After people were able to carve out lives for themselves in the new country, and felt more secure and less in need of compensating for their hurt, they could move to what Grinberg and Grinberg described as the second phase, and confront what hitherto had been too painful and thus needed to be repressed. This second phase reflects the epoch at the

⁵People with different needs in the process of adjusting to the new environment locked onto the FORUM which gave public expression to the different phases in this grieving process.

AUSTRIAN FORUM when it broke the silence around exile to address the émigrés' experience. And when the FORUM gave room to the exile literature, it revealed another important "purpose" that went beyond serving the émigrés' psychological needs. As exile literature was the cutting edge of Austria's recognition of her recent history, the FORUM became the place where a larger cultural reparation could begin to be accomplished.

Having worked through these two phases allowed the third phase to emerge, where the past could be appreciated for all its riches that it contributed to a person's life. This represents the FORUM's third epoch when it was increasingly committed to nostalgia. This period powerfully reflected the significance of Vienna in constituting the identities of the people who participated in the research. Those wishing to express their "Viennese-ness," that place-component of their identities, found a stage at the AUSTRIAN FORUM. With the evocation of *Heimat* that allowed them to connect with their childhood and youth in Vienna, the FORUM fulfilled yet another important meaning. The people who enjoyed these events were older and at a stage when one looks back at one's life. "In my thoughts, I am closer to the past than to the future...Especially when one gets older one cherishes the memories from earlier which offer a kind of satisfaction and joy" (Erich, p.15). The reminiscences of the places of their childhood and youth that took place at the FORUM

contributed to a sense of coherence and wholeness and were thus able to foster what Erikson called a "sense of integrity" at a later stage of one's life (1997, p.65).

The FORUM's meaning as a place that evoked home acquired a strong symbolic underpinning when the FORUM moved in with the Austrian Cultural Institute. The physical closeness of the exile organization with an organization of the official Austria underlined the interwoven intimacy of their cultural enterprises, and, in fact, mirrored the lives of the assimilated Viennese Jews before the *Anschluss*. Indeed, it serves as an ironic footnote to history that, in New York, those Viennese who had been banished from their native country established closeness to the official Austria, and replicated, at a place far away from home, the assimilated Jewish Viennese culture that could not be in Vienna.

But as much as the émigrés enjoyed the symbolic expressions of their former home, they always remained cognizant of what they had lost, *Heimat*. Many became most painfully aware of that loss on their return visits to Vienna. (See **CHAPTER 9**) When Leo visited the house he was born in, and he recognized the handrail in the staircase, he recalls,

The same handrail. I stood there and caressed it.

All my childhood memories passed by. My origin is there. But when I have these feelings of *Heimat* of my youth, I strongly realize how far away I have moved, how much I have lost. (Leo, 2nd interview, p.12)

This sense of loss prevails among the study participants. "I loved Austria. It was really my home...but not for you anymore" Beatrice says (p.12). What has been lost is the unquestioned rootedness and belonging to a place. In exile, *Heimat* has become a complicated question.

Heimat? That is very difficult. I believe *Heimat* is always there where one is welcome and where people are sorry to see you leave. It is not necessarily where one is born. *Heimat* is a malleable term. (Erich, p.13)

And Liliane,

This is a big question that neither I nor many others can answer. It is a schism, because, in fact, one has two homes now, but they are different. One cannot unite them. (Liliane, p.8).

If *Heimat* has been lost, there exists, however, a strong sense of being at home in New York. "Our body--perhaps against its will and perhaps forever--begins to get used to the country that it didn't choose out of its own free will" Grinberg and Grinberg write (1990, p.186).⁶ The study participants appear to have experienced a similar organic response to the new environment. "New York has become my

⁶My translation from the German.

second *Heimat*... after 34 years, like it or not" says Liliane (p.8). "One has been living here for so long. That has had an impact. One married here, had a child, buried one's parents, one's brother..." Leo relates (2nd interview, p.6). And while he realized on his first trip back to Vienna that he could never regain the *Heimat* of his youth, he recognized that New York and America had become home. Standing in front of the opera he whispered to himself "Now go, go back home, home to America" (Leo, 2nd interview, p.7). But the haunting quality of persecution and exile could undermine a sense of home in America--or any other country. Beatrice who calls New York her home, nevertheless alludes to a fundamental alienation she feels.

Of course you feel like a refugee. I mean especially when older people tell you where their families are...when they ask where are your parents and they are gone, in a way that nobody experienced here, you really don't want to talk about it...you don't want to make them feel miserable by telling them what happened to you and what happened to your people. When they're all telling you, my sister and my brother and my cousins, when you realize that all your family is gone with the exception of a few of them....so naturally you feel entirely out of it, I mean you feel like a refugee. I don't know how long you feel like a refugee...if you ever feel for real at home. (Beatrice, p.8)

For most émigrés, New York became home in the pragmatic sense of everyday-life, whereas, for many, Vienna remained *Heimat* in a deep, metaphysical sense. In its being out-of-

reach as a home, Vienna resembles the "imaginary homeland" that Salman Rushdie (1991) describes,

It may be that...exiles or emigrants or expatriates, are haunted by some sense of loss, some urge to reclaim, to look back...But if we look back, we must also do so in the knowledge--which gives rise to profound uncertainties--that our physical alienation...almost inevitably means that we will not be capable of reclaiming precisely the thing that we lost; that we will, in short, create fictions, not actual cities or villages, but invisible ones, imaginary homelands.... (Rushdie, 1991, p.10)⁷

In that sense the émigrés who participated in this study bear a likeness to the "radically new types of human being" that Rushdie delineated, who "root themselves in ideas rather than places, in memories as much as in material things" (see **CHAPTER 1**). And that is probably why Hilde Domin (1987), in her poem speaking of the émigrés, observed "a certain lightness" (and non-rootedness) that "as with a

⁷The authors on place-identity also advance a constructionist argument. However, they focus less on the construction of the meaning of places than on the cognitive structures related to places.

Our discussion...gives emphasis to place-identity as a *personal construction*. It grows out of direct experiences with the environment; these experiences in turn become modified and transformed by cognitive processes and the effects of still other subsequent direct experiences with the physical environment. And continually being woven into this cognitive fabric we call place-identity and thereby exerting an influence, are assimilated values, norms, and attitudes germane to physical settings that define the person's day-to-day existence. (Proshansky et al., 1983, p.62)

bird" remained with them (p.212). "There will be more and more people like us" Will Schaber, the late journalist from the Aufbau, envisaged, displaced people who find themselves between homes and between cultures, and to whom the idea of *Heimat* has become profoundly questionable (Fieldnotes).

There can be no recovery of an authentic cultural homeland. In a world that is increasingly characterized by exile, migration and Diaspora, with all the consequences of unsettling and hybridization, there can be no place for such absolutism of the pure and authentic. In this world, there is no longer any place like *Heimat*. (Morley, D, & Robins, K., 1993, p.27)⁸

The identity that grows out of displacement has been described as one of hybridity, of straddling two cultures. This metaphor implies a vital fusion of different cultural identities. Though not without exhibiting characteristics of hybridity after having made New York their home for several

⁸Phrases such as "radically new types of human being" and "a world that is increasingly characterized by exile, migration, and Diaspora" might be exaggerated considering the fact that other centuries have known major mass migrations and exile. However, Rushdie and Morley and Robins are here likely giving voice to a *Zeitgeist* at the end of this Century, which is characterized by a sense of rootlessness and alienation in a world which is rapidly changing along so many dimensions. And that might explain the prevalence of terms of displacement such as exile or homelessness as metaphors to describe the condition of the (post)modern subject searching for grounding. As Bammer (1994) holds, these metaphors mark "the peculiarly postmodern geography of identity: both here and there and neither here nor there at one and the same time" (p.xii).

decades,⁹ nevertheless, the émigrés who took part in this study suggest a different concept. Their confrontation with another culture, forced on them by exile, rather generated the sense of a fragmented self and the painful search for a stable identity. Thus, instead of the joyful shifting of identities and loyalties much celebrated in the literature on multi-culturalism and hybridity (Mouffe, 1988, Gergen, 1991, Fusco, 1995), the émigrés' narratives and memoirs abound with metaphors of rupture and loss. There is, for example, the often heard utterance "One will never be completely of one piece", or Herta Pauli's (1990) memoir "The Rupture of Time Runs Through My Heart" [Der Riss der Zeit geht durch mein Herz]. Carola, most poignantly, elaborates,

What was done to me by the Nazis under Hitler, that for years my identity was either mixed up or totally lost, and that I kept looking for where I could find my identity, that is perhaps the worst outcome. Also, one has lost one's home. But I have lost even more than home. I lost my identity. Because I didn't need to search for my identity in this way. Am I Catholic, am I Jewish? The question would have never affected me, because I was Viennese... That was my identity. And it was taken away from me. And I have never really found a substitute for it. Because when I go back now, I don't go back as a Viennese woman.

⁹One symbolic expression of hybridity can be seen in the language spoken among the émigrés which they themselves mockingly dub *emigranto*: A peculiar German mixed with Anglicisms and whose sentence structure often follows the English syntax. On the other hand, one might argue, *emigranto*, being neither "proper" German nor English, effectively expresses symbolically the loss of a culture where one feels completely at home.

I go back because I love Vienna. But that I would identify as Viennese, no! Because then I start seeing again those howling masks in front of me that were rushing through the streets. (Carola, p.20)

CHAPTER 11

CONCLUSION

It is impossible, I suspect, for us to imagine what it felt like to be a Jew in Vienna in 1938. It is impossible to imagine oneself being persecuted by a place to which one has given such unreserved love. With Austria's *Anschluss* to Nazi Germany, the Austrian Jews were suddenly subjected to the same racist laws which had made the German Jews outcasts in their own country a few years earlier. If the look across the border had given the Austrian Jews an idea of what Nazi rule meant, however, it hadn't prepared them for the rage they experienced following March 12, 1938. An American journalist who observed the scene, later wrote,

For the first few weeks the behavior of the Vienna Nazis was worse than anything I had seen in Germany. There was an orgy of sadism. Day after day large numbers of Jewish men and women could be seen scrubbing Schuschnigg signs off the sidewalk and cleaning the gutters. While they worked on their hands and knees with jeering storm troopers standing over them, crowds gathered to taunt them. Hundreds of Jews, men and women, were picked off the streets and put to work cleaning public latrines and the toilets of the barracks where the S.A. and the S.S. were quartered. Tens of thousands more were jailed. Their worldly possessions were confiscated or stolen. (Shirer, 1960, p.351)

The *Anschluss* effectively ended an era where, over generations, the Jews had become an interwoven thread in the tapestry of Viennese life. Their forefathers had come to the glorious capital of the Monarchy from the far reaches of the Hapsburg Empire, lured by the promises of emancipation and the joy of taking part in the German language and culture. In return they had richly contributed to all the areas of cultural expression, and at the turn of the century their prominent presence had helped to usher in this illustrious period we call the Wiener Moderne. They had fought in World War I, side by side with their Austrian fellow citizens. So much had some of them assimilated into the Viennese culture, upon which they left such a distinguished mark, that they considered themselves Viennese; their Jewishness had faded into the background--a religious denomination at most, and as such a private matter. When, after World War I, a new influx of Eastern European Jews arrived in Vienna, they brought with them a long gone world. Their customs, traditions, and religious practices grown in the Eastern European shtetl made them strangers to the Viennese and the assimilated Viennese Jews alike.

After the *Anschluss*, none of these differences counted. The new rulers decreed who a Jew was, and equally cast them out of Austrian society. For the assimilated Viennese Jews who had moved away from Judaism, a world fell apart. Denied

their cherished Viennese identity and instead stigmatized as Jewish, they were suddenly confronted with an identity proposition many of them were unable to fill with meaning. "When Hitler decided I was a Jew" is the often heard utterance by those whose self-understanding of the idea of Jewishness had become external and alien. But it was not only Hitler and the Nazis who decided their Jewishness. The hundreds of thousands of Viennese who streamed into the streets in their enthusiasm for Hitler condoned the new regime's policy. This wide support rendered at once generations of Jewish assimilation questionable, and turned a life built on that proposition delusive. "Suddenly you weren't what you thought you were" (Liliane, fieldnotes), and Vienna was after all not the home one had believed. The ground was slipping; the sense of betrayal was enormous, unfathomable. And unlike the Jew who was living in and nourished by a Jewish tradition, the Jew without a positive identification had to face this violent event, as Jean Améry (1980) expressed it, without a God, without a history, and without a messianic-nationalistic expectation. Put less grandly, without an identity structure that could sustain this radical rescripting of one's self.

For the refugees from Austria who were forced into exile because of the racist policies of the Nazi regime, there was

no way escaping the issue of identity. After all, their stories of exile began with a looming identity crisis at their core. But when put to the study participants directly, I observed a certain reluctance with more than a few to discuss these matters. I had to be content with rather reticent and scant answers to my questions regarding being Austrian, American, and Jewish. "I have never found a label fit for myself" Erich, for example, says (p.18). Perhaps matters of identity, after the traumatic experience of exile, were much too emotionally charged, filled with unhappy memories too personal and painful to talk about directly, and thus defied a simple cognitive answer. Perhaps my questions were too simplistic to address the complex identity structures that emerged from the experience of exile. Nevertheless, the whole interview was impregnated with themes of identity of Austrian-ness, Jewishness, and American-ness. The strains of a shifting and changing identity were embedded in the narration of the émigrés' lives, in fact, they often constituted the thread of the individual stories.

This observation makes a powerful argument for the contemporary theorizing that identities are constructed narratively. The narrative approach, picked up in psychology and other branches of the social sciences, argues that we live our lives by stories. They are a form of being and not

merely of discourse (Carr, 1986). We are the stories we tell (Adams, 1993).¹ We appropriate experience and seek unity from incoherence by way of creating our life story. "Our present identity is thus not a sudden and mysterious event but a sensible result of a life story" (Gergen, 1994, p.187), or as Adams (1993) put it succinctly in his 1997 preface to The Stories We Live By, "identity is a life story" (p.5). Certainly, writers have long recognized the power and deep satisfaction of the narrative. In Robert Musil's novel The Man Without Qualities, for example, we find a passage where Ulrich, the protagonist, reflecting on the complexities of modern life that threaten to turn life into abstraction, suddenly comes to understand the structure inherent in human living and acting as one of story telling.

...it struck him that when one is overburdened and dreams of simplifying one's life, the basic law of life, the law one longs for, is nothing other than that of narrative order, the simple order that enables one to say: "First this happened and then that happened..." It is the simple sequence of events in which the overwhelmingly manifold nature of things is represented, in a unidimensional order, as a mathematician would say, stringing all that has occurred in space and time on a single thread, which calms us; that celebrated "thread of the story," which is, it seems, the thread of life itself. Lucky the man who can say "when," "before," and "after"! ... This is the trick the novel artificially turns to account: Whether the wanderer is riding on the highway in pouring rain or crunching through snow and ice at ten below zero, the reader feels a cozy glow, and this

¹This echoes Goffman's concept of the self as emerging out of performance on a public stage. (See **CHAPTER 1**)

would be hard to understand if this eternally dependable narrative device, which even nursemaids can rely on to keep their little charges quiet, this tried-and-true "foreshortening of the mind's perspective," were not already part and parcel of life itself. (Musil, 1995, p.708-709)

For the assimilated Viennese Jews, at the moment of the *Anschluss*, the thread of their stories, *the thread of life itself*, was torn; surviving meant picking up the loose ends and rebraiding them into one's life story. My thesis is an attempt to trace the rebraiding of the threads in the stories of those émigrés who moved in the circle of the AUSTRIAN FORUM, to delineate the commonalities in their stories, and to present a shared narrative of exile. Embedded in that narrative, following the argument advanced above that we are the stories we tell, the reader hopefully will find some answers to the questions regarding the identity of one group of Austrian Jewish émigrés in New York. This being a narrative of displacement, it draws on the stories of people that abound with references to significant places in their lives: Vienna which represents *Heimat*, but also betrayal and persecution; the different locales in the complicated journeys in search of refuge; and New York City which became a new home. These places ground this narrative of exile. And as they are integral pieces of the émigrés' stories, these places become signifiers of who they are. In that sense, my dissertation advances a notion of place-identity that, while underlining a person's rich

connectedness to a place, stresses that identity is constituted within the amalgam of the place and its culture at a particular time in history.²

THE VIENNESE ASPECT OF IDENTITY.

To be sure, in the course of my study I met Viennese who came to the United States under the same circumstances as the study participants, but who emotionally seemed to have moved away from Austria. Those exiles created a life here, went to school, started businesses, and raised families just as the people from the AUSTRIAN FORUM did, but apparently they never looked back. The people involved with the FORUM, however, had self-selected to maintain not just a tie with Austria, but to integrate that portion of their former lives into their present life story. The fond memories of the émigrés centered around Vienna, where most of them lived, some for generations. They felt thoroughly Viennese, and for them Vienna was the capital of the cultural world. Music, opera, theatre, the life of the mind... many émigrés had enthusiastically participated in that cultural life. After their move to America, their cherished Viennese identity prevented them from accomplishing a total break with the past. "And in my heart I am still Viennese" (Erich, p.11).

²This notion of place-identity echoes, in fact, Erik Erikson's "ego space-time" (see CHAPTER1), and is close to the German concept of *Heimat* (see CHAPTER 10).

Yet, the Austrian side of these émigrés' identities, however strongly felt and expressed in the FORUM's cultural activities, remained brittle. After the experience of the *Anschluss*, they could never be as trustingly and unquestionably Austrian or Viennese as they were before. With the loss of the *Heimat* Vienna, the Viennese identity, previously taken for granted, was forever undermined, leaving a horrible identity vacuum. "I lost more than my home. I lost my identity" (Carola, p.20).

THE AMERICAN ASPECT OF IDENTITY.

This identity vacuum was never quite filled with an American identity. Surely, most of the émigrés became American citizens as soon as possible. However, that didn't necessarily make them Americans. In Stella's words, "Many American things are strange to me. No, I am certainly not an American" (p.16). One of my most striking observations occurred when I experienced my first event at the AUSTRIAN FORUM. The people who gathered there appeared to me so removed from American reality that I left the event with the distinct feeling I had encountered a group from another time and place. However, not to overstate this observation, a cautious note seems advisable. The AUSTRIAN FORUM I knew was the FORUM of its late years when it was fully committed to nostalgia. Most of the people who participated in the FORUM's events were at the end of their lives, a time when

many return to their origins, rejoicing in the fond memories of their childhoods and youths. Had I met the same people who, to my eyes, were so strikingly non-American, twenty or thirty years earlier in the midst of their professional and social lives, I might have left with a different impression. "I was much more American as long as I worked" (Carola, p.13).

Age, at the time of arrival in the United States, also made a difference in terms of identifying with America. Those who came as children and youths, who went to school and colleges here, were apt to take in America more fully, as were those men who served in the American military which allowed intimate contact with Americans from all walks of life. "World citizen with an American passport and veteran of the American army" is how Andreas, the former soldier, describes himself (p.26). Yet, in contrast to the Austrian-ness of the FORUM's émigrés, which was salient, the American-ness of many émigrés was, if adopted at all, rather transient. Even if they had become more American when working and raising children, they couldn't sustain that side of their identities in older age. The question, "Why don't we have American friends?" reflects an experience shared by most of the study participants. The FORUM's émigrés remained strangers in their adopted land, their "strangerness" powerfully captured in one of Adorno's (1951/1993) aphorisms where the wide and untouched American

landscape becomes the metaphor for alienation.

Paysage.--The shortcoming of the American landscape is not so much, as romantic illusion would have it, the absence of historical memories, as that it bears no traces of the human hand. This applies not only to the lack of arable land, the uncultivated woods often no higher than scrub, but above all to the roads. These are always inserted directly in the landscape, and the more impressively smooth and broad they are, the more unrelated and violent their gleaming track appears against its wild, overgrown surroundings. They are expressionless. Just as they know no marks of foot or wheel, no soft paths along their edges as a transition to the vegetation, no trails leading off into the valley, so they are without the mild, soothing, un-angular quality of things that have felt the touch of hands or their immediate implements. It is as if no one had ever passed their hand over the landscape's hair. It is uncomfortable and comfortless... (Adorno, Minima Moralia, p.48)

But there is New York! "New York is not America"--an often expressed cliché by the émigrés but, nevertheless, a truthful reminder that New York is the place in America where one can be at home without needing to be American. As Beatrice puts it, New York is "such a mixed place. You meet so many people and feel quite at home with them" (p.15).

THE JEWISH ASPECT OF IDENTITY.

The Jewishness of the assimilated Viennese Jews who gathered at the AUSTRIAN FORUM always stayed in the background of the organization. But privately the émigrés had to address this side of their selves. No matter how they related to their Jewishness, the events of history suddenly

made Jewishness their significant identities. As their forebearers had moved to a society that offered great opportunities, but, nevertheless, operated with a strong anti-Semitic undercurrent, in order to succeed and be, at least seemingly, a part of high society, it had been politic to not form a strong relationship with one's Jewishness. This project of assimilation, this historical experiment, failed when the anti-Semites took power. Aside from the effective destruction of European Jewry, the rise of Nazism had the additional effect on those who survived, but who had not been able to fill Jewishness with meaning, of creating a crisis of identity and belonging. If the study participants experienced this crisis as an inner turmoil, however, it was hardly shared with me in the interviews. There were some who fully identified as Jewish, and few who denied any Jewishness at all. Most simply accepted their Jewishness seemingly without conflict and without further elaborating on it. "I am Jewish. That's a fact. I am a German Jew as someone else is a Hottentot" (Gaby, p.17). With little cultural possession and religious bond as a Jew, there remained only the catastrophe of the Holocaust to identify with. The writer Jean Améry (1980), himself an assimilated Austrian Jew, coined the term *Katastrophenjude* for those assimilated Jews whose search for their Jewish selves remained fruitless. "Nobody can become something for which he has searched his memories in vain" (p.133). But, forced

by events to a destiny as a Jew, Améry, the *catastrophe Jew*, is confronted with the dilemma of the obligation and the impossibility to be just that. I believe Améry gives voice to many catastrophe Jews when he sums up this experience as one of estrangement.

As a Jew I walk through the world like a sick person who suffers of one of those diseases that don't generate grave symptoms but will most certainly be lethal...Without trust in the world I, as a Jew, stand strange and alone against my environment, and I can only settle down in the strangeness. I must take on the strangeness as a characteristic part of my personality, insist upon it like an unsaleable possession. (Améry, 1980, p.148-149)³

So, this is the "price" that the émigrés pay for the place in history that they unwittingly occupied. Though economically successful and socially adjusted, they live a life that lost its unequivocal place in the world. With the loss of their *Heimat*, matters of identity re-configuration were forced upon them. No longer Austrian, not fully American, and little rooted and nourished by the Jewish tradition, they remain *heimatlos*, strangers. "I am at home only in the airplane. When I fly from Vienna to New York, I fly home. When I fly from New York to Vienna, I fly home. And when I arrive I am not at home anywhere" (Carola, p.13).

³My translation from the German.

I began this research with an understanding of a person's identity as constructed in a social-cultural and historical context. I thought of changes in one's identity as a linear, developmental process, a progression towards a mature self. Like the snake shedding its skin, I thought a person moved through different identities over the course of life leaving behind the one that no longer fit the self. When I began my research I assumed that the émigrés from Austria had moved away from their Austrian Viennese identity to an American identity, assigning their Austrian-ness to removed memory.

I end this research with a rather different understanding. Though not departing from conceptualizing a person's identity as constructed, I have come to understand changes of identities as not necessarily linear and progressive. Rather, new identities are added to already existent ones. A person's identity can be multiple and in flux, layered and complex, continuously shifting between the different acquired identities. "Here I identify as ex-Austrian, and over there as neo-American" Georg relates (p.16). This post-modern understanding of the self seems to fit a life stamped by exile. A few study participants experience this self as an organic hybrid with the blurring of former identities to integrate features of a new identity into a fluid self understanding. More, however, describe their selves that evolved from the experience of

displacement as fractured and compartmentalized. As Gaby expresses, "Everything is very ambiguous, everything is bifurcated" (p.18). For some, a sense of the lost *Heimat* lingers on, others can comfortably claim two homes. And some again contain both emotions inside.

Having to leave Vienna was a double-edged sword. Apart from the difficulties of leaving one's *Heimat* there were also good things. One could broaden one's horizon and learn new things that one would have never had the opportunity to learn. (Erich, p.13)

A group of people stranded in history and geography, the émigrés founded the AUSTRIAN FORUM as a refuge. Here, they could express their range of feelings for Vienna, and still feel Viennese in their souls--their patriotism, the need to express their exile experience, and nostalgia (see **CHAPTER 8** and **CHAPTER 10**). At the FORUM, they could hold on to and cherish an identity which was once unquestionably theirs, but which had been torn away from them, forever destroyed. As the Viennese and Austrian identity could only be expressed in its removed and idealized version of the AUSTRIAN FORUM, however, it drew on the construction of an "imaginary homeland" (Rushdie, 1991, p.10). *Heimat* as utopia--that is perhaps why the events of the FORUM appeared to be from a different time and place, wrapped in nostalgia. But before being critical of the nostalgic impulse, we should remind ourselves of a pronouncement attributed to the

German writer Jean Paul, that our memories are the only possessions that no one can take away from us, that the land of memory is the only paradise from which we can not be exiled.

APPENDIX 1

INTERVIEW GUIDELINE.

Introduction:

I am working on my dissertation in Psychology at City University, at the Graduate Center. I study the AUSTRIAN FORUM, and I am interested in the question of how people experience exile, and how a social-cultural organization like the FORUM helps to cope with the exile situation. So, I am not only interested in the individual aspects of the emigration but also in the collective parts of it. I will interview people who were members of the FORUM, and I also want to talk to people who were not affiliated in order to get an outside perspective.

1. The Interviewee's Relationship to the AUSTRIAN FORUM.

Do you remember your first time at the FORUM; when was it; what was it like; were you a member; since when; how did you learn about the FORUM; how often did you visit; what did you like about the FORUM; do you have friends who came here, too; do you see each other outside of the FORUM, do other things; do you visit other Austrian events, at the Cultural Institute, at the Austrian American Federation; do you go to German speaking events; did the FORUM change over the years that you have known it, how; how do you feel that the FORUM does not exist anymore; what do you think about the new building; what about the interim period before the new building can be used; the FORUM has been described as an exile organization, do you agree with this, or do you have another history; has the experience of what it does changed since it lost its separate identity; how.

2. Biographical Background.

Where are you from; what did you do; family situation; how did the cultural life look like in Austria; in which way did you participate;

3. The Journey.

What year did you come here; with whom; what was the reason for emigration; how did the decision come about; how did you get out; was the emigration planned to be temporary or permanent; did it change, when; did you want and did you plan to come to America; when was the decision made to stay in New York; did you ever consider to go back to Austria; where in

New York do you live; did you move; when you got here, how did you think about yourself: exiled, immigrant, refugee;

4. Preconceptions of America.

What did you know about America; what were your images of America; did you know English; how comfortable were you with English; did you use any organization for help; which organizations; what newspapers did you read; are you still reading them;

5. Being Jewish.

Think back to feeling of being Jewish in Vienna, when you got here did you feel the same, different; and feeling of being Austrian at both places;

6. Relationship to Austria.

Did you ever go back; when was the first time; what were the circumstances; do you have family, friends in Austria; where in Austria do you visit; how often; how do you feel about Vienna;

7. Becoming American.

Do you feel American; what does America mean to you; are you Americanized, when did you know that; how do you fit into America; did you travel in America;

8. Question of Identity.

How would you describe yourself, as American, Jewish American, Austrian American, Austrian Jewish, anything else;

9. Home.

What is home; where is home;

10. Anything else you think is important.

APPENDIX 2

Siegfried Altmann, (1887 - 1963), was born in Nikolsburg, a small town at the Moravian-Austrian border where he grew up in the Jewish section of the town which had its own administration, police and schools. As a little boy he encountered Theodore Herzl.

On a visit to Vienna, when I was playing in the Volksgarten, a tall, bearded man in a light linen suit passed by. "The King of Zion" I heard an old Jew murmur after him, in admiration. Herzl had just returned from his conference with the Sultan. I succeeded in getting a smile from a noble Prince of Israel. But when I told the story to my father at home, he did not take my childish chatter seriously. (Werner, 1941. Outstanding Refugee Zionists in America. The New Palestine, p.8-9. Siegfried Altmann Collection at the Leo Baeck Institute in New York)

Until his emigration in 1938, Siegfried Altmann was the director of the Israelite Institute for the Blind, *Hohe Warte*, in Vienna. He was a visionary leader of that institution which provided new educational opportunities for its blind students.¹ He founded the first Braille library in Central Europe, and from 1929 to 1938 he served as president of the World Council for the Education of the Blind. In 1931, he visited New York City, attending the World Conference on Work for the Blind.

In addition to his work with the blind, Altmann also

¹After the *Anschluss*, the Nazis confiscated the *Hohe Warte* which was destroyed by bombs during the war.

engaged in the Zionist movement. He presided over the *Zionistische Organisation Österreichs* (1929 - 1931), and served as vice president of the *Herzl Club*.

With an affidavit from Helen Keller, Altmann, his wife Else, and their son were able to emigrate to the U.S. In New York he tried unsuccessfully to continue his work with the blind. However, after co-founding the AUSTRIAN INSTITUTE, his focus and energy allowed that institute to flourish. "His personal charm, his tact, his goodness, his humor helped to build his second work of life which provided a much needed platform for many artists and intellectuals who had emigrated to the U.S..." (Mimi Grossberg, 1971, in H. Gold, Geschichte der Juden in Oesterreich, p.110) Siegfried Altmann was also chairman of the Austrian Jewish Representative Committee, a Zionist group working within the World Jewish Congress, and a member of the Jakob Ehrlich Society, founded 1939 in New York and named after the courageous Zionist spokesman who died in a concentration camp. Altmann was in the leadership of the Free Austrian Movement, and on the advisory board of the Austrian National Committee (Goldner, 1985, Vorher und nachher. Der Weg eines Oesterreichers, Wien. Also: Wilder Spaulding, 1963, The Quiet Invaders, Wien).²

²For more, see the Siegfried Altmann Collection at the Leo Baeck Institute in New York.

Frederick Taylor, formerly Friedrich Krejci, (1896 - 1959), fought as an officer in World War I. After the war, he became a member of the police force in Vienna and married the daughter of a wealthy Jewish industrialist. At the time of the *Anschluss* in 1938, he and his wife Mary Doktor were touring the world. They did not return to Austria; instead, they immigrated to the United States.

Taylor was a participant in many Austrian exile activities. He supported the Military Committee for the Liberation of Austria, and, along with Otto Habsburg, Guido Zernatto, Hans Rott, Walter Schuschnigg, and Richard Schüller, he signed the Committee's call for Austrians to volunteer in an Austrian Battalion. He was also a member of the Free Austrian Movement, the Austrian National Committee, and by invitation of General Dwight Eisenhower, he was the Austrian representative to the organization People to People.³

Frederick Taylor was the first president of the AUSTRIAN INSTITUTE. His generous financial support helped establish the INSTITUTE, and secured its existence.

Guido Zernatto, (1903 - 1943), a poet and writer descended

³This organization for professionals and university and secondary school students, which is still in existence, was founded in 1956 by Eisenhower to promote international understanding through direct people-to-people contacts.

from Carinthian peasants, was a cabinet member in the Patriotic Front, Austria's last government under Kurt von Schuschnigg. He and his wife Riccarda arrived in New York City via Paris in 1940. In 1941, Zernatto became a professor at Fordham University, which allowed him to complete his treatise "*Das Nationalitätenproblem*."

He was active in the Austrian political emigration, first while in exile in France. Then, until his early death in 1943, in New York City, where he shared the presidency of the Austrian National Committee with Hans Rott.

One of his last poems ends,

Dieser Wind der fremden Kontinente
 Hat den Atem einer andern Zeit.
 Andre Menschen, einer andern Welt geboren,
 Mag's erfrischen. Ich bin hier verloren
 Wie ein Waldtier, das in Winternächten schreit.

This wind of strange continents
 Has the breath of a different time.
 It may refresh other people,
 born to another world. I am lost here
 like a forest animal that screams in winter nights.⁴

When the Austrian government opened its Cultural Institute in New York in 1963, Riccarda Zernatto became its first librarian.

Irene Harand, (1900 - 1975), had gained international

⁴The poem, written 1943 in New York, was published with other poems and essays, including excerpts from "*Das Nationalitätenproblem*," in: Zernatto, G. (1961). "...kündet laut die Zeit". Graz and Vienna: Stiasny Verlag.--This is my translation from the German.

recognition as an outspoken opponent of anti-Semitism. In 1933 she founded the *Weltverband gegen Rassenhass und Menschennot* (World Organization against Racism and Human Suffering) which became known as the Harand-Movement. In her understanding of being a Christian, she deeply resented any form of anti-Semitism, and she voiced this opinion in her publications *So oder so* (1933) and *Sein Kampf. Antwort an Hitler* (1935).⁵

Christianity and anti-Semitism cannot live together. One or the other must go. And remember that Anti-Semitism is the basis of National Socialism. If Christianity cannot or will not destroy National Socialism, National Socialism can and will destroy Christianity. (Harand, 1937. Christianity and the Swastika. *The New Outlook*. April 1937. Irene Harand Collection at the Leo Baeck Institute in New York)

In 1933 Irene Harand began to publish a weekly journal *Gerechtigkeit. Gegen Rassenhass und Menschennot* (Justice. Against Racism and Human Suffering). She contributed most of the articles herself. The *Gerechtigkeit* spoke out against anti-Semitism and National Socialism, but never for democracy. It favored a patriotic-monarchistic course instead. The *Gerechtigkeit* had a circulation of 28,000, and was distributed in 38 countries until it stopped publication in 1938.

⁵The latter was translated into English by the Anti-Defamation League. Published under the title, *His Struggle, an Answer to Hitler's "Mein Kampf"*, the book was distributed to every public library in America. (Mimi Grossberg, 1970, p.11)

At the time of the *Anschluss*, Irene Harand was in London, and after her husband Frank joined her in 1938, they went into exile in New York. There she was prominently involved with the Austrian American League, AAL, an organization to oppose Fascism, Nazism, and Communism as well as to cultivate and perpetuate Austrian art and culture. The AAL, which existed between 1939 and 1942, also helped persecuted people emigrate to the United States. Though officially non-partisan, the AAL had strong monarchistic leanings.⁶

Irene Harand collaborated with Altmann in leading the AUSTRIAN INSTITUTE, and after Taylor's and Altmann's deaths served as its third president until 1975 (Erika Weinzierl, 1991, Christliche Solidarität mit Juden am Beispiel Irene Harands (1900 - 1975, Freiburg, Germany)).⁷

Margarete Bush, (1887 - 1982), was born an Austrian citizen in a part of Hungary that later became Czechoslovakian. Up to her sixteenth birthday she studied with famous music teachers in Leipzig, Germany: Max Reger, Robert Teichmüller,

⁶George N. Shuster led the Austrian American League from 1940 to 1942.--The president of Hunter College was part of the circle of intellectuals around Friederike Zweig, Stefan Zweig's divorced wife. An American who spoke German, he spent years in Germany after the war to help rebuild that country's cultural life. "A wonderful man!" (Harry Zohn, personal conversation, December 5, 1993) For years, Shuster was listed as an honorary member of the AUSTRIAN INSTITUTE.

⁷See also the Irene Harand Collection at the Leo Baeck Institute in New York.

and Arthur Nikisch who made her promise to never become a conductor or a pianist. She kept the promise and became a piano teacher instead. After Leipzig, she continued her studies in Vienna with Richard Robert and Emil Sauer, and familiarized herself with the Leschetitzky Method. In the Twenties, 1926-1927, she spent a year in the United States, teaching music in Detroit. It was there that she began to develop the Bush Method, the idea of teaching children in groups--which was then very unusual in Europe--and of teaching them music in a pleasant way "through the ear, not through the eye". On her return to Vienna, she was able to implement her method in the Children's Conservatory of Music which she founded and directed for ten years, under the auspices of the *Neues Wiener Konservatorium*, until Hitler came to power. Margarete Bush was also well known as a concert and oratorio singer. Among her conductors were Gustav Mahler and Bruno Walter.

Margarete Bush came to New York via London in 1940. Having to support two children, she took all kinds of jobs.

I was washing the floors for an organization and they did not know who I was. I just washed the floors very well! But by and by they found out that I know languages and could help them with my languages. Finally they found out that if necessary I could play the piano, if nobody was there for accompanying, therefore I started also to make music. Finally I became a Director of Music in that organization. (Interview, in the Columbia Oral History Collection.)

This organization was the American Council for Émigrés in the Professions, ACEP, which helped refugees from Nazism or Bolshevism who wished to work in their professions. Margarete Bush worked for the ACEP for many years, travelling from university to university to find employment for her clients.

A friend of Irene Harand, Margarete Bush became involved with the AUSTRIAN INSTITUTE from its inception, first as a helper and assistant, then, after Bruno Walter's death, as the leader of the INSTITUTE's music section. Through her work with the ACEP she knew many artists who were willing to perform for no money, a favor from which the INSTITUTE richly profited. In addition to the musical programs, Margarete Bush offered informal gatherings, the *Wiener Jause*, a popular Viennese afternoon at the studio of the ACEP on 72nd Street.

Alfred Farau, formerly Hernfeld, (1904 - 1972),⁸ whose father had taught Jewish religion in the 2nd Bezirk, and whose mother had believed him to be a poet since his early childhood, was pursuing a two-track career as a psychotherapist and a writer while in Vienna. He developed an early interest in the *Individual Psychologie* of Alfred

⁸After arriving in New York, and wishing to protect his parents back in Vienna, Farau changed his name when he worked at a radio station which fought against Nazism in Europe.

Adler, of whom he became a long time student. Farau practiced psychotherapy at his private office. He also developed a reputation as a lecturer at the *Volkshochschule* and the *Schubert Konservatorium* where he spoke about literary and cultural historical matters.

Farau's writing career, which started out with the publication of a children's book and a series of poems, was mostly concerned with the then new literary form of the radio play. He was successful with two plays, one of which, *Der Ruf der Sterne*, was translated into eight languages and broadcast into the same number of countries. His success landed him a contract with the German broadcasting corporation, which, however, was cancelled with Hitler's rise to power in Germany in 1933.

In 1938, during *Kristallnacht*, Farau was arrested and spent several months in the concentration camp in Dachau. After his release, he and his wife left Austria for Trieste, Italy, leaving behind his parents who later died in Auschwitz.

In 1940, the Farau's arrived in New York, and, by 1943, Farau was able to practice psychotherapy again. He also continued to be involved with the Alfred Adler Institute on Central Park West, where he collaborated with Adler's son Kurt and daughter Alexandra, and other well known personalities such as Danica Deutsch, Heinz Ansbacher, Ernst

Papanek, and Emil Fröschels. After the war, Farau returned to Vienna where, in 1953, he finished his university studies with a doctorate in philosophy. He continued to write, publishing on psychological subjects. But he remained committed to his literary work as well. He published two books of poetry and wrote Schatten sind des Lebens Güter, a play which was first presented to the public in 1962 under the sponsorship of the Aufbau and the Austrian General Consulate. Among his large circle of friends he counted many writers and intellectuals. He knew Alfred Polgar, Ernst Waldinger, Berthold Viertel, Friederike Zweig, Max Roden, Friedrich Bergammer, Walter Sorell, and Michael Lazarus.

An important and very popular side of Farau's creativity concerned his lecturing activity--both in English and in German--at American universities, learned societies, and cultural exile organizations, in which capacity he became a true mediator between the two cultures. For many years, Farau was also vice president and literary director of the AUSTRIAN INSTITUTE and the AUSTRIAN FORUM.

(Harry Zohn, Ed., 1992. Alfred Farau. Aus dem Tagebuch eines Emigranten und anderes Österreichisches aus Amerika. Volume 4, Austrian Culture. New York: Peter Lang. Also: Interview with Gertrud Bartel.)

Hans Bernfeld (1913 - 1985), a commercial artist educated at the *Kunstgewerbeschule* in Vienna, left Austria for Milan in

1938, and, in 1939, he continued to Shanghai where he stayed for ten years and met his wife Ann.

In 1951, the couple arrived in New York, and Bernfeld began to work as a commercial artist again.

For many years, Bernfeld was involved with the AUSTRIAN FORUM, and, from 1982 until his death, served as its president. His tireless efforts--supported by his wife--secured the FORUM's survival at a time when its membership began to decline. Bernfeld tried to reach new recruits by inserting more English language programs, and by enlisting such popular performers as Marta Eggerth and Fritz Spielman. When he convinced Marta Eggerth to become his successor, he, once again, saved the FORUM for years to come.

Marta Eggerth (1912) was born in Budapest. At only 11 years of age, she made her first singing appearance in the operetta *Mannequin*. Soon she was one of the foremost exponents of operetta, with engagements all over Europe. She worked with Emmerich Kálmán, Franz Lehár and Richard Strauss. When talking pictures arrived in Germany she became the queen of the film operetta, and by 1937 she had made some 39 films. During one of the filmings she met her future husband, Jan Kiepura, the legendary Polish tenor, and they began a singing partnership, which lasted until his death in 1966. With the coming of World War II, they emigrated to

America where Kiepura had accepted a five-year contract at the Metropolitan Opera. Marta Eggerth appeared together with Kiepura in *La Bohème* in Chicago, and accepted offers from Hollywood for two films with Judy Garland. In 1944 Marta Eggerth starred on Broadway opposite her husband in the role of the Merry Widow; and with the number of performances in America and Europe approaching 2,000, she became one of the most celebrated "widows" of all time. After the war Marta Eggerth and Jan Kiepura returned to Europe and began touring again. But New York remained their home. Their son, Marian Kiepura, helped his mother when she became the last president of the AUSTRIAN FORUM. Though in her eighties, her singing career picked up in Europe, causing the obligations of the FORUM's presidency to become too much of a burden. She resigned, and since no successor was found, the AUSTRIAN FORUM ceased to exist in October 1992.

Jarmila Novotna, (1907 - 1994) a leading soprano at the Metropolitan Opera for many years, and a regular and honored guest at the AUSTRIAN FORUM, was born in Prague in 1907. She began singing when still a teenager, and made her début in Prague in 1925. She reached the peak of her fame in the years just before and after World War II performing in opera houses all over the world. She collaborated with Bruno Walter and Arturo Toscanini, and sang opposite Richard Tauber. It was Toscanini who persuaded her to leave her

native Czechoslovakia and to move to New York in 1939. She left a country that had emerged from the breakup of the Austro-Hungarian Empire after World War I, and was just beginning to experience the meaning of democracy. In 1942 Jarmila Novotna recorded Czech folksongs accompanied on the piano by Jan Masarek, the son of the first president of Czechoslovakia, Thomas Masarek. The recording was dedicated to the memory of the men and women who were killed by the Nazis. When the Communists assumed power in Czechoslovakia in 1948, Jarmila Novotna's return to her homeland became once again impossible, and it was only with the end of Communism in 1989 that she was truly welcome in her native land. In the Fall of 1992, in honor of her 85th birthday, the recording of her music, including the folksongs recorded in 1942, was released in Czechoslovakia, and she was in Prague for her birthday celebration which included an opening night at the opera in her honor.

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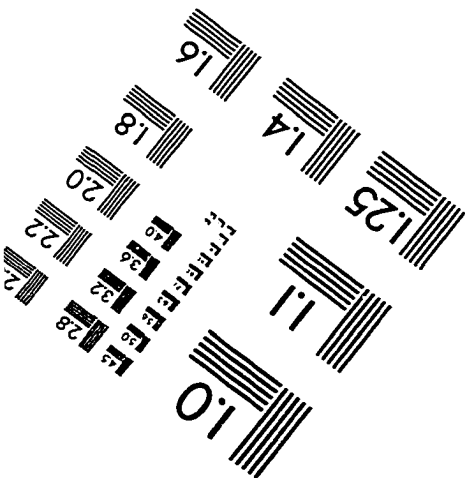
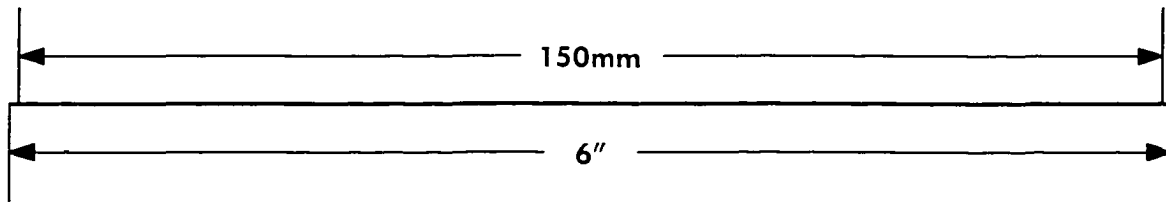
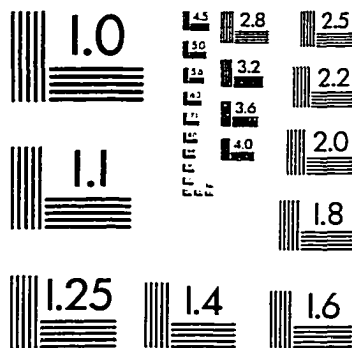
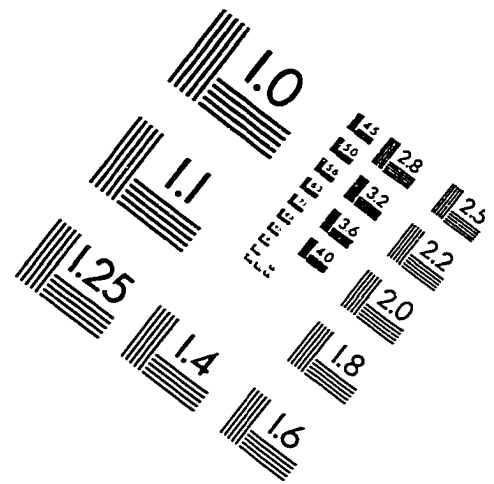
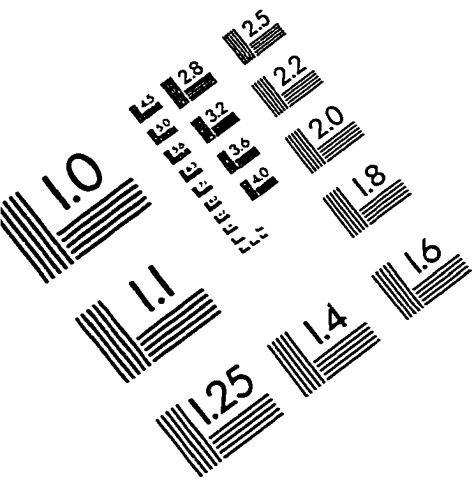
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