

EDWARD L. BERNAYS FOUNDATION LECTURE SERIES

on
EUROPE'S CONTRIBUTION TO AMERICAN CIVILIZATION

Address by
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Historically, the term "Austria" has had more than one meaning both geographically and politically. In its widest sense it meant, and is still so used, the multi-national realm over which the Hapsburgs held sway. Austria was for centuries a part of the Holy Roman Empire and its capital Vienna was the seat of the emperors and one of the political and cultural centers of the Occident. The Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, which came into being at the beginning of the last century, with its 56 million inhabitants, was the second largest country in Europe and formed an almost self-contained economic unit. The former Austrian Monarchy was in many ways different from all other European powers. Other countries had some minorities, like the German Empire under Bismarck with Polish, French and Danish minorities, but these have been, compared with the German Staatsvolk, extremely small. The ethnographical map of Austria on the other hand was a multi-colored mosaic. Among the 56 million inhabitants of the former monarchy were 12 million Germans, 10 million Hungarians, 7 million Czechs, 5 million Poles, 4 million Ruthenians, 6 million Serbo-Croatians, 3 million Rumanians, 2 million Slovaks, $1\frac{1}{2}$ million Slovenes and nearly one million Italians. The German-speaking part of the population was, as you can see, less than one quarter of the inhabitants. The former Austrian Monarchy came to an end after World War I. Austria of today is a republic with over 7 million people.

Talking about Austria's influence on the American civilization, I shall only refer to the contribution of the German-speaking part of the former Austrian Monarchy and of Austria of today. With this reservation in mind, I shall try to present to you a sweeping panoramic view

of the more interesting immigrant groups from Austria and of their contributions to American civilization.

The first group, of which we have reliable historical records, consisted of Austrian Jesuits who, in the 17th and 18th centuries, explored the Southwest of what is now the United States and was then the northern part of New Spain, and did missionary work amongst the Indians in this region. The most famous of these Jesuits was Father Eusebius Frans Kuehn, better known by his Hispanicized name, Eusebio Francisco Kino, who had been born in 1644 in Nonsberg, in the Tyrol. He founded a number of missions, which form a chain from northern Mexico to southern Arizona. Covering more than 20,000 miles on foot, he discovered the mouth of the Rio Grande and, in 1700, reached the Colorado River. In 1711 Father Kuehn was killed by rebellious Indians.

Twenty years later the then Archbishop of Salzburg exiled approximately 30,000 of his Protestant subjects, who refused to revert to Catholicism. Just about this time Georgia, the last of the English colonies to be established in America, was founded. Among the first settlers of the new colony were 42 Protestant families from Salzburg. They founded Ebenezer, the "Rock of Help" of the Old Testament. The location between the Savannah and Ogeechee Rivers seemed to be well chosen. But the soil proved sterile, the air was hot and humid, the crops were poor. When the mortality rate among the hardy mountaineers began to rise alarmingly, Governor Oglethorpe granted them new lots, six miles from the old site. The construction of New Ebenezer on a ridge overlooking the Savannah River started in 1736. One of the first buildings to be erected was an orphanage - probably the first one in America - proof of the high mortality among the adults.

Under the effective leadership of their minister, Johann Martin Bolzius, the Salzburgers became pioneers in agriculture and industry.

By 1738 they produced so much rice, that they had to build a rice mill, the first one on this continent. They also erected the first saw mill and the first grist mill in Georgia.

By the time the Revolutionary War broke out, New Ebenezer had developed into a model community. The overwhelming majority of its members joined the patriotic cause. The fact that John Adam Treutlen of Ebenezer was elected first governor of Georgia, is evidence of the prominence of the Salzburgers among the patriots of that state.

America has traditionally been a haven for the oppressed. As religious intolerance had brought the Salzburgers to these shores, so the repressive Karlsbader Beschluesse of 1819, and the ensuing repercussions which culminated in the revolutions of 1830 and 1948 in Austria and the German kingdoms and principalities, brought not a few of the "demagogues", who had been rebelling against the old order. Among those Austrians, who sought refuge and possibly the realization of their sometimes utopian aspirations in the United States, were the gifted author Franz Grund of Vienna who for his shrewd appraisal, Aristocracy in America, has been called "The Jacksonian Tocqueville", and the defrocked Moravian monk Karl Postl, better known as Charles Sealsfield, who created a new type of fiction: the ethnographical novel. Through vivid and readable descriptions of American types has had existed between 1820 and 1840, he acquainted German-speaking Europe with the New World, its spirit and potentialities.

Many of the Dreissiger and Forty-Eighters, as the "Refugees of Revolution" were called, became prominent in American education and in the arts, or as professional Men. They provided the intellectual and political leadership for the German-American element - and that included the immigrants from the German-speaking parts of the Hapsburg Empire - , which, on occasion, gave to that element an influence

transcending its actual numerical strength. With their political aspirations and background, they became successful journalists and publishers, making the numerous German newspapers and journals by far the most important foreign language press in the United States. The anti-slavery issue in the United States gave the radicals an outlet for their pent-up revolutionary feelings. One of these was Friedrich Hassaurek. Born in Vienna in 1831, he was one of the youngest of the Forty-Eighters, and one of the most brilliant of the lot. An active campaigner for President Lincoln and his cause, he was in 1872 a leading figure in the liberal Republican movement.

Oswald Ottendorfer, who like Hassaurek, had been a member of Vienna's Akademische Legion, made the New Yorker Staatszeitung the most widely read and influential German daily in the United States.

Isidor Bush, trained as a printer in his father's plant in Vienna, founded the first American Jewish weekly, Israel's Herald.

Of the medical doctors among the Austrian revolutionaries, who found refuge in the United States, I should perhaps mention Dr. Krackowitzer, who became the leading surgeon at Mount Sinai and New York Hospitals, was a member of the committee to reorganize Bellevue Hospital in 1874, and president of the Pathological Society of New York.

Hans Balatka, who had studied music in Vienna, became director of the Chicago Philharmonic Society in 1860 and is counted among the pioneers to introduce good music in America.

Central Park in New York is a lasting memorial to another Forty-Eighter from Austria, Ignaz Anton Pilat, who had studied botany at the University of Vienna and executed the plans of Olmstead and Vaux for Manhattan's great recreation ground and air reservoir.

But the era of Metternich brought not only revolutionaries and

radicals from Austria into the "home of the free". In 1830 the Leopoldinen-Stiftung was founded in Austria. It was to promote Catholic missionary work among the Indians, and to attend to the religious and also the daily needs of the German-speaking immigrants in the United States. Until World War I, which put a halt to its activities, this foundation had made possible the construction of more than 400 churches in the United States, and had brought hundreds of priests and Indian missionaries from all parts of the Monarchy to the North American Continent.

The greatest number of Austrians who came to the United States under the so-called "New Immigration" at the end of the last and at the beginning of this century, were from Austria's easternmost province, Burgenland, which politically if not ethnically, was part of Hungary until 1919. The movement is still continuing, although numerically less significant. Through their continuing ties the Burgenlanders, quite a few of whom re-migrated to Austria, had and have an economic influence on their native province that cannot be overlooked. There are, by the way, more Burgenlanders living in Allentown, Pennsylvania, than in any community of the Burgenland itself.

While the Burgenlanders were mostly of peasant stock, the landless sons and daughters of smallholders, Karl Bitter, born in Vienna in 1867, may serve as an example of another type of immigrant that was frequently encountered at the time: the gifted and ambitious young man whose aspirations had been thwarted at home. Bitter's case is remarkable not only because he was extraordinarily successful in the United States, but also because it demonstrates what great talent was received by this country from other lands.

As a young sculptor, Bitter helped to decorate the stately buildings that rose on the former glacis and along the Ring after the old

walls and bastions of Vienna had been razed to create new space for the rapidly growing city. When he was drafted into the army, Bitter could not face the prospect of spending three artistically barren years in uniform. He went to the United States, where he arrived in 1889 with no other assets than his talent and the training he had been given at the Vienna Academy of Fine Arts. Ten years later, Karl Bitter was in charge of all the decorative work which was done in connection with the Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo, and which kept 35 artists and more than 100 assistants busy for over a year. Moreover, he planned and supervised the work for the World's Fair in St. Louis (1902-1904) and the Panama Pacific Exposition in San Francisco (1906-1908).

Bitter was president of the National Sculptor Society. From 1912 to 1915, the year he was killed by an automobile in front of the Metropolitan Opera House, he was a member of the Arts Council of the City of New York. Numerous works by his hand embellish New York and other American cities.

Leaving the chronological order of this presentation, I should like to mention another contemporary Austrian sculptor, who has gained fame in this country: Almost every visitor to the national capital includes in his sightseeing the 78 feet high Marine Corps War Memorial near Arlington National Cemetery. This and other famous monuments adorning Washington have been created by Felix de Weldon, who was born and educated in Vienna.

During the period between the two World Wars - except for the fateful late thirties of which I shall speak in a moment, - after the gates to the United States had been closed by the Immigration Act of 1924, Austrian emigration to the United States dwindled in numbers but not in quality. There came to this country Karl Landsteiner, who in 1930 received the Nobel Prize for his discovery of blood groups; Karl

and Gerti Cori who received the Nobel Prize in 1947 for their research on enzymes; and Richard Joseph Neutra, the great architect. There were actors like Walter Slezak, and singers like Maria Jeritza, and the first of those men who were to make skiing one of America's favorite pasttimes. In 1929 Siegfried Buchmayr came from Hofgastein to Franconia in New Hampshire, where he ran the ski-school of the Peckett on Sugar Hill. Many others followed: the group, headed by Hans Hauser, that staffed Sun Valley. Sepp Ruschp, who developed Stowe in Vermont, and Hannes Schneider, the greatest of the Austrian skiing pioneers, who made North Conway famous.

Many of these Austrian ski teachers and mountain climbers served as instructors with the 10th Mountain Division during World War II and thus contributed substantially to the knowledge of mountain and winter warfare in the United States. Today there is hardly a ski resort in the United States, which is not run by, or does not employ Austrian ski teachers. The style and technique of good American skiers is, without exception, Austrian.

On March 11, 1938 troops of the German Wehrmacht began to occupy Austria and on March 13th Austria's Anschluss to Germany was proclaimed. Thousands of Austrians had to leave their homeland. Many of these Austrians sought, and found, refuge in the United States. While the majority were not "big people", there were among them many of the most gifted individuals, Austria has ever produced: composers like Arnold Schoenberg, the creator of dodecaphonic music; conductors like the late Bruno Walter and Erich Leinsdorff, who is now heading the Boston Philharmonic Orchestra; singers like Lotte Lehmann; writers like Franz Werfel - among whose many works I should like to mention only the Song of Bernadette -; and a great number of actors, producers and directors like Otto Ludwig Preminger; doctors like the Nobel Prize winner Otto

Loewi; scientists like Viktor Hess, who had also received the Nobel Prize; Disciples and associates of Freud, like Otto Rank and Theodor Reik, and the followers of Adler, among them his children, Alexandra and Kurt; philosophers like Rudolf Carnap and Philip Frank, the prominent representatives of the "Vienna Circle"; engineers and industrialists like Paul Schwarzkopf, the pioneer of powder metallurgy; economists like Ludwig von Mises - and many, many others whose names would fill page after page.

The contributions of these Austrians to all aspects of American arts and learning is inestimable. Time and again they have been able to stimulate and interpret authoritatively Austrian ideas and creative achievements that had reached the United States before they came. I should like to mention here especially Austrian music and Austrian psychology. The oeuvre of Haydn, Mozart and Schubert, or that most beloved of Christmas carols, "Silent Night, Holy Night", and the teachings of Freud and Adler have become as much a part of American culture as they are part of the cultural heritage of my country. In this connection I should perhaps mention also the fact that Johann Strauss introduced many of his famous waltzes to the American public in person during his triumphant visit to the United States in 1872.

"The Trapp Family Singers", the widow and children of Austria's submarine hero of World War I, Baron Georg von Trapp, became famous throughout the United States as interpreters of Austrian folksongs. Maria Augusta von Trapp's autobiography suggested The Sound of Music, the newest musical by Rodgers and Hammerstein.

Although Austria is best known in the United States for her contributions to American civilization in the arts and humanities, I should point out that the first car driven by an internal combustion engine was built in Vienna in 1875, and that the famous Volkswagen was

designed by the Austrian Ferdinand Porsche. The first propeller-driven steamship was built in 1829 according to the plans of the Austrian Franz Ressler. In many American power plants electricity is produced with the aid of a type of vertical turbine, invented by the Austrian Viktor Kaplan. Modern jet and rocket propulsion would be impossible without the metallurgical discoveries of Paul Schwarzkopf, whom I mentioned before.

Sometimes Austria's contribution was indirect. Thus, since the end of the last century, literally thousands of Americans have studied at Vienna University's famous Medical School, which, in this way, helped make America the leading power in medicine.

Also among the first Austrian postwar immigrants were experts in rocketry, jet propulsion, ordnance, etc., who had held important positions in Germany's armament industry during the war and were brought to the United States under Operation Paper Clip.

Among these so-called quota immigrants - from 1946 to 1959, there were 22,580 of these - the number of well educated persons, including those with academic training, and of skilled laborers and craftsmen is high. The immigration laws see to that: the first 50 percent of the quota for each quota area is allocated to aliens whose high education, technical training, specialized experience or exceptional ability would be substantially beneficial to the national economy, cultural interests or welfare of the United States, and to the accompanying spouse and children of such aliens. As a consequence, Austrian specialists in certain technological fields, in chemistry, physics, etc. were systematically recruited by private firms and sometimes also by United States Government-sponsored agencies.

The Austrian immigrants of the post World War II period seem to assimilate very quickly. As has been pointed out already, many are

highly educated. They come not in groups but only with their families, or singly. They usually have jobs waiting for them in a solely American environment. Their command of English, which they often speak fluently and with little accent when arriving, eliminates the linguistic barrier, which is one of the chief reasons for setting the foreigner apart. These Austrians are usually highly adjustable. They came or come voluntarily. While seeking improvement they are conscious of the fact that they have to contribute to their new environment, not only in their fields of occupational specialization, but, with their frequently wide cultural background, also in their everyday relations with their neighbors, with whom they quickly establish contacts. Education, well-paid positions, the glamour of names like Vienna, Salzburg and Tyrol, Austria's record during the Hungarian revolution, all these combine to ensure the acceptance of the newcomer by the "right people". As a consequence, few of these Austrians carry chips on their shoulders or make themselves conspicuous by being ethnocentric or more than 100 percent American or in any other way.

And so they came: The Salzburgers, the Forty-Eighters, the Burgenlanders, the Indian missionaries and pastors, the refugees from National Socialism and the ordnance experts of World War II, the devout peasants and the fiery revolutionaries, the unskilled workers and the Nobel Prize winners. They came eagerly or grieving over the loss of their country, hopefully seeking the good life or content to have found a haven. They received and they gave. Often Austria's loss was America's gain.

But let us now look at the other side of the coin: The existence of an independent Austrian Republik after World War II would have been impossible without the strong political, moral and economic support of my country by the United States. We owe it to the United States that

Austria's sovereignty was restored through the State Treaty on May 15, 1955, and that the last occupation soldier left Austrian soil on October 26th of the same year. He left an Austria, which thanks to the Marshall Plan, had become economically viable and is now a prosperous country. Through the efforts of the United States Government-sponsored and private agencies thousands of Austrians, particularly young Austrians, have been able to gain first-hand experiences in the United States and, equipped with this knowledge, are helping to make Austria stronger and better.

We Austrians are deeply conscious of the debt of gratitude we owe to the United States. She has richly rewarded us for whatever contribution Austria has been able to make to the civilization of this great country of yours.

Thank you.

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