

CHAPTER II: LEARNING AND SUFFERING IN VIENNA

I had, however, one misgiving. It seemed to me that I was better qualified for drawing than for painting, especially in the various branches of architectural drawing. At the same time my interest in architecture was constantly increasing, and I advanced in this direction at a still more rapid pace after my first visit to Vienna, which lasted two weeks.

I was not yet sixteen years old. I went to the Hof Museum to study the paintings in the art gallery there; but the building itself captured almost all my interest. From early morning until late at night I spent all my time visiting the various public buildings, and it was the buildings themselves that were always the principal attraction for me.

For hours and hours, I could stand in wonderment before the Opera and the Parliament House. The whole Ring Strasse had a magic effect upon me, as if it were a scene from the Arabian Nights.

And now here I was for the second time in this beautiful city, impatiently waiting to hear the result of the entrance examination, but proudly confident that I had got through. I was so convinced of my success that when the news that I had failed to pass was brought to me, it struck me like a bolt from the blue. Yet the fact was that I had failed.

I went to see the Rector and asked him to explain the reasons why they refused to accept me as a student in the general School of Painting, which was part of the Academy. He said that the sketches which I had brought with me showed unquestionably that painting was not what I was suited for, but that the same sketches gave clear indications of my aptitude for architectural designing.

Therefore, the School of Painting did not come into question for me, but rather the School of Architecture, which also formed part of the Academy. They found it hard to believe that I had never been to a school for architecture and had never received any instruction in architectural designing.

When I left the magnificent Hansen building, in the Schiller Platz, I was quite crestfallen. I felt at odds with myself for the first time in my young life, for what I had heard about my capabilities now appeared to me as a lightning

flash which clearly revealed a dualism under which I had been suffering for a long time, but for which I had hitherto been unable to account. Within a few days I myself also knew that I ought to become an architect, but of course the way was very difficult.

I was now forced bitterly to rue my former conduct in neglecting and despising certain subjects at the *Realschule*. Before attending courses at the School of Architecture at the Academy it was necessary to attend the Technical College, but a necessary qualification for entrance to this College was a matriculation certificate gained at the higher grade school, which I did not possess. As far as one could foresee my dream of following an artistic calling seemed beyond the limits of possibility.

After the death of my mother I went to Vienna for the third time. This visit was destined to last several years. Since I had been there before, I had recovered my old calm and resoluteness. My former self-assurance had come back, and I had my eyes steadily fixed on the goal. I was determined to be an architect.

Obstacles are placed across our path in life, not to be boggled at, but to be surmounted, and I was fully determined to surmount these obstacles, having constantly before my mind the picture of my father, who had raised himself by his own efforts to the position of civil servant though he was the poor son of a village shoemaker. I had a better start, and the possibility of winning through was greater.

At that time my lot in life seemed to me a harsh one; but to-day I see in it the wise workings of Providence. Adversity had me in its grip and often threatened to smash me; but the will grew stronger as the obstacles increased, and finally the will triumphed.

I am thankful for that period of my life, because it hardened me and enabled me to be hard, and I am even more thankful because I appreciate the fact that I was thus saved from the emptiness of a life of ease and that a mother's darling was taken from comfortable surroundings and handed over to Adversity as to a new mother.

Though I then rebelled against it as too hard a fate, I am grateful that I was cast, against my wishes, into a world of misery and poverty and thus came to know the people for whom I was afterwards to fight.

It was during this period that my eyes were opened to two perils, the names of which I scarcely knew hitherto and had no notion whatsoever of their terrible significance for the existence of the German people. These two perils were Marxism and Judaism.

For many people the name of Vienna signifies innocent jollity, a festive place for happy mortals. For me, alas, it is a living memory of the saddest period of my life. Even to-day, the mention of that city arouses only gloomy thoughts in my mind.

The very name of that Phaeacian town spells five years of poverty—five years in which, first as a casual labourer and then as a poor painter, I had to earn my daily bread, and a meagre morsel indeed it was, not even sufficient to still the hunger which I constantly felt.

That hunger was the faithful companion which never left me and shared in everything I did. Every book that I bought meant renewed hunger, and every visit I paid to the opera meant the intrusion of that inalienable companion during the days that followed. I was always struggling with my unsympathetic friend, and yet during that time I learned more than I had ever learned before.

Apart from my architectural studies and rare visits to the opera, for which I had to deny myself food, I had no pleasure in life except my books.

I read a great deal then, and I pondered deeply over what I read. All my free time after work was devoted exclusively to study.

Thus, within a few years, I was able to acquire a stock of knowledge, which I find useful even to-day. But, over and above that, there formed in my mind during those years, an impression of life and a *Weltanschauung*. These became the granite basis of my conduct. I have had to add but little to what I then learned and made my own, and I have had to alter none of it.

On the contrary, I am firmly convinced to-day that, generally speaking, it is in youth that men lay the essential groundwork of their creative thought, wherever that creative thought exists.

I make a distinction between the wisdom of age—which can only arise from the greater profundity and foresight that are based on the experiences of a long life—and the creative genius of youth, which blossoms out in thought and ideas with inexhaustible fertility, without being able to digest these immediately, because of their very superabundance.

These furnish the building materials and plans for the future, and it is from them that age takes the stones and builds the edifice, unless the so-called wisdom of the years has smothered the creative genius of youth.

The life which I had hitherto led at home with my parents differed little from that of many others. I looked forward without apprehension to the morrow, and there was no such thing as a social problem to be faced. Those among whom I passed my young days belonged to the small bourgeois class.

Therefore, it was a world that had very little contact with the world of genuine manual labourers, for, though at first this may appear astonishing, the gulf which separates that class, which is by no means economically well-off, from the manual labouring class is often deeper than people think.

The reason for this division, which we may almost call enmity, lies in the fear that dominates a social group which has only just risen above the level of the manual labourer—a fear lest it may fall back into its old condition or at least be classed with the labourers.

Moreover, there is something repulsive in remembering the cultural indigence of that lower class and their rough manners with one another; so that people who are only on the first rung of the social ladder find it unbearable to be forced to have any contact with the cultural level and standard of living beyond which they have passed. Thus, it happens that very often those who belong to what can really be called the upper classes find it much easier than do the upstarts to descend to and intermingle with their fellow-beings on the lowest social level, for, by the word upstart.

I mean everyone who has raised himself through his own efforts to a social level higher than that to which he formerly belonged. In the case of such a person the hard struggle through which he has passed often destroys his innate human sympathy. His own fight for existence kills his sensibility to the misery of those who have been left behind.

From this point of view Fate had been kind to me. Circumstances forced me to return to that world of poverty and economic insecurity above which my father had raised himself in his early days, and thus the blinkers of a narrow *petit bourgeois* education were torn from my eyes. Now for the first time I learned to know men and I learned to distinguish between an outer polish or coarse manners and the real inner nature of people.

At the beginning of the century Vienna already ranked among those cities where social conditions were iniquitous. Dazzling riches and loathsome destitution were to be found side by side.

In the centre and in the Inner City one felt the pulse-beat of an Empire which had a population of fifty-two millions, with all the perilous charm of a State made up of multiple nationalities.

The dazzling splendour of the Court acted like a magnet to the wealth and intelligence of the whole Empire, and this attraction was further strengthened by the centralising policy of the Habsburg monarchy itself.

This centralising policy was necessary in order to hold together that hotch-potch of heterogeneous nationalities, but the result of it was an extraordinary concentration of higher officials in the city, which was at one and the same time the metropolis and imperial residence.

Vienna was not merely the political and intellectual centre of the Danubian monarchy; it was also the industrial centre. In contrast to the vast number of military officers of high rank state officials, artists and scientists, there was the still vaster army of workers. Abject poverty rubbed shoulders with the wealth of the aristocracy and the merchant class.

Thousands of unemployed loitered in front of the palaces on the Ring Strasse, and below that *Via Triumphalis* of the old Austria, the homeless huddled together in the murk and filth of the canals.

There was hardly any other German city in which the social problem could be studied better than in Vienna. But here I must utter a warning against the illusion that this problem can be ‘studied’ from a higher social level.

The man who has never been in the clutches of that gushing viper can never know what its poison is. An attempt to study it in any other way will result only in superficial talk and sentimental delusions. Both are harmful; the first, because it can never go to the root of the problem, the second, because it evades the question entirely. I do not know which is the more nefarious—to ignore social distress, as do the majority of those who have been favoured by fortune and those who have risen in the social scale through their own efforts, or the equally supercilious and often tactless, but always genteel, condescension displayed by people who have a craze for being charitable and who plume themselves on ‘sympathising with the people.’

Of course such persons sin to a degree which they, with their lack of instinctive understanding, are, unable to realise, and thus they are astonished to find that the social conscience on which they pride themselves never produces any results, but often causes their good intentions to be resented, and then they talk of the ingratitude of the people.

Such persons are slow to learn that social activity is something very different and that they cannot expect gratitude since they are not distributing favours, but establishing rights. I was protected against the temptation to study the social question in the way just mentioned, for the simple reason that I was forced to suffer myself.

It was, therefore, not a question of studying the problem objectively, but rather one of testing its effects on myself. Though the rabbit came through the ordeal of the experiment, this must not be taken as evidence of its harmlessness. When I try to-day to recall the succession of impressions received during that time I find that I can do so only with approximate completeness.

Here I shall describe only the more essential impressions and those which personally affected and often staggered me, and I shall mention the few lessons I learned from this experience. At that time it was for the most part not very difficult to find work, because I had to seek work not as a skilled tradesman, but as a so-called extra-hand and had to be ready to take any job that turned up by chance, just for the sake of earning my daily bread.

Thus I adopted the same attitude as, all those emigrants who shake the dust of Europe from their feet, with the cast-iron determination to lay the foundations of a new existence in the New World and acquire for themselves a new home.

Liberated from all the paralysing prejudices of class and calling, environment and tradition, they enter any service that is open to them, accepting any work that comes their way, filled more and more with the idea that honest work never disgraced anybody, no matter what kind it may be. So I was resolved to enter what was for me a new world and make my way.

I soon found out that there was always some kind of work to be got, but I also learned that it could just as quickly and easily be lost. The uncertainty of being able to earn a regular daily livelihood soon appeared to me the gloomiest feature in this new life upon which I had entered.

Although the skilled worker was not so frequently thrown idle as the unskilled worker, yet the former was by no means protected against the same fate; because though he might not have to face hunger as a result of unemployment due to the lack of demand on the labour market, the lock-out and the strike deprived the skilled worker of the chance to earn his bread. The element of uncertainty in earning one's daily bread causes far-reaching and serious repercussions throughout the whole social-economic structure.

The country lad who migrates to the big city feels attracted by what has been described as easy work (which it may be in reality) and shorter working hours and especially by the magic glamour of the big city. Accustomed in the country to earn a steady wage, he has been taught not to quit his former post until a new one is at least in view.

As there is a great scarcity of agricultural labour, the probability of long unemployment in the country is very slight. It is mistake to assume that the lad who leaves the countryside for the town is not made of such sound material as those who remain at home to work on the land.

On the contrary, experience shows that it is the more healthy and more vigorous that emigrate, and not the reverse. Among these emigrants I include not merely those who emigrate to America, but also the farm-hand who decides to leave his native village and migrate to the big city, where he will be a stranger. He is ready to take the risk of an uncertain fate.

In most cases, he comes to town with a little money in his pocket and for the first few days he is not discouraged if he should not have the good fortune to find work, but if he finds a job and then loses it in a little while, the case is much worse.

To find work anew, especially in winter, is often difficult and indeed sometimes impossible.

For the first few weeks life is still bearable. He receives his out-of-work money from his trade-union and is thus enabled to carry on. But when the last of his own money is gone and his trade-union ceases to pay out because of prolonged unemployment, then comes real distress. He now loiters about and is hungry.

Often he pawns or sells the last of his belongings. His clothes begin to get shabby and with the increasing shabbiness of his outward appearance he

descends to a lower social level and, in addition to his physical misery, now mixes with a class of human beings through whom his mind becomes poisoned.

When he has nowhere to sleep, and if this happens in winter, as is very often the case, he is in dire distress. Finally he gets work, but the same story repeats itself a second time, then a third time, and now it is probably much worse. Little by little, he becomes indifferent to this everlasting insecurity. Finally he grows used to the repetition.

Thus, even a man who is normally of industrious habits grows careless in his whole attitude towards life and gradually becomes an instrument in the hands of unscrupulous people who exploit him for the sake of their own ignoble aims.

He has been so often thrown out of employment through no fault of his own that he is now more or less indifferent as to whether the strike in which he takes part is for the purpose of securing his economic rights or is aimed at the destruction of the State, the whole social order and even civilisation itself. Though the idea of going on strike may not be to his liking, yet he joins in out of sheer indifference.

I saw this process happen before my eyes in thousands of cases and the longer I observed it, the greater became my dislike for that mammoth city which greedily attracts men to its bosom, in order to break them mercilessly in the end. When they came they still felt themselves in communion with their own people at home; if they remained that tie was broken.

I was so buffeted about by life in the metropolis that I myself tasted the physical experience of such a lot and felt the effects of it in my own soul. One other thing became clear to me. The sudden change from work to idleness and vice versa and the constant fluctuation thus caused between earning and expenditure finally destroyed the sense of thrift in many people and also the habit of regulating expenditure in an intelligent way.

The body appeared to grow accustomed to vicissitude, eating heartily in good times and going hungry in bad. Indeed hunger shatters all plans for regulating expenditure in better times when employment has again been found.

The reason for this is that the deprivations which the unemployed worker has to endure must be compensated for psychologically by a persistent mental mirage in which he imagines himself eating heartily once again, and this dream

develops into such a longing that it turns into a morbid impulse to cast off all self-restraint when work and wages turn up again.

Therefore, the moment work is found anew he forgets to regulate the expenditure of his earnings but spends them to the full without thinking of the morrow. This leads to confusion even in the little weekly housekeeping budget, because the expenditure is not carefully planned. At first, the earnings will last perhaps for five days instead of seven; on subsequent occasions they will last only for three; as the habit grows, the earnings will last scarcely for a day, and finally they will disappear in one night.

Often there are a wife and children at home, and in many cases it happens that these become infected by such a way of living, especially if the husband is good to them and loves them in his own way and according to his own lights. Then the week's earnings are spent in common at home within two or three days.

The family eats and drinks together as long as the money lasts and at the end of the week they hunger together. Then the wife wanders about furtively in the neighbourhood, borrows, a little and runs up small debts with the, shopkeepers, in an effort to pull through the lean days towards the end of the week. They sit down together to the midday meal, with only meagre fare on the table and often even nothing to eat.

They wait for the coming pay-day, talking of it and making plans; and while they are thus hungry they dream of the plenty that is to come, and so the little children become acquainted with misery in their early years.

The evil culminates when the husband goes his own way from the beginning and the wife protests, simply out of love for the children.

Then there are quarrels and bad feeling and the husband takes to drink as he becomes more and more estranged from his wife. He now becomes drunk every Saturday. Fighting for her own existence and that of the children, the wife has to dog his footsteps on the road from the factory to the tavern in order to get a few shillings from him on pay-day.

Then when he finally comes home, maybe on the Sunday or the Monday, having parted with his last pence, terrible scenes take place. I have had actual experience of all this in hundreds of cases. At first I was disgusted and indignant, but later on I came to recognise the whole tragedy of their misfortune

and to understand the profound causes of it. They were the unhappy victims of evil circumstances.

Housing conditions were very bad at that time. In Vienna manual labourers lived in surroundings of appalling misery. I shudder even to-day when I think of the woeful dens in which people dwelt, the night-shelters and the slums, and all the tenebrous spectacles of ordure, loathsome filth and wickedness. What will happen one day when hordes of emancipated slaves come forth from these dens of misery to swoop down on their unthinking fellows?

For unthinking they certainly are. Unthinkingly they allow things to go on as they are, little, dreaming, in their insensibility, that the day of reckoning must inevitably come, unless Fate is appeased betimes.

To-day I thank Providence for having sent me to, such a school. There I could not refuse to take an interest in matters that did not please me. This school soon taught me a profound lesson.

In order not to despair completely of the people among whom I then lived I had to differentiate between their outward appearance and their way of living, on the one hand, and the reasons for their development, on the other.

Then I could bear everything without discouragement, for those who emerged from all this misfortune and misery, from this filth and outward degradation, were not human beings as such, but rather the lamentable results of lamentable laws. In my own life similar hardships prevented me from giving way to a pitying sentimentality at the sight of these degraded products which had finally resulted from the pressure of circumstances. The sentimental attitude would have been the wrong one to adopt.

Even in those days I already saw that there was a two-fold method by which alone it would be possible to bring about an amelioration of these conditions, namely, to awaken a profound sense of social responsibility for the creation of a better basis for our future development, combined with a ruthless determination to prune away all incorrigible outgrowths.

Just as Nature concentrates her attention, not on the preservation of what already exists, but on the selective breeding of offspring in order to carry on the species, so in human life also it is less a matter of artificially improving the existing generation (which, owing to human characteristics, is impossible in

ninety-nine cases out of a hundred), but more of securing from the very start a better road for future development.

During my struggle for existence in Vienna I perceived, very clearly that the aim of all social activity must never be merely charitable relief, which is ridiculous and useless, but it must rather be a means to find a way of eliminating the fundamental deficiencies in our economic and cultural life, deficiencies which necessarily bring about the degradation of the individual or at least lead him towards such degradation.

The difficulty of employing any means, even the most drastic, to overcome the hostility towards the State prevailing among certain criminal classes is largely due to an attitude of uncertainty regarding the inner motives and causes of this contemporary phenomenon.

The reasons for this uncertainty are to be found in a sense of guilt for having permitted this tragedy of degradation. That feeling paralyses every serious and firm resolve and so contributes to the vacillating, and therefore weak and ineffectual, application of even those measures which are indispensable for self-preservation.

When an age is no longer burdened with its own consciousness of blame in this regard, then and only then, will it have that inner tranquillity and outer strength necessary to cut off drastically and ruthlessly all parasite growth and root out the weeds. Because the Austrian State had almost no sense of social right or social legislation its inability to abolish those evil outgrowths was manifest.

I do not know what appalled me most at that time; the economic misery of those who were, then my companions, their crude customs and morals, or the low level of their culture.

How often does our bourgeoisie rise up in moral indignation on hearing from the mouth of some pitiable tramp that it is all the same to him whether he be a German or not, and that he will feel at home wherever he can get enough to keep body and soul together. They bewail such a lack of 'national pride' and express their horror at such sentiments. But how many people really ask themselves why it is that their own sentiments are better?

How many of them understand that their natural pride in being members of so favoured a nation arises from the innumerable succession of instances

they have encountered which remind them of the greatness of their country and their nation in all spheres of artistic and cultural life? How many of them realise that pride in their country is largely dependent on knowledge of its greatness in all those spheres?

Do our bourgeois circles ever think what a ridiculously meagre share the people have in that knowledge which is a necessary prerequisite for the feeling of pride in one's country?

It cannot be objected here that in other countries similar conditions exist and that nevertheless the working classes in those countries have remained patriotic. Even if that were so, it would be no excuse for our negligent, attitude, but it is not so. What we call chauvinistic education—in the case of the French people, for example is only the excessive exaltation of the greatness of France in all spheres of culture or, as the French say, *civilisation*.

The French boy is not educated on purely objective principles. Wherever the importance of the political and cultural greatness of his country is concerned, he is taught in the most subjective way imaginable. Education ought always to be on broad, general lines and these ought to be deeply engraved, by constant repetition if necessary, on the memories and feelings of the people. In our case, however, we are not merely guilty of sins of omission, but also of positively perverting the little which some individuals had the luck to learn at school. The rats that poison our body politic gnaw from the hearts and memories of the broad masses even that little which distress and misery have left.

Let the reader try to picture the following:

There is a lodging in a cellar and this lodging consists of two damp rooms. In these rooms a workman and his family live seven people in all. Let us assume that one of the children is a boy of three. That is the age at which children, first become conscious of the impressions which they receive. In the case of highly gifted people traces of the impressions received in those early years remain in the memory up to an advanced age.

Now, the narrowness and congestion of those living quarters are not conducive to pleasant relations and thus quarrels and fits of mutual anger arise. These people can hardly be said to live with one another, but rather on top of one another. The small misunderstandings which disappear of themselves in a home where there is enough space for people to get away from one another for

a while, here become the source of chronic disputes. As far as the children are concerned the situation is tolerable from this point of view.

In such conditions, they are constantly quarrelling with one another, but the quarrels are quickly and easily forgotten, but when the parents fall out with one another daily bickerings often develop into rudeness; such as cannot be adequately imagined. The results of such experiences must become apparent later on in the children.

One must have practical experience of such a milieu in order to be able to picture the state of affairs that arises from such mutual recriminations when the father assaults the mother and maltreats her in a fit of drunken rage.

At the age of six the unfortunate child begins to be aware of sordid facts which an adult would find revolting infected with moral poison, undernourished in body and with its poor little head alive with vermin, the young 'citizen' goes to the primary school. With difficulty he barely learns to read and write. There is no possibility of learning any lessons at home.

On the contrary, the father and mother themselves talk before the children in the most disparaging way about the teacher and the school and they are much more inclined to insult the teachers than to put their offspring across their knee and knock sound reason into him.

What the little fellow hears at home does not tend to increase his respect for his human surroundings. Here nothing good is said of human nature as a whole and every institution, from the school to the government, is reviled. No matter what the subject, religion or morals, the State or the social order, they rail against them all and drag them down into the dirt.

When the lad leaves school, at the age of fourteen, it would be difficult to say what are the most striking features of his character, incredible ignorance in so far as real knowledge is concerned or cynical impudence combined with an attitude towards morality which is really startling in one so young.

What position can a person fill in the world which he is about to enter, if to him nothing is sacred, if he has never come into contact with anything noble but, on the contrary, has been intimately acquainted with the lowest kind of human existence?

The child of three has got into the habit of reviling all authority by the time he is fifteen. He has been acquainted only with moral filth and vileness,

everything being excluded that might stimulate his thoughts towards higher things. Now this young specimen of humanity enters the school of life.

He leads the same kind of life which was exemplified for him by his father during his childhood. He loiters about the streets and comes home at all hours. He even blackguards that broken-hearted being who gave him birth.

He curses God and the world and finally ends up in a reformatory for young people where he acquires the final polish, and his bourgeois contemporaries are astonished at the lack of 'patriotic enthusiasm' which this young 'citizen' displays.

Day after day the bourgeois world sees how poison is spread among the people through the medium of the theatre, the cinema, gutter journalism and obscene books, and yet they are astonished at the deplorable 'moral standards' the 'lack of national feeling' among the masses—as if the overdone sentimentality of the cinema, rubbishy papers and suchlike could lay a foundation for recognition of the greatness of one's country, apart entirely from the earlier education which the individual has received.

I then came to understand, quickly and thoroughly, what I had never been aware of before, namely, that the question of 'nationalizing' a people is first and foremost one of establishing sound social conditions which will furnish the foundation necessary for the education of the individual, for only when family upbringing and school education have inculcated upon the mind of the individual a knowledge of the cultural and economic and, above all, of the political greatness of his own country—then, and then only, will it be possible for him to feel proud of being a citizen of that country.

I can fight only for something that I love. I can love only what I respect, and in order to respect a thing I must at least have some knowledge of it.

As soon as my interest in social questions was once awakened I began to study them thoroughly. A new and hitherto unknown world was thus revealed to me.

In the years 1909–10, I had so far improved my position that I no longer had to earn my daily bread as a manual labourer. I was now working independently in a small way, as a painter in water colours. This *métier* was a poor one indeed as far as earnings were concerned, for these were only sufficient to pay for the bare necessities of life, yet it had an interest for me, in

view of the profession to which I aspired.

Moreover, when I came home in the evenings, I was now no longer dead-tired as formerly, when I used to be unable to open a book without falling asleep almost immediately.

My present occupation was, therefore, in line with the profession I aimed at for the future. Moreover, I was master of my own time and could arrange my working-hours better than formerly. I painted in order to earn my bread, and I studied because I liked it.

Thus I was able to acquire that theoretical knowledge of the social problem which was a necessary complement to what I was learning through actual experience. I studied all the books which I could find that dealt with this question and I thought deeply on what I read. I think that the people among whom I then lived considered me an eccentric person.

Besides my interest in the social question I naturally devoted myself with enthusiasm to the study of architecture. Side by side with music, I considered it queen of the arts. To study it was for me not work but pleasure. I could read or draw into the small hours of the morning without ever getting tired, and I became more and more confident that my dream of a brilliant future would come true, even though I should have to wait long years for its fulfilment. I was firmly convinced that one day I should make a name for myself as an architect.

The fact that, side by side with my professional studies, I took the greatest interest in everything that had to do with politics did not seem to me to signify anything of great importance. On the contrary, I looked upon this practical interest in politics merely as part of an elementary obligation that devolves on every thinking man. Those who have no understanding of the political world around them have no right to criticise or complain.

On political questions, therefore, I still continued to read and study a great deal, but 'reading' had probably a different significance for me from that which it has for the average run of our so-called 'intellectuals.'

I know people who read interminably, book after book, page after page, and yet I should not call them 'well-read.' Of course they 'know' an immense amount, but their brain seems incapable of assorting and classifying the material which they have gathered, from books.

They have not the faculty of distinguishing between what is of value and

what is worthless in a book, in order that they may retain the former in their minds, and if possible, skip over the latter while reading or, if that be not possible, when once read, throw it overboard as useless ballast.

Reading is not an end in itself, but a means to an end. Its chief purpose is to help towards filling in the framework which is made up of the talents and capabilities that each individual possesses.

Thus each one procures for himself the implements and materials necessary for the fulfilment of his calling in life, no matter whether this be the elementary task of earning one's daily bread or a career taken up in response to a higher call.

Such is the first purpose of reading, and the second purpose is to give us a general knowledge of the world in which we live. In both cases, however, the material which we have acquired through reading must not be stored up in the memory on a plan that corresponds to the successive chapters of the book, but each little piece of knowledge thus gained must be treated as if it were a little stone to be inserted into a mosaic, so that it finds its proper place among all the other pieces and particles that help to form a general world-picture in the brain of the reader.

Otherwise, only a confused jumble of chaotic notions will result from all reading, and this jumble is not merely useless, but it also tends to make the unfortunate possessor of it conceited, for he seriously considers himself a well-educated person and thinks that he understands something of life.

He believes that he has acquired knowledge, whereas the truth is that every increase in such 'knowledge' draws him more and more away from real life, until he finally ends up in some sanatorium or takes to politics and becomes a member of parliament.

Such a person never succeeds in turning his knowledge to practical account when the opportune moment arrives, for his mental equipment is not ordered according to the broad lines of human existence, but in the order of succession in which he read the books and their contents is stored in his mind.

If Fate should one day call upon him to use some of his book-knowledge for certain practical purposes in life, Fate would have to name the book and give the number of the page, for the poor noodle himself would never be able to find the spot where he gathered the information now called for; but since the

page is not mentioned at, the critical moment the wise fool finds himself in a state of hopeless embarrassment.

In a high state of agitation he searches for analogous cases and it is almost certain that he will finally hit on the wrong prescription.

Were this not so, there could be no explanation for the political achievements of our highly-placed government officials, unless we assume that they are due to malice and chicanery rather than to pathological weakness.

On the other hand, a man who has cultivated the art of reading will instantly discern, in a book, a journal or a pamphlet, what ought to be remembered because it meets his personal needs or is of value as general knowledge.

What he thus learns is incorporated in his mental conception of this or that problem or thing, further correcting the mental picture or enlarging it so that it becomes more exact and precise. Should some practical problem suddenly demand examination or solution, memory will immediately select the requisite information from the mass that has been acquired through years of reading and will place this information at the service of a man's powers of judgment so he may gain a new and clearer view of the problem, or even solve it.

Only thus can reading have any meaning or value.

The speaker, for example, who has not the sources of information ready to hand which are necessary to a proper treatment of his subject, is unable to defend his opinions against an opponent, even though those opinions be perfectly sound and true.

In every discussion his memory will leave him shamefully in the lurch. He cannot summon up arguments to support his statements or to refute his opponent. So long as the speaker has only to defend himself on his own personal account, the situation is not serious, but the evil arises when Fate places at the head of public affairs such a *soi-disant* know-all, who in reality knows nothing.

From early youth I endeavoured to read books in the right way and I was fortunate in having a good memory and intelligence to assist me. From that point of view my sojourn in Vienna was particularly useful and profitable. My daily experiences there were a constant stimulus to study the most diverse

problems from new angles.

Inasmuch as I was in a position to put theory to the test of reality and reality to the test of theory, I was safe from the danger of losing myself in a haze of theories on the one hand, and of becoming superficial, on the other.

My everyday experiences at that time made me determined to make a fundamental theoretical study of two most important questions, apart from the social question. It is impossible to say when I might have started to make a thorough study of the doctrine and characteristics of Marxism, were it not for the fact that I then literally pitched head foremost into the problem.

What I knew of Social Democracy in my youth was precious little and that little was for the most part wrong. The fact that it led the struggle for universal suffrage and the secret ballot gave me an inner satisfaction, for my reason then told me that this would weaken the Habsburg regime, which I so thoroughly detested.

I was convinced that except at the cost of sacrificing the German element, the Danubian State could not continue to exist. Even a long and steady Slavisation of the Austrian Germans would not have constituted a guarantee that the Empire would endure, because it was very questionable if, and how far, the Slavs possessed the necessary capacity for preserving the State as such. Therefore, I welcomed every movement that might lead towards the final disruption of that impossible State which, to continue to exist, would have to stamp out the German character in ten million people.

The more this babel of tongues wrought discord and disruption, even in the parliament, the nearer did the hour approach for the dissolution of this Babylonian Empire. That would mean the liberation of my German-Austrian people and only then would it become possible for them to be re-united with the mother country.

Accordingly, I had no feeling of antipathy towards the actual policy of the Social Democrats. That its avowed purpose was to raise the level of the working classes (which, in my ignorance, I then foolishly believed) was a further point in favour of Social Democracy rather than against it,) but the feature that contributed most to estrange me from the Social Democratic movement was its hostile attitude towards the struggle for the preservation of Germanism in Austria and its undignified wooing of the Slav ‘comrades,’ who received these approaches favourably as long as any, practical advantages

were forthcoming, but otherwise maintained a haughty reserve, thus giving the suitors the answer their behaviour deserved.

So it happened that, at the age of seventeen, the word 'Marxism' was very little known to me, while I looked on 'Social Democracy' and 'Socialism' as synonymous expressions. It was only as the result of a sudden blow from the rough hand of Fate that my eyes were opened to the nature of this unparalleled system of duping the public.

Hitherto my acquaintance with the Social Democratic Party had only been that of a mere spectator at some of their mass meetings. I had not the slightest idea of the Social Democratic doctrine or of the mentality of its partisans but now was suddenly brought face to face with the products of its teaching and what was called its *Weltanschauung*.

In this way a few months sufficed for me to learn something which in other circumstances might have required years of study namely, that under the cloak of social virtue and love of one's neighbour a veritable pestilence was spreading abroad and that if this pestilence were not stamped out without delay it might eventually succeed in exterminating the human race.

I first came into contact with the Social Democrats while working in the building trade. From the very moment I started work the situation was not very pleasant for me. My clothes were still rather decent, I was careful of my speech and I was reserved in manner.

I was so occupied with thinking of my own present lot and future prospects that I did not take much interest in my immediate surroundings. I had sought work so that I should not starve and at the same time so as to be able to make further headway with my studies, though this headway might be slow.

Possibly I should not have bothered about my companions had it not been that on the third or fourth day an event occurred which forced me to take a definite stand. I was called upon to join the trade-union.

At that time I knew nothing about the trade-unions. I had had no opportunity of forming an opinion on their utility or inutility, as the case might be, but when I was told that I must join the union, I refused.

The grounds which I gave for my refusal were simply that I knew nothing about the matter and that anyhow I would not allow myself to be forced into anything. Probably the former reason saved me from being thrown out right

away.

They probably thought that within a few days I might be converted or become more docile, but if they thought so, they were profoundly mistaken. After two weeks I found it utterly impossible for me to take such a step, even if I had been willing to take it at first.

During those fourteen days I came to know my fellow workmen better, and no power in the world could have moved me to join an organisation whose representatives had meanwhile shown themselves in a light which I found so unfavourable.

At first, my resentment was aroused. At midday some, of my fellow, workers used to adjourn to the nearest tavern, while the others remained on the building premises and there ate their midday meal, which was in most cases a very scanty one. These were the married men whose wives brought them their midday soup in dilapidated vessels. Towards the end of the week there was a gradual increase in the number of those who remained to eat their midday meal on the building premises. I understood the reason for this afterwards. They now talked politics.

I drank my bottle of milk and ate my morsel of bread somewhat apart from the others, while I circumspectly studied my environment or else fell to meditating on my own harsh lot. Yet I heard more than enough, and I often thought that much of what they said was meant for my ears, in the hope of making me adopt a definite attitude, but all that I heard had the effect of arousing the strongest antagonism in me.

Everything was disparaged the nation, because it was held to be an invention of the 'capitalist' class (how often I had to listen to that phrase!); the Fatherland, because it was held to be an instrument in the hands of the bourgeoisie for the exploitation of the working classes; the authority of the law, because that was a means of oppressing the proletariat; the school system, as a means of training not only slaves, but also slave-drivers; religion, as a means of doping the people, in order to exploit them afterwards; morality, as the badge of stupid and sheepish docility. There was nothing that they did not drag in the mud.

At first I remained silent, but that could not last very long. Then I began to take part in the discussion and to reply to their statements. I had to recognise, however, that this was bound to be entirely fruitless, as long as I did

not have at least a certain amount of definite information about the questions that were discussed.

I therefore decided to consult the sources from which they claimed to have drawn their so-called wisdom, and, with this end in view, I studied book after book, pamphlet after pamphlet.

Meanwhile, we argued with one another on the building premises. Day by day I was becoming better informed than my companions on the subjects on which they claimed to be informed.

Then a day came when the more redoubtable of my adversaries resorted to the most effective weapon they had to replace the force of reason, namely, intimidation and physical force. Some of the leaders among my adversaries ordered me to leave the building or else allow myself to be flung off the scaffolding.

As I was quite alone I could not put up any effective resistance, so I chose the first alternative and departed, having, however, learned a lesson.

I went away full of disgust, but at the same time so deeply moved that it was quite impossible for me to turn my back on the whole situation and think no more about it. When my anger began to calm down, the spirit of obstinacy got the upper hand and I decided that at all costs I would get back to work again, in the building trade.

This decision became all the stronger a few weeks later, when my little savings had entirely run out and hunger clutched me once again in its merciless grip. I had no alternative. I got work again and had to leave for the same reasons as before.

I tortured myself with the question, 'Are these men worthy to belong to a great people?' The question is profoundly disturbing, for if the answer is in the affirmative, then the struggle to defend one's nationality is no longer worth all the trouble and sacrifice we demand of our best elements if it be on behalf of such a rabble.

On the other hand, if the answer is in the negative, then our nation is poor in human material. After days spent in such meditation and introspection, I was depressed and saw before my mind's eye the ever-increasing and menacing army of people who could no longer be reckoned as belonging to their own nation.

It was with changed feelings, that, some days later, I gazed on the interminable ranks of Viennese workmen parading four abreast, at a mass demonstration. I stood dumbfounded for almost two hours, watching that enormous human dragon which slowly uncoiled itself there before me. When I finally left the square and wandered in the direction of my lodgings I felt dismayed and depressed.

On my way I noticed the *Arbeiterzeitung* (“The Workers’ Journal”) in a tobacco shop. This was the chief press-organ of the old Austrian Social Democracy. In a cheap cafe, where the common people used to forgather and where I often went to read the papers, the *Arbeiterzeitung* was also displayed.

Hitherto I had not been able to bring myself to do more than glance at the wretched thing for a couple of minutes, for its whole tone was a sort of mental vitriol to me. Under the depressing influence of the demonstration I had witnessed, some interior voice urged me to buy the paper in that tobacco shop and read it through.

So I took it home with me and spent a whole evening reading it, despite the steadily mounting rage provoked by this ceaseless outpouring of falsehoods.

I now found that in the social democratic daily papers I could study the inner character of this movement much better than in all their theoretical literature.

What a discrepancy between the two, between the literary effusions which dealt with the theory of Social Democracy and their high-sounding phraseology about liberty, human dignity and beauty, the air of profound wisdom, the disgusting moral pose and the brazen prophetic assurance—a meticulously woven glitter of words, to dazzle and mislead the reader and, on the other hand, the daily press spreading this new doctrine of human redemption in the most vile fashion!

No means was too base, provided it could be exploited in the campaign of slander. These journalists were real virtuosos in the art of twisting facts and presenting them in a deceptive form. The theoretical literature was intended for the simpletons of the *soi-disant* intelligentsia of the middle and upper classes. The newspaper propaganda was intended for the masses.

This probing into books and newspapers and the study of the teachings of

Social Democracy reawakened my love for my own people, and thus what at first seemed an impassable gulf became the occasion of a closer affection.

Having once understood the working of the colossal system for poisoning the popular mind, only a fool could blame the victims of it. During the years that followed I became more independent, and as I did so, I became better able to understand the inner cause of the success achieved by this Social Democratic gospel.

I now realised the meaning and purpose of those brutal orders which prohibited the reading of all books and newspapers that were not 'Red' and at the same time demanded that only the 'Red' meetings should be attended. In the clear light of reality I was able to see what must have been the inevitable consequences of that intolerant teaching.

The mentality of the broad masses is accessible only to what is strong and uncompromising. Like woman whose inner sensibilities are not under the sway of abstract reasoning, but are always subject to the influence of a vague emotional longing for the strength that completes her being, and who would rather bow to the strong man than dominate the weakling—in like manner the masses of the people prefer the ruler to the suppliant, and are well-led with a stronger sense of mental security by a teaching that brooks no rival, than by one which offers them a liberal freedom.

They have very little idea of how to use that freedom, and thus they are prone to feel that they have been abandoned. They feel very little shame at being terrorised intellectually and they are scarcely conscious of the fact that their freedom as human beings is impudently abused, nor have they the slightest suspicion of the intrinsic fallacy of the whole doctrine. They see only the ruthless force and brutality of its determined utterances, to which they always submit.

If Social Democracy is opposed by a more truthful teaching, then, even though the struggle be of the most bitter kind, this truthful teaching will finally prevail, provided it be enforced with equal ruthlessness.

Within less than two years I had gained a clear understanding of Social Democracy, its teaching and its weapons.

I recognised the infamy of that technique whereby the movement carried on a campaign of mental terrorism against the bourgeoisie, which is neither

morally nor spiritually equipped to withstand such attacks. The tactics of Social Democracy consisted in opening, at a given signal, a veritable barrage of lies and calumnies against the man whom they believed to be the most redoubtable of their adversaries, until the nerves of the bourgeoisie gave way and they sacrificed the man who was attacked, simply in the hope of being allowed to live in peace.

But the hope always proved to be a foolish one for they were never left in peace. The same tactics were repeated again and again, until fear of these ruthless fanatics exercised, by sheer force of suggestion, a paralysing effect on their victims. Through its own experience, Social Democracy learned the value of strength and for that reason it attacks mostly those in whom it senses real mettle, which is indeed a very rare possession.

On the other hand, it praises every weakling among its adversaries, more or less cautiously according to the measure of his mental qualities, known or assumed. They have less fear of a man of genius who lacks will-power, than of a vigorous character of mediocre intelligence, and at the same time they highly commend those who are devoid of both intelligence and will-power.

The Social Democrats know how to create the impression that they alone are the protectors of peace. In this way, acting very circumspectly, but never losing sight of their ultimate goal, they conquer one position after another, at one time by methods of quiet intimidation, and at another, by sheer daylight robbery, employing these latter tactics at those moments when public attention is turned towards other matters from which it does not wish to be diverted, or when the public considers an incident too trivial to create a scandal and thus provoke the anger of a malignant opponent.

These tactics are based on an accurate estimation of human frailties and must lead to success, with almost mathematical certainty, unless the other side also learns how to fight poison gas with poison gas. Weaker elements must be told that here it is a question of to be or not to be.

I also came to understand that physical intimidation has its significance for the mass as well as for the individual. Here again, the psychological effect has been calculated to a nicety. Intimidation in workshops and in factories, in assembly halls and at mass demonstrations, will always meet with success as long as it does not have to encounter the same kind of intimidation in a stronger form.

Then, of course, the Social Democratic Party will raise a horrified outcry and appeal to the authority of the State, which it has just repudiated and will, in most cases, quietly achieve its aim amid the general confusion, namely, to discover some bovine creature holding an important government position, who, in a vain attempt to curry favour with the dreaded opponent in case of future trouble, is ready to finish off those who dare to oppose this world enemy.

The impression which such successful tactics makes on the minds of the broad masses, whether they be adherents or opponents, can be estimated only by one who knows the popular mind, not from books, but from practical life, for the successes which are thus obtained are taken by the adherents of Social Democracy as a triumph of the righteousness of their own cause; on the other hand, the beaten opponent very often loses faith in the effectiveness of any further resistance.

The more I understood the methods of physical intimidation that were employed, the more sympathy I had for the multitude that had succumbed to it. I am thankful now for the ordeal which I had to go through at that time; for it was the means of bringing me to think kindly again of my own people, inasmuch as the experience enabled me to distinguish between the false leaders and the victims who have been led astray, for those who had been misled in this way can only be described as victims.

If I attempted to give a faithful picture of those on the lowest rung of the social ladder, my picture would be incomplete, if I did not add that even in the social depths I still found light in the shape of a rare spirit of self-sacrifice and loyal comradeship, contentment and a modest reserve.

This was true especially of the older generation of workmen. Although these qualities were disappearing more and more in the younger generation, owing to the all-pervading influence of the big city, yet among the younger generation also, there were many who were fundamentally sound and who were able to maintain themselves uncontaminated amid the sordid surroundings of their everyday existence.

If these men, who in many cases meant well and were upright in themselves, were, as far as their political activities were concerned, in the ranks of the mortal enemy of our people, that was because they, as decent workpeople did not and could not grasp the downright infamy of the doctrine

taught by the socialist agitators.

Furthermore, it was because no other section of the community bothered itself about the lot of the working classes, and social conditions finally proved more powerful than any feelings which might have led them to adopt a different attitude. A day was bound to come when want gained the upper hand and drove them to join, the Social Democrats.

On innumerable occasions the bourgeoisie took a definite stand against even the most legitimate human demands of the working classes. This line of conduct was not only ill-judged and indeed immoral, but the bourgeoisie did not even stand to gain by it. The result was that even the honest workman abandoned the original concept of the trade-union organisation and was dragged into politics.

There were millions of workmen who began by being hostile to the Social Democratic Party, but their defences were repeatedly stormed and finally they had to surrender. Yet this defeat was due to the stupidity of the bourgeois parties, who had opposed every social demand put forward by the working classes. The short-sighted refusal to support attempts to improve labour conditions, the refusal to adopt measures for the prevention of accidents in the factories, the refusal to forbid child labour, the refusal to consider protective measures for female workers, especially expectant mothers—all this was of assistance to the Social Democratic leaders, who were thankful for every opportunity which they could exploit for forcing the masses into their net.

Our bourgeois parties can never repair the damage that resulted from the mistake they then made, for they sowed the seeds of hatred when they opposed all efforts at social reform and thus, to all outward appearances, at least, lent colour to the claim put forward by the arch-enemy of our people: that only the Social Democrats protected.

In this way it provided the moral justification of the actual existence of the trade-union, which was, from the outset, the chief political recruiting ground for the Social Democratic Party.

During those years in Vienna, I was forced, whether I liked it or not, to decide on the attitude I should take towards the trade-union. Because I looked upon them as inseparable from the Social Democratic Party, my decision was hasty and mistaken. I repudiated them as a matter of course, but on this,

essential question, too, Fate intervened and gave me a lesson, with the result that I changed the opinion which I had first formed.

When I was twenty years old I had learned to distinguish between the trade-union as a means of defending the social rights of the employees and of fighting for better living conditions for them and, on the other hand, the trade-union as a political instrument used by the party in the class struggle.

The fact that the Social Democrats grasped the enormous importance of the trade-union movement, secured for them a weapon which they used with success, whereas the bourgeois parties by their failure to understand it, lost their political prestige.

They thought that their own arrogant ‘veto’ would arrest the logical development of the movement, but what they actually did was to produce an illogical development. It is absurd and also untrue to say that the trade-union movement was in itself hostile to the nation.

To maintain the opposite would be more correct. If the activities of the trade-union are directed towards improving the condition of a class, which is a mainstay of the nation, and succeed in doing so, such activities are not directed against the Fatherland or the State but are, in the truest sense of the word, national.

In that way, the trade-union organisation helps to create the social conditions which are indispensable in a general system of national education. It deserves high recognition when it destroys the psychological and physical germs of social disease and thus contributes to the general welfare of the nation. It is, therefore, superfluous to ask whether the trade-union is indispensable. So long as there are employers who lack social understanding and have false ideas of justice and fair play, it is not only the right, but also the duty, of their employees (who are, after all, an integral part of our people) to protect the general interests against the greed and unreason of the individual.

To safeguard the loyalty and confidence of the people is as much in the interests of the nation as to safeguard public health. Both are seriously menaced by dishonourable employers who are not conscious of their duty as members of the national community.

Their personal avidity or ruthlessness sows the seeds of future trouble. To eliminate the causes of such a development is an action that deserves the

approbation of the country, and not the reverse.

It is useless to argue that the individual workman is free at any time to escape from the consequences of an injustice which he has actually suffered, or thinks he has suffered, at the hands of an employer—in other words, he can leave. That argument is only a ruse to distract attention from the question at issue.

Is it, or is it not, in the interests of the nation to remove the causes of social unrest? If it is, then the fight must be carried on with the only weapons that promise success.

The individual workman is never in a position to stand up against the might of the big employer, for the question here is not one that concerns the triumph of right since, if right had been recognised as the guiding principle, the conflict could not have arisen at all.

But here it is a question of who is the stronger. If it were otherwise, a sense of justice would, in itself, lead to an honourable settlement of the dispute, or, to put the case more correctly, such a dispute would never have arisen.

If unsocial and dishonourable treatment of men provokes resistance, then the stronger party will win through in the conflict, until the constitutional legislative authorities do away with the evil through legislation.

Therefore it is evident that, only if the individual workmen combine against the individual employer as representing the concentrated force of the undertaking, can they hope not to be doomed to defeat from the outset.

Thus the trade-unions can help to inculcate and strengthen a sense of social responsibility in daily life and open the way to practical results. In doing this they tend to remove those causes of friction which are a continual source of discontent and complaint.

The blame for the fact that the trade-unions do not fulfil this much-desired function must be laid at the doors of those who barred the road to legislative social reform, or rendered such a reform ineffective by sabotaging it through their political influence. Since the political bourgeoisie failed to understand—or, rather, did not wish to understand—the importance of the trade-union movement, the Social Democrats seized the advantage offered them by this mistaken policy and took the trade-unions under their exclusive

protection, without any protest from the other side.

In this way they established for themselves a solid bulwark behind which they could safely retire whenever the struggle assumed a critical aspect. Thus the genuine purpose of the movement gradually fell into oblivion, and was replaced by new objectives, for the Social Democrats never have, the slightest intention of upholding the original purpose for which the trade-union movement was founded.

Within a few decades the trade-union movement was transformed, by the expert hand of Social Democracy, from an instrument which had been originally fashioned for the defence of human rights into an instrument for the destruction of the national economic structure.

The interests of the working class were not for one moment permitted to interfere with this aim, for, in the political sphere the application of economic pressure always renders extortion, successful, if the one side be sufficiently unscrupulous and the other sufficiently inert and docile. In this case both these conditions were fulfilled.

By the beginning of the present century the trade-unionist movement had already ceased to serve the purpose for which it had been founded. From year to year it fell more and more under the political control of the Social Democrats, until it finally came to be used solely as a battering-ram in the class struggle.

The plan was to shatter, by means of constantly repeated blows, the economic edifice on the building of which so much time and care had been expended. Once this objective had been reached, the destruction of the State would become easier, because the State would already have been deprived of its economic foundations.

It became less and less a question of protecting the real interests of the workers, until political acumen no longer deemed it advisable to supply the social and cultural needs of the broad masses, Since there was a danger that if these masses once felt content they could no longer be employed as mere passive material in the political struggle.

The mere prospect of such a development caused such anxiety among the leaders in the class-warfare, that they eventually rejected and inveighed against every genuinely beneficial social reform, and conditions were such that

these leaders did not have to trouble to justify such an illogical policy.

As the masses were taught to increase and raise their demands, the possibility of satisfying them dwindled, and whatever ameliorative measures were taken seemed less and less significant, so that it was always possible to persuade the masses that this ridiculous degree in which the most sacred claims of the working classes were being granted, represented a diabolical plane to weaken their fighting power and, if possible, to paralyse it. In view of the limited thinking capacity of the broad masses, the success achieved is not to be wondered at.

In the bourgeois camp there was high indignation over the dishonesty of the Social Democratic tactics, but not even the most tentative steps were taken to lay down guiding principles for their own line of conduct in the light of this.

The refusal of the Social Democrats, to improve the miserable living conditions of the working classes, ought to have induced the bourgeois parties to make the most energetic efforts in this direction and to snatch from the hands of the class-warfare leaders their most precious weapon; but nothing of this kind happened.

Instead of attacking the position of its adversaries the bourgeoisie allowed itself to be pressed and hurried. Finally, it adopted means that were so tardy and so insignificant that they were ineffective and were rejected. So the whole situation remained just as it had been before the bourgeois intervention, except that the discontent had increased.

Like a threatening storm, the 'free trade-union' hung above the political horizon and overshadowed the life of each individual. It was one of the most frightful instruments of terror that threatened the security and independence of the national economic structure, the stability of the State and the liberty of the individual.

Above all, it was the 'free trade-union' that turned democracy into a ridiculous term, insulted the ideal of liberty and derided that of fraternity with the slogan, 'If you won't become one of us, we'll crack your skull.'

Thus did I come to know this friend of humanity. During the years that followed, my knowledge was widened and deepened, but I never felt called upon to alter my original opinion. The more became acquainted with the external forms of Social Democracy, the greater became my desire to

understand the inner nature of its doctrines.

For this purpose the official literature of the party was of little use. In discussing economic questions, its statements were false and its proofs unsound. In treating of political aims its attitude was insincere.

Furthermore, its modern methods of chicanery in the presentation of its arguments were profoundly repugnant to me. Its flamboyant sentences, its obscure and incomprehensible phrases, pretended to contain great thoughts, but they were devoid of meaning.

One would have had to be a decadent Bohemian in one of our modern cities in order to feel at home in that labyrinth of nonsense, or enjoy ‘intimate experiences’ amid the stinking fumes of this literary Dadaism. These writers were obviously counting on the proverbial humility of a certain section of our people, who believe that a person who is incomprehensible must be profoundly wise.

By comparing the theoretical falsity and absurdity of that doctrine with the reality of its external manifestations, I gradually came to have a clear idea of its final aims. During such moments I had dark presentiments and feared something evil. I had before me a teaching inspired by egotism and hatred, calculated to win its victory, the winning of which would be a mortal blow to humanity.

Meanwhile, I had discovered the relationship existing between this destructive teaching and the specific character of a people, who up to that time had been to me almost unknown.

Knowledge of the Jews is the only key to a true understanding of the inner nature, and, therefore, the real aims, of Social Democracy.

The man who has come to know this race has succeeded in removing from his eyes the veil through which he had seen the aims and meaning of this party in a false light; then, out of the murk and fog of socialist talk rises the grimacing spectre of Marxism.

To-day it is hard, and almost impossible, for me to say when the word ‘Jew’ first began to have any particular significance for me. I do not remember ever having heard the word at home during my father’s lifetime. If this word had been used with a particular inflection I think the old gentleman would have considered those who used it in this way as being ‘behind the times.’

In the course of his career he had, despite his pronounced nationalist tendencies, come to be more or less of a cosmopolitan, and this had not been without its effect on me. In school, too, I found no reason to alter the picture I had formed at home.

At the *Realschule* I knew one Jewish boy. We were all on our guard in our relations with him, but only because his reticence and certain actions of his warned us to be discreet. Beyond that, my companions and myself formed no particular opinion regarding him.

It was not until I was fourteen or fifteen years old that I frequently ran up against the word 'Jew,' partly in connection with political controversies. These references aroused a slight aversion in me, and I could not avoid an uncomfortable feeling which always came over me when I had to listen to religious disputes. But, at that time, I did not see the Jewish question in any other light.

There were very few Jews in Linz. In the course of centuries the Jews who lived there had become Europeanized and so civilised in appearance that I even looked upon them as Germans. The reason why I did not then perceive the absurdity of such an illusion was that the only thing which I recognised as distinguishing them from us was the practice of their strange religion. As I thought that they were persecuted on account of their faith my aversion to hearing remarks against them grew almost into a feeling of horror. I did not in the least suspect that there could be such a thing as systematic anti-Semitism.

Such were the views I held when I went to Vienna.

Confused by the mass of impressions I received from the architectural surroundings, and depressed by my own troubles, I did not at first distinguish between the different social strata of which the population of that mammoth city was composed.

Although Vienna then had about two hundred thousand Jews among its population of two millions, I did not notice them.

During the first weeks of my sojourn, my eyes and my mind were unable to cope with the onrush of new ideas and values.

Not until I had gradually settled down in my new surroundings, and the confused picture began to grow clearer, did I gain a closer insight into my new world, and with that I came up against the Jewish problem.

I will not say that the manner in which I first became acquainted with it was particularly pleasant. In the Jew I still saw a man who was of a different religion, and, therefore, on grounds of human tolerance, I was against the idea that he should be attacked because he had a different faith.

Consequently I considered that the tone adopted by the anti-Semitic press in Vienna was unworthy of the cultural traditions of a great people. The memory of certain events which happened in the Middle Ages came to my mind, and I felt that I should not like to see them repeated.

Generally speaking, these anti-Semitic newspapers were not regarded as belonging to the first rank (but I did not then understand the reason of this) and so I regarded them as the products of jealousy and envy rather than as the expression of a sincere, though wrong-headed, feeling.

My own opinions were confirmed by what I considered to be the infinitely more dignified manner in which the really important papers replied to these attacks or simply ignored them, which latter seemed to me the better way.

I diligently read what was generally called the world press—*Neue Freie Presse*, *Wiener Tageblatt*, etc.—and I was astonished by the abundance of information these gave their readers and the impartial way in which they presented particular problems.

I appreciated their dignified tone, although sometimes the flamboyancy of the style was unconvincing, and I did not like it. All this, however, might be attributed to the atmosphere of the metropolis.

Since, at that time, I considered Vienna to be such, I thought this constituted sufficient grounds to excuse these shortcomings of the press, but I was frequently disgusted by the grovelling way in which the Viennese press played lackey to the Court. Scarcely a move took place at the Hofburg which was not presented in glorified colours to the readers. There was such a fuss, especially when it was a question of ‘the wisest monarch of all times,’ that one was reminded of the antics of the mountain-cock at mating time. It all seemed artificial, and to my mind, unworthy of liberal democracy.

I thought that this cheap way of currying favour at the Court belittled the dignity of the nation, and that was the first shadow that fell on my appreciation of the great Viennese press.

While in Vienna I continued to follow with a vivid interest all the events that were taking place in Germany, whether connected with political or with cultural questions. I had a feeling of pride and admiration when I compared the rise of the young German Reich with the decline of the Austrian State.

But, although the foreign policy of that Reich was a source of real pleasure on the whole, the internal political happenings were not always so satisfactory. I did not approve of the campaign which, at that time, was being carried on against Wilhelm II.

I looked upon him not only as the German Emperor but, above all, as the creator of the German Navy. The fact that the Emperor was prohibited by the Reichstag from making political speeches, made me very angry, because the prohibition came from a quarter which, in my eyes, had no reason for doing so, for at a single sitting those same parliamentary ganders did more cackling than the whole dynasty of emperors, including even the weakest, could have done in the course of centuries.

It annoyed me to have to acknowledge that in a nation where any half-witted fellow could claim for himself the right to criticise and might even be let loose on the people as a 'legislator' in the Reichstag, the wearer of the Imperial Crown could be the subject of a 'reprimand' on the part of the most miserable assembly of drivellers that had ever existed.

I was even more disgusted at the way in which this same Viennese press *salaamed* obsequiously before the meanest steed belonging to the Habsburg royal stables and went off into wild ecstasies of delight if the nag wagged its tail in response.

At the same time these newspapers took up an attitude of anxiety in matters that concerned the German Emperor, trying to cloak their enmity by the serious air of concern which they assumed. Naturally, they protested that they had no intention of interfering in Germany's internal affairs—God forbid!

They pretended that by touching a delicate spot in such a friendly way they were fulfilling a duty that devolved upon them by reason of the mutual alliance between the two countries and at the same time discharging their obligations of journalistic truthfulness.

Having thus excused themselves about tenderly touching a sore spot, they probed the wound ruthlessly.

That sort of thing made my blood boil, and now I began to be more and more on my guard when reading the great Viennese press.

I had to acknowledge however, that on such subjects, one of the anti-Semitic papers—*Deutsches Volksblatt*—acted with more dignity. What got still more on my nerves was the repugnant manner in which the big newspapers cultivated admiration for France.

One really had to feel ashamed of being a German when confronted by those mellifluous hymns of praise for ‘the great cultured nation.’ This wretched Gallomania more often than once made me throw away one of these newspapers belonging to the ‘world press.’

I now often turned to the *Volksblatt*, which was much smaller in size, but which treated such subjects more decently I was not in accord with its sharply anti-Semitic tone, but again and again I found that its arguments gave me food for serious thought.

Anyhow it was as a result of such reading that I came to know the man and the movement which then determined the fate of Vienna. These were Dr. Karl Lueger and the Christian Socialist Party. At the time I went to Vienna I felt opposed to both. I looked on both the man and the movement as reactionary.

But even an elementary sense of justice forced me to change my opinion when I had an opportunity of knowing the man and his work; and slowly that opinion grew into outspoken admiration when I had better grounds for forming a judgment. To-day, as well as then, I respect Dr. Karl Lueger as the most eminent type of German *Burgomaster*.

How many prejudices were overcome through such a change in my attitude towards the Christian Socialist Movement!

My ideas about anti-Semitism changed also in the course of time, but that was the change which I found most difficult. It cost me a great internal conflict with myself, and it was only after months of struggle between reason and sentiment that the former gained the victory.

Two years later sentiment rallied to the side of reason and became a faithful guardian and counsellor. At the time of this bitter inner struggle between calm reason and the sentiments in which I had been brought up, the lessons that I learned on the streets of Vienna were of invaluable assistance.

A time came when I no longer passed blindly along the streets of the mighty city, as I had done in the early days, but now with my eyes open, not only in order to study the buildings, but also the human beings.

Once, when passing through the oldest part of the city, I suddenly encountered a creature in a long caftan and wearing black sidelocks. My first thought was, is this, then, a Jew?

They certainly did not have this appearance in Linz. I watched the man stealthily and cautiously, but the longer I gazed at that strange countenance and examined it feature by feature, the more the question shaped itself in my brain, 'Is this, then, a German?'

As was always my habit with such experiences, I turned to books for help in removing my doubts. For the first time in my life I bought myself some anti-Semitic pamphlets, for a few pence, but unfortunately they all began with the assumption that the reader had at least a certain degree of information on the Jewish question or was even familiar with it.

Moreover, the tone of most of these pamphlets was such that I became doubtful again, because the statements made were partly superficial and the proofs extraordinarily unconvincing. For weeks, and indeed for months, I returned to my old way of thinking.

The subject appeared so enormous and the accusations were so far-reaching that I was afraid of being unjust and so I became again anxious and uncertain.

Naturally, I could no longer doubt that here it was not a question of Germans who happened to be of a different religion, but rather that it was a question of an entirely different people, for as soon as I began to investigate the matter and observe the Jews, Vienna appeared to me in a different light.

Wherever I now went, I saw Jews, and the more I saw of them the more strikingly and clearly they stood out as different from the other citizens. Especially the old part of the city and the district north of the Danube Canal swarmed with a people who, even in outer appearance bore no similarity to the Germans.

Any indecision which I may still have felt about that point was finally removed by the activities of a certain section of the Jews themselves.

A great movement, called Zionism, the aim of which was to assert the national character of Judaism, was strongly represented in Vienna.

To all outward appearances it seemed as if only one group of Jews championed this movement, while the great majority disapproved of it, or even repudiated it, but a closer investigation of the situation showed that since that part of Jewry which was styled 'liberal' did not disown the Zionists as if they were not member of their race, but rather as brother Jews who publicly professed their faith in an unpractical, and even, dangerous way, there was no real rift in their internal solidarity.

This fictitious conflict between the Zionists and the 'liberal' Jews soon disgusted me; for it was false through and through and therefore in direct contradiction to the moral dignity and immaculate character on which that race had always prided itself.

Cleanliness, whether moral or of another kind, had its own peculiar meaning for these people. That they were water-shy was obvious on looking at them and, unfortunately, very often even when not looking at them. The odour of those people in caftans often used to make me feel ill. Apart from that there were the unkempt clothes and the ignoble exterior. All these details were certainly not attractive, but the revolting feature was that beneath their unclean exterior one suddenly perceived the moral mildew of the chosen race.

What soon gave me food for serious thought was the insight which I gradually gained into the activities of the Jews in certain walks of life.

Was there any shady undertaking, any form of, foulness, especially in cultural life, in which at least one Jew did not participate?

On probing to the heart of this kind of abomination, one discovered, like a maggot in a rotten body, a tiny Jew, who was apt to be blinded when thus exposed to the light of day.

In my eyes the charge against Judaism became a grave one the moment I discovered the scope of Jewish activities in the press, in art, in literature and in the theatre.

All unctuous protests were now more or less futile. One needed only to look at the posters and to study the names of the authors of the appalling productions advertised as being performed in the cinemas and theatres, in order to become hardened against the Jews.

Here was a pestilence, a moral pestilence, with which the public was being infected. It was worse than the black plague of long ago. And in what doses this poison was manufactured and distributed!

Naturally, the lower the moral and intellectual level of such an author of 'artistic' products, the more inexhaustible his fecundity, and at times it even seemed as though these creatures turned out their stuff like machines and hurled it at the public. In this connection we must remember there is no limit to the number of such writers.

One ought to realise that for one Goethe, Nature may bring into existence ten thousand such scribblers who act as the worst kind of germ-carriers in poisoning human soul. It was a terrible thought, and yet one which could not be overlooked, that the greater number of the Jews seemed specially destined by Nature to play this shameful part.

Was it for this reason that they were called the chosen people? I then began to investigate carefully the names of all the fabricators of these unclean products which played such a big part in the cultural life of the public. The result of that investigation was still more unfavourable to the attitude which I had hitherto held in regard to the Jews.

Though my feelings might rebel a thousand times, reason now had to draw its own conclusions.

The fact that nine-tenths of all the 'smutty' literature, artistic 'tripe' and theatrical banalities, had to be charged to the account of a people who formed scarcely one percent of the nation could not be gainsaid. It was there and had to be admitted.

Then I began to examine my favourite 'world press,' with that fact before my mind.

The deeper I probed, the more did the object of my former admiration lose its glory. Its style became still more repellent and I was forced to reject its subject-matter as entirely shallow and superficial. Its impartial attitude in the presentation of facts and views seemed to me to contain more falsehood than truth. The writers were—Jews.

Thousands of details that I had scarcely noticed before seemed to me now to deserve attention. I began to grasp and understand things which had formerly puzzled me. I saw the liberal policy of that press in another light. Its

dignified tone in replying to the attacks of its adversaries and its dead silence in other cases now became clear to me as part of a cunning and despicable way of deceiving the readers.

Its brilliant theatrical criticisms always praised the Jewish authors and its adverse criticism was reserved exclusively for the Germans.

The slight pin-pricks against Wilhelm II showed the persistency of its policy, just as did its systematic commendation of French culture and civilisation. The subject-matter of the serial was trivial and often indecent. The language of this press as a whole had the accent of a foreign people. The general tone was so openly derogatory to the Germans that this must have been definitely intentional.

To whose interest was this? Or was it mere chance? In attempting to find an answer to these questions I gradually became more and more dubious.

The process was hastened by glimpses which I gained of another aspect of the case, namely, the general conception of manners and morals which was openly upheld and put into practice by a large section of the Jews. Here again the life which I observed in the streets taught me by living example.

The part which the Jews played in the evil of prostitution, and more especially in the white slave traffic, could be studied here better than in any other Western European city, with the possible exception of certain ports in Southern France.

Walking by night along the streets of the Leopoldstadt, almost at every turn, whether one wished it or not, one witnessed certain incidents of which the majority of Germans knew nothing until the War made it possible, and indeed inevitable, for the soldiers to see such things on the Eastern front.

A cold shiver ran down my spine when I first ascertained that it was the cold-blooded and shameless Jew who showed his consummate skill in conducting a sordid and vicarious trade among the dregs of the big city. Then I was filled with wrath.

I had now no more hesitation about investigating the Jewish problem in all its details. Henceforth, I was determined to do so, but as I learned to track down the Jew in all the different spheres of cultural and artistic life, and in the various manifestations of this life everywhere, I suddenly came upon him where I had least expected to find him.

I now realised that the Jews were the leaders of Social Democracy. In the face of that revelation the scales fell from my eyes. My long inner struggle was at an end.

In my relations with my fellow-workmen I was often astonished to find how easily and how often they changed their opinions on the same question, sometimes within a few days and sometimes even within the course of a few hours.

I found it difficult to understand how men, who always had reasonable ideas when I spoke to them as individuals, suddenly lost this reasonableness the moment they came under the influence of the mass. I was often on the verge of despair.

When, after talking to them for hours, I was convinced that I had, at last broken the ice or made them see the error of their way of thinking, and was sincerely pleased, I would often find to my disgust that next day I had to begin all over again. All my efforts had been in vain. With pendulum-like regularity they swung back to their original opinions.

I was able to understand their position fully. They were dissatisfied with their lot and cursed the fate which had hit them so hard. They hated their employers, whom they looked upon as the heartless agents of their cruel destiny.

Often they used abusive language against the public officials, whom they accused of having no sympathy with the situation of the working people. They made public demonstrations against the cost of living and paraded through the streets in defence of their claims.

At least all this could be explained in the light of reason, but what was impossible to understand was the boundless hatred they expressed against their own fellow-citizens, how they disparaged their own nation, mocked at its greatness, reviled its history and dragged the names of its most illustrious men in the gutter.

This hostility towards their own kith and kin, their own native land and home was as irrational as it was incomprehensible. It was against Nature.

One could cure that malady temporarily, but only for some days, or at most for some weeks, but on meeting those whom one believed to have been converted one found that they had reverted to their old way of thinking and

were again the prey of perverse opinions.

I gradually discovered that the Social Democratic press was mainly controlled by Jews, but I did not attach special importance to this circumstance, for the same was true of other newspapers.

In this connection there was, however, one striking fact, namely, that there was not a single newspaper with which Jews were connected that could be spoken of as 'national' in the sense that I, with my education and convictions, used that word.

Making an effort to overcome my natural reluctance, I tried to read articles published in the Marxist press. However, as my aversion increased tenfold, I set about learning something of the people who wrote and published this mischievous stuff—from the publisher downwards, all of them were Jews!

I got hold of as many Social Democratic pamphlets as I could and looked up the names of the authors—Jews all!

I noted the names of nearly all their leaders and most of them belonged to the chosen race, whether they were members of the *Reichsrat* (Imperial Council), trade-union secretaries, chairmen of various organisations or street agitators.

Everywhere the same sinister picture presented itself. I shall never forget the list of names—Austerlitz, David, Adler, Ellenbogen, and others.

One fact became quite evident to me, namely, that this alien race held in its hand the leadership of that Social Democratic Party with whose minor representatives I had been disputing for months past. I was happy at last to know for certain that the Jew was not a German.

Thus I learnt to know thoroughly those who were leading our people astray. One year in Vienna had sufficed to convince me that no worker is so rooted in his preconceived notions that he will not surrender them in face of better and clearer arguments and explanations.

Gradually I became an expert in the doctrine of the Marxists and used this knowledge as an instrument to drive home my own firm convictions. I was successful in nearly every case.

The great masses can be rescued, but a lot of time and a great deal of

patience must be devoted to such work. A Jew, on the other hand, can never be rescued from his fixed notions.

I was then simple enough to attempt to show them the absurdity of their teaching. Within my small circle I talked to them until my throat ached and my voice grew hoarse. I believed that I could finally convince them of the danger inherent in the Marxist nonsense.

But I achieved the very opposite. It seemed to me that a growing insight into the disastrous effects of the Social Democratic doctrine in theory and in practice only served to strengthen their opposition.

The more I debated with them the more familiar I became with their tactics in debate. At the outset they counted upon the stupidity of their opponents; but when they got so entangled that they could not find a way out, they played the trick of acting the innocent simpleton.

Should they fail, in spite of their tricks of logic, they acted as if they could not understand the counter-arguments and feeling themselves cornered, hastily transferred the discussion to another field. They uttered truisms and platitudes; and, if you accepted these, took this acceptance as applying to other problems and matters differing essentially from the original theme.

If you cornered them on this point they would escape again, and you could not force them to make any precise statement.

Whenever one tried, to get a firm grip on any of these apostles, one's hand grasped only a slimy jelly which slipped through the fingers, but coagulated again a moment afterwards.

If your arguments were so telling that your adversary felt forced to give in on account of those listening and if you then thought that at last you had gained ground, a surprise was in store for you on the following day.

The Jew would be utterly oblivious to what had happened the day before, and he would start once again by repeating his former absurdities, and if nothing had happened.

Should you become indignant and remind him of yesterday's defeat, he pretended astonishment and could not remember anything, except that on the previous day he had proved that his statements were correct.

Sometimes I was dumbfounded. I do not know what amazed me the more—their quickness in repartee or the artful way in which they dressed up their falsehoods. I gradually came to hate them. Yet all this had its good side, because the better I came to know the real leaders, or at least the propagators of Social Democracy, the more did my love for my own people increase accordingly.

Considering the satanic skill which these evil counsellors displayed, who could blame their unfortunate victims? Indeed, I found it extremely difficult to prove a match for the dialectic perfidy of that race.

How futile was it to try to win over such people, seeing that they distorted the truth, denied the very words they had just uttered and used them again a few moments afterwards to serve their own ends in argument!

The better I came to know the Jew, the easier it was to excuse the workers.

In my opinion the, most culpable were not to be found among the workers, but rather among those who did not think it worthwhile to take the trouble to sympathise with these, and in accordance with the iron law of justice to give to the hard-working son of the people what was his, while at the same time executing his seducer and corrupter.

Moved by my own daily experiences, I now began to investigate more thoroughly the sources of the Marxist teaching itself. Its effects were well known to me in detail, one needed only a little imagination in order to be able to forecast the inevitable consequences.

The only question now was, ‘Did the founders foresee the effects of their work in the form which it was eventually to assume, or were the founders themselves the victims of an error?’

To my mind both, alternatives were possible.

If the second question had to be answered in the affirmative, then it was the duty of every thinking person to push his way into the forefront of this sinister movement with a view to preventing it from producing the worst possible results.

But if it were the first question which had to be answered in the affirmative, then it must be admitted that the original authors of this evil which

has infected the nations were devils incarnate, for only the brain of a monster, and not that of a man, could plan an organisation whose activities must finally bring about the collapse of human civilisation and turn this world into a desert waste.

Such being the case, the only alternative left was to fight, and in that fight to employ all the weapons which the human spirit, human intellect and human will could furnish, leaving it to Fate to decide in whose favour the balance should tilt.

I began to gather information about the authors of this teaching, with a view to studying the principles of the movement. The fact that I attained my object sooner than I could have anticipated as due to the insight into the Jewish question which I had recently gained, slight though it was.

This newly acquired knowledge alone enabled me to make a practical comparison between reality and the theoretical talk of the founders of Social Democracy, because I now understood the language of the Jew.

I realised that the Jew uses language for the purpose of dissimulating his thoughts or at least veiling them, so that his real aim cannot be discovered in his words, but rather by reading between the lines. This was the moment at which my opinions underwent the greatest transformation which I had as yet experienced; from being a soft-hearted cosmopolitan I became ardently anti-Semitic.

Only on one further occasion, and that for the last time: did I give way to oppressing thoughts which caused me some moments of profound anxiety. As I critically reviewed the activities of the Jewish people throughout long periods of history I became perplexed and asked myself whether, for inscrutable reasons beyond the comprehension of poor mortals such as ourselves, Destiny might not have irrevocably decreed that the final victory should go to this small people?

May it not be that this people which lives only for the things of this earth has been promised the earth as a reward?

Have we, from the objective point of view, a right to fight for self-preservation, or is this right subjective?

Fate answered the question for me inasmuch as it led me to make a detached and exhaustive inquiry into the Marxist teaching and the activities of

the Jewish people in connection with it. The Jewish doctrine of Marxism repudiates the aristocratic principle of Nature and substitutes for the eternal right of might and strength, the dead weight of sheer numbers. Thus it denies the individual worth of the human personality, disputes the teaching that nationality and race are of primary significance, and by doing this deprives Man of the very foundations of his existence and civilisation.

If the Marxist teaching were to be accepted as the foundation of the life of the universe, it would lead to the disappearance of all order that is conceivable to the human mind, and thus the adoption of such a law would provoke chaos in the structure of the greatest organism that we know, with the result that the inhabitants of this earthly planet would finally disappear.

Should the Jew, with the aid of his Marxist creed, triumph over the peoples of this world, his crown will be the funeral, wreath of mankind, and this planet will once again follow its orbit through ether, devoid of human life, as it did millions of years ago.

Nature, the eternal, takes merciless vengeance on those who defy her laws. Therefore, I believe to-day that my conduct is in accordance with the will of the Almighty Creator. In resisting the Jew I am defending the handiwork of the Lord.

