

*Studies in German Literature, Linguistics, and Culture*

# A History of Austrian Literature 1918–2000

Edited by  
Karin Kohl and Ritchie Robertson

CAMDEN HOUSE

<sup>15</sup> Joseph Roth, *Briefe*, ed. Herrmann Kesten (Cologne: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1970), 9.

<sup>16</sup> Anna Gmeyner, *Manja. Ein Roman um fünf Kinder*. Mit einem Vorwort von Heike Klapdor-Kops (Mannheim: Persona-Verlag, 1984), 168.

<sup>17</sup> Albert Drach, "Z.Z." *das ist die Zwischenzeit* (Hamburg: Claassen, 1968), 19.

### 3: Publishers and Institutions in Austria, 1918-45

*Murray G. Hall*

#### The World of Publishing

IN 1921, JUST THREE YEARS AFTER the founding of the First Austrian Republic, a Viennese observer of the book trade by the name of Carl Junker lamented that there were no *literary* publishing houses worthy of mention ("[kein] namhafter belletristischer Verlag") in Austria.<sup>1</sup> There is some truth in this statement, for a glance at the publishing world at the time reveals that the popular literature of the turn of the century, which is today considered by literary historians to be representative of the period and of Austrian literature in general, appeared in publishing houses in Berlin or Leipzig. The works of the modern writers of Jung-Wien, for example, appeared primarily in the publishing house of Samuel Fischer in Berlin. Those of the equally popular pan-German or nationalistic writers were published by the L. Staackmann Verlag in Leipzig, whence the term "Staackmänner." Developments between 1918 and 1945 have to be viewed in light of the circumstances under which publishing was possible in the Habsburg Monarchy. Indeed, from the eighteenth century on, the many "Buchhändlerordnungen" — the official rules and regulations of the book trade — and general restrictions from above give the impression that printing and selling books was something to be tolerated rather than welcomed. The official attitude toward the book trade over the decades explains why Germany, not only because of the larger German-speaking population, was able to persuade so many Austrian writers to publish there, and why the book and publishing trades were so dependent on the German market. It is important to note that the major feature which distinguished the "Austrian" book trade from the "German" book trade in the nineteenth century and on up until the end of the First World War was greater commercial freedom and better copyright protection.

The fact that many nineteenth-century Austrian writers, among them Franz Grillparzer or Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach, also published a good part of their works in Germany raises the question as to the characteristics of the nineteenth century publishing landscape in Austria(-Hungary),

a landscape which was to change dramatically after the First World War. Traditionally, Vienna, as the capital of the vast Habsburg Monarchy, was the main book selling and publishing center. Prague and Budapest were a distant second and third and the publishing trade in Austria-Hungary differed from that in Germany in being multithenic, multicultural and multilingual, although scholars today tend to focus on the German-language book trade.

Throughout the nineteenth century, the trades of book publisher and bookseller were combined, this being one of the ways to restrict the number of bookselling outlets. It was not until 1899 with the founding of the Wiener Verlag that the situation began to change. The vast majority of the companies were publishing houses that specialized in certain fields, and the proprietors of most of the new firms established in the course of the nineteenth century were North German Protestants. The fields of specialization included medicine (partly because of the fame of the Vienna School of Medicine), veterinary medicine, natural and social sciences, agriculture, and law, with a wide array of relevant scholarly journals, schoolbooks and cartography. Among the companies we find the k.k. Schulbücherverlag, which long held a monopoly on the publication of schoolbooks in all the languages of the monarchy, Manz (legal texts), Hölder-Pichler-Tempsky (medicine, school textbooks), Franz Deuticke (the publisher of Freud's *Traumdeutung*), Anton Schroll & Co. (art books), Universal-Edition (contemporary music), Urban & Schwarzenberg (medicine), Moritz Perles (medicine, veterinary medicine, geography, agriculture, etc.), Halm & Goldmann (art books and lexica), Verlag der Wiener Volksbuchhandlung (Social Democrat publications), Wilhelm Frick (agriculture), Wilhelm Braumüller (law, social and political science, medicine, veterinary medicine), Carl Fromme (court printers; calendars, scientific works), and L. Rosner (dramatic works).

Despite the number of specialized publishers in Vienna who also operated bookshops, it would be incorrect to assume that the literary publishing landscape was completely barren. One example of a publisher with a mixed program is the Carl Konegen Verlag. Still, except for the Wiener Verlag, there were no exclusive publishers of belles lettres, and thus Austria-Hungary exported literary manuscripts to Berlin or Leipzig and imported the published books.

Although the Austrian book trade was fully integrated into the German book trade and many booksellers and publishers were members of the Börsenverein der deutschen Buchhändler, the umbrella organization of German booksellers and publishers established in 1825, the book publishing trade in Austria-Hungary took a different route because of the heavy-handed bureaucracy. It was not until 1859 that the Verein der österreichischen (later: österreichisch-ungarischen) Buchhändler was established, its statutes modeled on those of the Börsenverein. The association's

official publication, the *Buchhändler-Korrespondenz*, appeared from 1860 on. Whereas in Germany various factors led to the emergence of a new type of publisher, the so-called "Kulturverleger" — such as Samuel Fischer, Eugen Diederichs, Anton Kippenberg of the Insel Verlag, and later Kurt Wolff and Ernst Rowohlt — and restrictions were removed on the publication of the works of classical German literature, there was no such pioneering atmosphere at the time in the Habsburg Monarchy. Access to the trade was restricted by an antiquated and often corrupt system of granting licenses ("Konzessionen"), and the strict censorship laws made literary publishing, especially, a risky business. Another major factor preventing Vienna, despite the obvious literary talent, from becoming an important center for literary publishing was copyright protection. Despite intensive lobbying by publishers and others, Austria-Hungary did not join the Bern Convention of the late 1880s, relying instead on reciprocal agreements with some, but not all key countries. Indeed, Austria was not to join the Convention until forced to do so by the Treaty of St. Germain (1919). Although the membership issue was brought before parliament in Vienna before the collapse of the monarchy, the non-German-speaking nationalities in the monarchy were adamantly opposed. As book piracy was rampant and writers and composers were often victims, they chose to publish in the German Reich, where their works enjoyed full copyright protection. There, as today, they also had a larger market. This lack of legal protection was, in the words of the contemporary book historian Carl Junker, a "catastrophe." From a legal standpoint, the writers were "fair game," as he put it. The proclamation of the First Austrian Republic in November 1918 improved the situation for both writers and local publishers.

The first exclusively literary publisher in Vienna was the Wiener Verlag (successor to the firm founded in 1874 by the Viennese actor, later bookseller and publisher Leopold Rosner, and which specialized in theatrical works), established in 1899 by the brother of Egon Friedell, Oskar Friedmann, and later taken over by a businessman named Fritz Freund. Until its demise and bankruptcy in 1908, newspaper articles about the Wiener Verlag were to be found just as often in the court section of the papers as on the culture pages. The Jugendstil publisher attracted turn-of-the-century literary talents such as Hugo von Hofmannsthal and Arthur Schnitzler, and the debut novel *Die Verwirrungen des Zöglings Törleß* (The Confusions of Young Törless, 1906) by Robert Musil, also appeared in the Wiener Verlag. Fritz Freund not only attracted authors and artists with healthy royalties, he was also active in the business of book piracy, exploiting the fact that Scandinavian and Russian writers, for example, were not copyright protected under Austrian law.

The end of the First World War, the collapse of the Monarchy, the loss of the vast industrial hinterland and natural resources, unemployment, high inflation, lack of fuel and suitable paper for printing, not to mention

the political rivalry between "Red Vienna," the bastion of the Social Democrats, and the "Black" federal government of the Christian Socials, all influenced the publishing trade in Austria in the 1920s. Paradoxically, these times were a "Gründerzeit" (period of rapid economic expansion) or, as one observer put it, there existed a "mushroom atmosphere."<sup>2</sup> For the first time, new companies argued — in a brief expression of a newly-found Austrian cultural identity — there was a need to "repatriate" Austrian literature.

The first half of the 1920s saw the rise and fall of many new publishing houses. Only a very few of the newcomers, however, were still around in 1938, when Austria was annexed by Nazi Germany. While the many specialized firms of the nineteenth century continued to exist despite losing some markets, it was now time for literary publishers to try their hand, and Austrian writers were actually attracted to them, although later figures showed that roughly nine-tenths of Austrian literature was published in Germany. All the newcomers had ambitious programs, but several were undone by managerial incompetence and the ambition to run a publishing company as a stock-holding company. Richard Kola, for example, a banker with a passion for books, founded the Rikola Verlag in 1920, aiming to produce good quality literature at an affordable price, but his appetite for acquiring other companies — publishers, printers, paper mills — coupled with bank scandals, inflation, and poor sales put an end to the company by the mid-1920s. WILA, the Wiener Literarische Anstalt, was another promising literary publisher, focusing on young and contemporary Austrian authors, but, short of capital during the inflation period, it also made the mistake of becoming a stock-holding company and getting involved with dubious banking houses. The years immediately following the war were also a time of experiment. In Germany, "socialization" had become a buzzword and the process was also extended to the publishing trade. Disgruntled writers, annoyed at what they saw as exploitation by their capitalist publishers, set about "socializing" literary creativity and founded a writers' co-operative called the Genossenschaftsverlag in Vienna in 1919. The venture brought together a group of strange bedfellows, among them the poets Albert Ehrenstein, Fritz Lampl, and Hugo Sonnenschein, the versatile writer Franz Werfel, the psychoanalyst Alfred Adler and the psychotherapist Jakob Moreno Levy. Profits from the sale of the works of German classical writers should fall to them and not to publishers, they argued. The co-operative experiment, which brought forth periodical publications such as *Daimon*, *Der neue Daimon* and *Gefährten* and works by Oskar Kokoschka, Ernst Weiss, Heinrich Mann, and others, was short-lived. By 1922 it had disappeared. Another interesting publisher in Vienna around this time was the Ed. Strache Verlag, which consciously promoted the "young generation" of Austrian writers.

One early success story, however, was the E. P. Tal & Co. Verlag, established in 1919 by Ernst Peter Tal, who had earlier worked for S. Fischer in Berlin. Despite financial difficulties in the early 1920s, the Tal company, operated after his death in 1936 by his wife Lucy Tal, remained in business until March 1938, whereupon it was taken over by an "Aryan" employee and renamed Alfred Ibach Verlag. The Paul Zsolnay Verlag, founded at the end of 1923, was the most successful Austrian publisher of the interwar years, both from a literary and financial standpoint. Although a lover of books without experience in the trade, Paul Zsolnay had other advantages: he had financial backing from a wealthy family; he established the company at a time when the economy was gradually emerging from inflation; he had an experienced literary director at his side; he was able to offer disgruntled writers in inflation-ridden Germany royalties no German publisher could come close to matching; and he was able to purchase the rights to the works of the British author and later Nobel Prize laureate John Galsworthy, who proved to be phenomenally successful and Zsolnay's "cash cow." Zsolnay was also the German-language publisher of H. G. Wells, Pearl S. Buck and A. J. Cronin, to name but a few of the writers in his "international" program. More importantly, unlike other publishers in interwar Austria, he was a respected player on the German book market, and the renowned German publishing houses were his peers. Although Zsolnay's "mission" was not specifically the promotion of Austrian writers, and he saw himself as a "German publisher," he published dozens of Austrian writers, among them Franz Werfel, Felix Salten, Robert Neumann, Roda Roda (nom de plume of Sandór Friedrich Rosenfeld), Hilde Spiel, Ernst Lothar, Hans Kalmeyer, Friedrich Torberg, and Leo Perutz. Zsolnay was also the publisher of German writers such as Heinrich Mann, Kasimir Edschmid, Carl Sternheim, Emil Ludwig, Walter von Molo, and Frank Thiess, to name but a few. Hitler's accession to power in Germany, where Zsolnay sold roughly three-quarters of his books, dealt a severe blow to both production and program. Around twenty Zsolnay authors fell victim to the official and unofficial lists of proscribed books. Their books could no longer be sold or distributed in Germany and some of the writers, among them Max Brod, went on to publish in exile publishing houses in Holland. But others, facing the prospect of trying to live off the sale of books on the Austrian or Swiss market, turned their backs on Zsolnay altogether.

To keep his company going under these difficult circumstances, Zsolnay entered into a compromise with Austrian Nazi writers in 1934, this being the price he was willing to pay for continuing access for his other books on the German market. Financially and politically speaking the venture proved to be a flop, and Zsolnay was still regarded in Germany as a "Jewish" publisher. His days were numbered when the Nazis took over Austria in March 1938. By engaging an "Aryan" front man immediately

after the annexation Zsolnay managed for a time to trick the Nazi authorities into believing the Paul Zsolnay Verlag was now an "Aryan" company. When the company's "Aryan" nature was questioned, the Gestapo closed it in April of 1939. Meanwhile, in November 1938, Zsolnay had left for England, ostensibly to carry out business there for the firm in Vienna. He was not to return until 1946. After months and years of wrangling, the Paul Zsolnay Verlag was taken over by the bookseller Karl H. Bischoff, who had worked for the Reichsschrifttumskammer in Berlin and was responsible for overseeing the closing of Jewish-owned publishing houses in Vienna. Unlike other publishing firms which had survived despite the war and were then forced to close in 1943, the Karl H. Bischoff Verlag remained in business until the end of the Second World War, continuing with an "international" program, but focusing on the literature of southeastern Europe.

Another company worthy of mention on account of its literary program and its ideological affinity to the Social Democrats is the Anzengruber Verlag Brüder Suschitzky, established in 1901 in Favoriten as the first bookstore in that working-class district. The Anzengruber Verlag published fiction and non-fiction on topics of the day, including abortion. After the *Anschluss*, and despite attempts by a potential new "Aryan" proprietor, the Reichsschrifttumskammer ordered the company to be closed because of its Jewish-Marxist tendencies. Also on the proscription list was the Phaidon Verlag, owned by Bela Horowitz. Phaidon was a key player on the German market in the field of inexpensive high-quality art books, and because it was considered "Jewish," the company was a thorn in the flesh of those in Germany who wanted to eradicate the supposed Jewish domination of the book trade.

Hitler's accession to power heralded the politicization of art and literature, and Austrian publishers soon began to feel the effects as lists of banned books were circulated in Germany. The publishing trade in Austria was virtually dependent on the German authorities, who achieved their "literary" aims through a series of political moves that were ostensibly of a commercial nature. Not only were Austrian publishing houses unable to sell the books of banned writers in Germany, imports into Germany were also restricted as were transfers from sales of books in Germany back to Austria. In 1935, Germany, in an effort to increase the inflow of foreign currency into the country to back its armaments industry, introduced a 25% discount on the sale of German books in Austria, thus harming not only the publishing trade, but also the printing industry. "National Socialism at dumping prices" was the reaction of some of the critical newspapers. Despite the many and varied difficulties with the German book market, a number of new literary publishers did enter the market in the 1930s. Perhaps the most famous is Gottfried Bermann Fischer, the son-in-law of the Berlin publisher Samuel Fischer. In an effort to save part of the S. Fischer

program — successful writers whose works could no longer be published or sold in Germany — Bermann Fischer first wanted to establish a firm in Switzerland, but the narrow-mindedness of the writers' and publishers' organization prevented it. In 1936, Bermann Fischer set up shop in Vienna after the German authorities allowed him to transport about three quarters of a million S. Fischer books to Vienna. Among the most celebrated writers in his program were Thomas Mann and Robert Musil. Immediately after the *Anschluss*, the publishing house was closed and Bermann Fischer was able to flee to Switzerland.

Other publishing companies and bookshops in Vienna became targets after the *Anschluss*. Some, such as the E. P. Tal Verlag, were allowed to be "aryanzed," but many others, such as the Herbert Reichner Verlag, which published the works of Stefan Zweig, were simply eliminated.

Throughout the interwar years, Austrian booksellers were highly dependent on book imports from Germany, Austria being Germany's most important foreign market. At the same time, with only minor exceptions as in the case of school textbook publishers, Austria's literary publishers sold between fifty and ninety percent of their books on the German market and were thus perpetually at the mercy of the German authorities. For the period 1938 to 1945, it is just as difficult to speak of an Austrian publishing establishment as to speak of the continuance of an Austrian literature. So many of the writers associated today with that literature were either murdered or had fled into exile, and along with them often their publishers as well.

### Literary Institutions

Although literary historians today tend to perceive only works belonging to a literary canon (and in the search for a positive cultural identity after the Second World War Austria was eager to regard authors such as Robert Musil, Joseph Roth, Franz Kafka, or Hermann Broch as *the* representatives of Austrian literature in the interwar years), twentieth-century Austrian literature can actually be seen as the sum of a number of different "literatures" ("Binnenliteraturen") co-existing parallel to one another. The history of Austrian writers' organizations from the mid nineteenth century on mirrors these parallel literary currents, and there is much to support the thesis put forward by Ernst Fischer that Austrian literary life was ideologically and politically segmented.<sup>3</sup> As Fischer notes, this "stratification" is not only to be found where ideologically like-minded writers band together, but, in the Austrian context, at other levels as well. Distribution and consumption of literature are two examples. Thus we find Catholic, Social Democrat, German nationalist and liberal publishing houses and book clubs, lending libraries and literary journals existing side by side, albeit with some cross-overs. Accordingly, there were highly successful Austrian writers in the

1910s and 1920s who published their works in the L. Staackmann Verlag in Leipzig (Robert Hohlbaum, Karl Hans Strobl, and many others) because of the ideological affinity. In Austria itself, the publisher most closely associated with anti-Republican and anti-Semitic sentiment was the Leopold Stocker Verlag in Graz, established in 1917. It would be completely unthinkable for writers such as those mentioned to ever be published or want to be published by the likes of S. Fischer, Kurt Wolff, Ernst Rowohlt or the Insel Verlag. Similarly, one could not expect to find liberal or Jewish writers among the "Staackmänner."

Although they shared such concerns as the social well-being of their members, pension and health benefits, the common characteristic of writers' organizations in Austria from their inception in the late 1850s was the explicit affiliation to a political or ideological camp. Essentially, this was a reflection of the political landscape.

It was in the Schiller centenary year, 1859, that the first "writers' organization," the Journalisten- und Schriftstellerverein Concordia, was established as an association. Among the founders were journalists-cum-writers from the 1848 generation, as opposed to strictly book authors. Concordia's public presence and close ties to the newspaper business are evidenced by one of the big events on Vienna's social calendar, namely the Concordia Ball, which was staged annually from 1863. Concordia, too, developed plans to provide its members with a retirement pension and health care insurance. Poetry readings and lectures were also an essential part of the association's public image. All in all, Concordia, whose members included writers and editors of Vienna's most powerful newspapers, was labeled "liberal" and pretentious.

It is not surprising then that anti-liberal forces soon gained strength. The first counter movement to Concordia, the Wiener Schriftstellergenossenschaft (Vienna Writers' Cooperative), applied in 1896 for legal status and its founding members came from Iduna, the free German society for literature (established 1891), a grouping of pan-German, conservative writers. In the following year, the association revised its statutes and became the Deutschoesterreichische Schriftstellergenossenschaft (DÖSG). The prime mover was Adam Müller-Guttenbrunn (1852-1923), a known anti-Semite who had the backing of a number of anti-Semitic and/or pan-German newspapers and periodicals and felt spurned by Concordia, which presented itself as *primus inter pares*. During the four decades it existed, the DÖSG failed to become the anti-liberal counterpart to Concordia and did little to care for the professional needs of its writing members. Instead, it mainly functioned as an ideological platform.

A further ideological differentiation from the liberal Concordia and the pan-German DÖSG came in the year 1895 with the founding of the Verband katholischer Schriftstellerinnen Österreichs (Society of Austrian Catholic Women Writers) against a background of growing political

Catholicism. It derived its *raison d'être* in part from the dominant public role played by the liberal and Jewish Concordia.

The last witness to the segmentation of Austrian literary life was the Schutzverband deutscher Schriftsteller (Protective Society of German Writers). Founded in Germany in 1909 as a type of trade union for writers, the SDS first tried to establish a Vienna branch in 1916 with Engelbert Pernerstorfer as chairman. Among the members of the board at the time were Hugo von Hofmannsthal, Raoul Auerheimer, Franz Karl Ginzkey, Karl Glossy, and Anton Wildgans. But the association did not get off the ground and it was re-established in early 1920 as the Schutzverband deutscher Schriftsteller in Österreich (SDSÖ), albeit without links to prominent Social Democrats. When more conservative elements had been eliminated from the association, the SDSÖ, although decried as leftist, became a force to reckon with and managed to bring into its fold, as a champion of the economic interests of its members, Austrian authors who, for ideological reasons, would not otherwise want to be seen together. The SDSÖ sought equal opportunities for writers under the country's social insurance legislation, fought for authors' royalties for the publication of their works in the new medium of radio, offered members free legal advice, and so on. One writers' organization that seemed to surmount the political and ideological barriers separating Austrian authors was the "apolitical" PEN Club, established in 1923 in Vienna by the writer Grete von Urbanitzky. Its first president was none other than Arthur Schnitzler. But another well-known literary figure of the time, the satirist Karl Kraus, refused to become a member because "the afternoon get-togethers and joint supporters" were anathema to him. Although politics officially had no place in the PEN Club, that was to change in May 1933 in Dubrovnik at its first international conference after Hitler's rise to power and the book-burnings across Germany earlier that month. The issue of what position the PEN Club should take toward Nazi Germany split both delegates and the ranks of the club in Vienna down the middle. The debate in which the chief Austrian delegates, Felix Salten and Grete von Urbanitzky, refused to support measures against Nazi Germany for the first time made Austrian writers, for whatever motive, distinguishable as friend or foe in Berlin. The dispute led many long-standing members to leave the PEN Club for political or pragmatic reasons. At this time, other efforts were being made to "organize" writers in Austria. Following the creation of the Reichsschrifttumskammer (RSK), one of seven chambers of the Reichskulturkammer established by propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels in the fall of 1933 to bring all creative activity under the control of a central body, the ability to publish hinged on membership of the RSK and thus a declaration of loyalty to the Führer. It goes without saying that those writers who were deemed "unreliable" were simply excluded from the book market. Meanwhile, other noteworthy attempts to organize writers were underway in Austria.

The Schutzverband deutscher Schriftsteller in Germany had undergone what is known as "Gleichschaltung" and been replaced, under Goebbels' aegis, by the Reichsverband deutscher Schriftsteller (RDS). Soon afterwards, the Salzburg writer Franz Löser began to canvas his colleagues in Austria about becoming members of an Austrian branch of the RDS. And he garnished his "invitation" with a warning that, in future, membership of the RDS would be a deciding factor in whether a writer would be able to publish his works in Germany. Anyone who was not a member of the RDS, he argued, would simply not be "heard" in Germany any longer. Response from writers in Austria was low and only about 30 of the 100 who had received Löser's newsletter bothered to apply. But in the fall of 1933, the RDS was incorporated into the RSK and in December it was announced that Austrian writers were under no obligation to seek membership in the RSK, although German publishers, newspaper and journal editors and the like continued to demand a declaration of loyalty to the German government from Austrian authors.

Even before the so-called July Agreement between Austria and Germany in 1936, which led the government in Vienna to pardon some 16,000 members of the illegal Nazi Party and further opened the floodgates to ongoing cultural domination, there had been a number of National Socialist writers' organizations in the widest sense in Austria. In 1931, for example, the Kampfband für deutsche Kultur (German Fighting Union) established an Austrian branch to promote the ideals of a German culture, based on race, blood and *Volk*. The list of its members reveals the *völkisch* canon and includes the names of countless writers whose careers were to take off during the Nazi period in Austria from 1938 and who seemed to believe their political persuasion ("Gesinnung") was worth more in terms of public and party recognition than their literary talent. After Chancellor Dollfuss's government banned the Nazi Party, the Kampfband was forced to dissolve in November 1933, although it still led an illegal existence. Writers closely associated with the Kampfband were Hermann Graedener, Mirko Jelusich, and Josef Weinheber. Earlier, Austrian sympathizers with German "renewal" had used the Kampfband, that is one of its sections, the "Fachschaft Schrifttum" under Josef Weinheber, as the platform to establish another National Socialist association, namely the Ring nationaler Schriftsteller. Following the banning of the Nazi Party in November 1933, the Ring disappeared from sight. In 1934 another offshoot of a Nazi German organization, this time the Nationalsozialistische Kulturgemeinde (National Socialist Cultural Community), was established underground. Planned as strict party organization, membership of the NSDAP was a prerequisite, although the illegal association likely only played a minor role in literary affairs. The two most prominent figures in the NSKG were Rudolf Haybach, the first publisher of Heimato von Doderer, and Anton Haasbauer.

The most conspicuous writers' organization established between 1933 and 1938 is the strictly "Aryan" Bund der deutschen Schriftsteller Österreichs (BdSÖ; League of German Writers in Austria). It was founded in November 1936 at the initiative of the *Landeskulturamtsleiter* of the illegal NSDAP, Hermann Stuppäck, in what was the third attempt to create a National Socialist authors' association by writers such as Friedrich Schreyvogel, Max Mell, Wladimir Hartlieb, Hermann Heinz Ortner, Hermann Graedener, Mirko Jelusich, Franz Spunda, and Josef Wenter, in other words, the literary stalwarts among Nazi or conservative-nationalist writers in Austria. Indeed, the BdSÖ saw itself as the focal point of National Socialist writing in Austria and its members are, needless to say, absent from any literary canon today. Shortly before Christmas 1936, the BdSÖ held its constituent meeting and chose, for the sake of appearances, a non-party member affiliated with exponents of the *Ständestaat* (corporate state), the conservative writer Max Mell, as chairman. However, the state or secret police spoke out against giving legal status to the association, arguing that it appeared to be a front for previous, now banned Nazi organizations and nothing more than a grouping of Nazi-minded writers. The Federal Chancellery, for its part, dismissed the arguments and sided with the Vienna police department which could offer no reason *not* to allow the BdSÖ to become a legally sanctioned association. The Bund's statutes could not, of course, include the "Arierparagraph" (a regulation restricting membership to "Aryans"), but in practice non-Aryans were not admitted. In earlier decades, other writers' organizations had followed the principle of not allowing non-Aryans to become members. Although the Bund was very soon to outlive its usefulness, in that its members were all required after March 1938 to seek admission to the Reichsschrifttumskammer, its short existence is significant nonetheless. For the authorities making literary policy in Nazi Germany, to whom the names of most Austrian writers meant little or nothing, the estimated one hundred members of the Bund were not only distinguishable from Jewish, liberal or otherwise undesirable writers in Austria; they were considered the true representatives of Austrian writing. And last, but not least, the main exponents of the Bund facilitated the smooth transition in Austria after March 1938 to the rule of the Reichsschrifttumskammer. Several weeks later, Austria's nationalistic writers celebrated the "liberation" of their homeland (and their role in it) in the form of an expression of political and ideological conviction, in the *Bekanntnisbuch österreichischer Dichter* (Austrian Writers Confess Their Faith). Published by the Bund der deutschen Schriftsteller Österreichs itself, seventy-one of the 100 contributors were actual members who could now give free rein to their innermost feelings about the "savior" Adolf Hitler. With the *Anschluss*, the segmentation of literary life ended, and literary history has all but forgotten the gravediggers.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Carl Junker, "Der Verlagsbuchhandel in der Republik Österreich. Betrachtungen anlässlich der ersten Wiener Buchmesse," in *Deutsche Verlegerzeitung* 2 (1921), Nr. 22, 406-13. The following essay is based to a considerable extent on the author's two-volume history of literary publishing in Austria in the interwar years: *Österreichische Verlagsgeschichte 1918-1938*. Volume I: *Geschichte des österreichischen Verlagswesens*; Volume II: *Lexikon der belletristischen Verlage*. Vienna: Böhlau Verlag 1985. (= Literatur und Leben. Neue Folge, volume 28/I-II.)
- <sup>2</sup> "in der Pilzatmosfera der ewigen Krisenschwüle schossen die neuen Verlage auf." Carl Julius Haidvogel, "Wir jungen Österreicher," in *Österreichische Monatshefte* (Vienna), 5. Jahrgang, November/December 1929, 554-59, here: 555.
- <sup>3</sup> Ernst Fischer, "Literatur und Ideologie in Österreich 1918-1938. Forschungsstand und Forschungsperspektiven," *Internationales Archiv für Sozialgeschichte der deutschen Literatur*. I. Sonderheft *Forschungsreferate* (1985): 183-255. N.B.: the Ernst Fischer cited here is *not* the writer and politician Ernst Fischer (1875-1954).

## 4: Popular Culture in Austria: Cabaret and Film, 1918-45

Janet Stewart

IN 1895, THE MUSEUM DER VOLKSKUNDE (Museum of Folklore) was established in Vienna, a year after the constitution of the Verein für Volkskunde (Association for Folklore), which sought to understand a particular form of popular culture — traditional folk culture — from the vantage point of historical anthropology. Programmatically, the first issue of the association's journal, *Die österreichische Zeitschrift für Volkskunde* (The Austrian Journal of Folklore), included articles by Richard von Kralik titled "Zur österreichischen Sagenkunde" (The Study of Austrian Legend and Myth) and Alois Riegl titled "Das Volksmäßige und die Gegenwart" (The Folkish and the Present).<sup>1</sup> The whole undertaking was essentially an exercise in documenting the traditional folk culture of the Habsburg Monarchy, but it was being carried out in a period that was witnessing significant sociocultural change as industrialization brought about large-scale migration from the countryside, the location and object of these ethnographical studies, to the city. While academics devoted their attention to one form of popular culture, a different manifestation of that culture was gaining in importance. The twin processes of industrialization and urbanization brought in their wake a new form of popular culture, mass commercial culture, which developed as a result of new technological possibilities coupled with the people's experience of living in rapidly expanding cities. The First World War and the subsequent dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy served merely to intensify this dynamic; after 1918, particularly in Vienna, mass commercial culture appeared as the dominant form of popular culture. This development was, however, not without its critics and challengers.

### Old and New Cultural Forms

The roots of mass commercial culture in Austria extend back into the nineteenth century and can be found in popular theater and variety theater, as well as in the "illusory world" of the Prater.<sup>2</sup> The latter, in particular, often appears in Austrian literature of the first decades of the twentieth century,