

RED VIENNA, 1919–1934:
IDEAS, DEBATES, PRAXES

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE WIEN MUSEUM'S
CENTENNIAL EXHIBITION AND ROUNDTABLE
DISCUSSION "WHAT IS RED VIENNA?": CONFLICTING
PERSPECTIVES, ENDURING LEGACIES

Red Vienna in the Museum

By curators

WERNER MICHAEL SCHWARZ,
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Debate: What is Red Vienna?

By SCHWARZ ET AL

Translated from the German by LAUREN K. WOLFE

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE:

Chiaroscuro: A way of looking at the world

Right now a world health crisis is showing us in devastating light just how damaging—to bodies, well-beings, livelihoods, communities, ecologies—are the effects of the cynical organization of the global economy. Chiaroscuro describes the technique of using the contrast between light and dark to put into relief formal patterns over and above the narrative or figurative elements in a work of visual art. Likewise the moment of pandemic permits a unique view onto the basic interrelatedness of progressive demands that are often administered as distinct issues: the right to clean and affordable housing, universal healthcare and basic income, prison abolition, the disentanglement of employment from so-called entitlements, radical wealth redistribution, immigration reform, direct democracy, free education, investment in and

equal access to public and social infrastructure, and so on. The separate treatment of issues obscures the structural bases of social and economic inequality and maintains instead the dominant narrative in the foreground—a disingenuous narrative of individualism and identitarianism, economies of scarcity, the “global village.” In order to answer justly to the exigencies of the present, not only are political instruments needed, but also alternative concepts, a formally integrated way of looking at the world.

“Red Vienna” emerged from a similarly afflicted historical moment. War-induced mass migration and displacement, a tuberculosis epidemic, pervasive malnutrition, a severe housing shortage, widespread unemployment, extreme wealth disparity: This was the petri dish in 1919 that generated a municipal politics and culture predicated on the Social Democratic principles of economic jus-

tice and self-determination. What exactly the city accomplished, how it was able to do so, and what lessons that brief experiment—which lasted from 1919 to 1934, when the conservative forces of the federal government ultimately dismantled it—may hold for the present are questions posed by the Wien Museum's recent centennial exhibition *Red Vienna, 1919–1934: Ideas, Debates, Praxes*.ⁱ The following introductory essay and roundtable discussion have been excerpted from the catalog to this exhibition.

Gemeindebauten: A theory put to work

Maybe the most paradigmatic expression of the theoretical practice or practical theory of Red Vienna are the municipal housing projects that the city built in answer to a series of interrelated concerns:

public health and sanitation, unemployment and housing insecurity, gender equality in the home and on the labor market, and the cultivation of self-actualized political subjects. The Social Democratic-controlled city strove to meet the material needs of the working-class population in a manner congruent with its own political and cultural values: Each housing complex featured communal laundries and kitchens, kindergartens and playgrounds, public bathing facilities, and libraries and doctors' offices, in order to promote sanitary living, adult education, a feeling of solidarity, and to communalize domestic labor and care work. Their construction itself helped alleviate unemployment. These complexes were also designed to facilitate political organizing in that each had assigned Party offic-

i. The Wien Museum is a municipal, not an imperial institution; all the more astonishing that, within Europe, its holdings are second in size only to the British Museum in London. The Wien Museum's mission—an interdisciplinary exploration of the long history and diverse cultures of Vienna—is realized across its twenty-one sites located throughout the city.

es and officers who were available for those seeking council on any number of issues, from employment to domestic life. A central tenet of the Social Democratic Workers' Party (SDAP) was not to win votes but to create the voters who would comprehend and support Party values as a result of directly benefitting from these values put into practice. Public education initiatives and access to educational resources for the working classes realized the Social Democratic aim of transforming the worker from an object of administration into a political subject with agency of its own.

Austromarxism: A "third way" of radical reform

If there is a whiff of paternalism in this agenda to create a voter with a particular profile, that certainly was not lost on the interwar Viennese themselves, nor was the Party by any means free of internal conflict. The "Austromarxism"

which provided the intellectual undergirding of the SDAP evolved over time from its origins in the late nineteenth century, though what remained characteristic throughout was its self-conception as a "third way" between socialist revolution and liberal-democratic reform: a radical reinvestment in and reshaping of public democratic institutions. How "radical" a position this "third way" was is up for debate, since the achievements of the SDAP in the interwar years did involve the Party in a number of political trade-offs with the bourgeois classes, who were haunted by the specter of Bolshevism. This sort of entanglement is thought to be part of the reason why more fundamental reforms in, for instance, the relations of production were not risked. Then again, creative strategies emerged where other avenues of reform were foreclosed: If the means of production remained to a large extent the property of the bourgeoisie,

the SDAP-controlled administration simply purchased the assets it wished to place outside the reach of the market.

It should be noted that Red Vienna existed to some extent as a city apart. There was also another Vienna in the interwar years—a wealthy, bourgeois, landed, formerly imperial Vienna that provided much of the tax revenue which funded Social Democratic, worker-oriented Red Vienna. The First Austrian Republic (1919–1938) was a widely unloved rump state that resulted from the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the Treaty of Saint-Germain in the wake of World War I. This new Austria was deeply ideologically divided between the “Red” Social Democrats, who comprised the political majority in the capital, and the conservative “Black” Christian Socialists, who dominated politics in the remainder of the

country. This division, exacerbated by the global economic crisis of 1929, would in the end prove calamitous for this radical experiment in social democracy.ⁱⁱ

Subjects and objects: Between emancipation and control

The Social Democratic Workers’ Party grew out of the workers’ movement that it then sought both to further cultivate and to institutionalize. The SDAP project to make political subjects out of the mass administrative object that the working class had been under imperial management yielded occasionally ambivalent results, somewhere between emancipation and control. For instance, public health initiatives, including family planning, were administered under the direction of openly eugenicist city councilmen. Moreover, in the longer term, the institutionalization of the work-

ii. Many thanks to Alys X. George for providing critical historical insight to this introduction.

ers' movement ultimately wound up individualizing the relationship between the new political subject and the municipal government; the new political subject became not only a disciplined subject, but, as its needs were increasingly reliably met through its individual appeal to administrative offices, its attachment to the collectivity of the originating movement weakened. On the other hand, innovative sociological projects were enabled by this changed view of the working classes as comprised of individuals with their own agency. Feminist sociologist Käthe Leichter, for instance, surveyed 1,320 women industrial workers in Vienna in the early 1930s; their narrative testimonials pointed to significant gaps between the actual lived conditions of Social Democratic women and the gender-equity rhetoric and policies of the Party. Even if what the study revealed was the failure of rhetoric and policy to affect the lives

of the target population, the new research methods made the gap identifiable and thus remediable.

Austrofascism: A darker yield

Red Vienna did not end as a result of its own internal contradictions, nor can its end stand unequivocally as judgment on its viability. Social Democratic Vienna was dismantled by Christian Socialist coup. In March 1933, railway workers went on strike. Parliament convened to vote on disciplinary action; however, a series of voting irregularities resulted in all three presidents of the lower house voluntarily resigning their non-voting positions in order to cast decisive votes in a second round. Conservative chancellor Engelbert Dollfuß seized on the circumstance to declare a procedural "crisis"—the constitution gave no clear instruction on what to do when the house was left without a speaker—and refused to reinstate parliament, which he insisted had "eliminated itself."

Absent parliament, all political channels for Social Democratic action were effectively foreclosed. The Dollfuß administration then began suspending civil liberties; it banned the paramilitary wing of the SDAP and imprisoned many of its members. In February 1934, “Black” forces loyal to the federal government trespassed on SDAP property, provoking a four-day civil war the “Red” contingent was bound to lose, having been dispossessed of its weapons. After this, the Party was banned, along with all trade unions. A corporatist, one-party government evolved, with power centralized in the office of the chancellor. These events were of course unfolding against the backdrop of an unprecedented global economic crisis.

Another petri dish, this one containing a volatile mix of

reactionary nationalist politics and international market meltdown, yielded the five-year rule of Austrofascism.³ Compounding crises may have set the stage for a radical reinvention of just forms of living in 1919, but compounding crises also conditioned the arrest and dismantling of the same only fifteen years later. Both of these bookends seem equally instructive for the present.

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Chicago, April 2020

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iii. Canonical postwar Austrian historiography categorizes this period from February 1933 to March 1938 (ending with the so-called “annexation” of Austria to Nazi Germany) as corporatist and authoritarian rather than fascist, which aligns with the dominant postwar narrative of Austria as the Nazis’ “first victim.” More recent studies in fascism and Austrian history have been reexamining this narrative and have begun to think “Austrofascism” alongside other European twentieth-century fascisms.

INTRODUCTION: RED VIENNA IN THE MUSEUM

By curators Werner Michael Schwarz, Georg Spitaler, Elke Wikidal

Red Vienna as an exhibition theme is rather like a great drama, reimagined and restaged for each new occasion. After close to forty years of intensive research and debate, many key elements of script and score have been more or less fixed: the magnificent architecture, the striking photographic documentation, the intensive debates that played out within its literary and educational circles. These had to do with housing, schooling, welfare, feminist politics, adult education, working-class culture, art; they were carried out in electoral campaigns and fierce disputes among political rivals that leveraged every available means of (visual) media. Each new staging of Red Vienna emphasizes, omits, rediscovers different things and positions itself differently with respect to what has come before. Any interpretation of this brief moment—this “routinization of utopia” (Wolfgang Maderthaler) which is lastingly inscribed in the city, even though it lasted barely more than a decade (1919–1934)—is reflective of its context and the interests of those who give it shape.

The major exhibition *Traum und Wirklichkeit. Wien 1870–1930*, which showed at the Vienna Künstlerhaus in 1985, expressed fascination with the reverberating effects of the intellectual and aesthetic ideas of *fin-de-siècle* Vienna,

1. *Traum und Wirklichkeit. Wien 1870–1930*. [Dream and Reality: Vienna 1870–1930] Exhibition catalog, Historisches Museum der Stadt Wien, Vienna 1985.

2. [Built between 1927 and 1930, Karl Marx Hof is one of the largest and most iconic of Vienna's *Gemeindebauten*, spanning over twelve city blocks and including more than 1,300 apartments, many of which remain occupied by contemporary Viennese. In February 1934, Karl Marx Hof was a hotspot of the urban Social Democratic uprising against the Christian conservative federal government, which had ordered the building shelled. A permanent Red Vienna exhibition is on display at the *Waschsalon Karl-Marx-Hof*, a former communal laundry since converted to a museum.—Trans.]

3. [Otto Wagner (1841–1918) was a foundational figure in *fin-de-siècle* architecture and urban planning, a paragon for a generation of architects that would undertake iconic

circa 1900.¹ In this retelling, history came to a programmatic close in the year 1930, with the opening of Karl Marx Hof²—prior, in other words, to the actual end of Red Vienna—which, for the curators, marked the end of the Golden Age of Viennese culture. One of the key figures of the epoch, according to this interpretation, was the architect Otto Wagner.³ The exhibition's interest lay in the continuation of Wagner's ideas through his students in Red Vienna—which is to say, in an apparent paradox, in that socialist ideals were being implemented predominantly by bourgeois architects.

Even in the years prior to 1985, a number of exhibitions had already put Red Vienna on display on in some cases rather prominent stages. The first of these was an exhibition with the almost diffident title *Zwischenkriegszeit—Wiener Kommunalpolitik 1918–1938*, which opened in the context of the *Wiener Festwochen*, then moved to the *Museum des 20. Jahrhunderts* in the Schweizergarten, before finally showing at the *Gesellschafts- und Wirtschaftsmuseum*.⁴ The sepia-tinted black-and-white photos featured in the just over one-hundred-page exhibition catalog are shrouded in a thin veneer suggestive of a

posture somewhere between melancholy and a cautious repoliticization. Quite different, then, from the following year's show *Mit uns zieht die neue Zeit. Arbeiterkultur in Österreich 1918–1934*, which was interested above all in the collective as an acting subject.⁵ The curators of this 1981 exhibition chose the Koppreiter tram depot in Meidling as their exhibition space, certainly a theatrical if not exactly a museal one. In a show titled *Die Kälte des Februar. Österreich 1933–1938*, which focused on the suppression of the Social Democratic uprising,⁶ the emphases and perspective of the 1981 exhibition were carried forward to the start of 1984.⁷ In the spirit of the 1970s New Left, this exhibition juxtaposed the indecision of Party leadership against those Social Democrats who were prepared to fight in 1934. Both exhibitions had recourse to “texts” that are no longer immediately available to curators today: the recollections of those who had participated.

Throughout the 1980s, Red Vienna remained an object of fervent debate, and the culture that it had generated itself remained largely intact. At this time, Social Democracy in Vienna appeared well-secured, though these exhibitions and young activists strove

Red Vienna construction and design projects. The irony: Wagner was an eminently bourgeois liberal-democratic Viennese; his successors, trained in the Secession style Wagner helped develop, would be the ones to construct the city of radical social democracy.—Trans.]

4. Gottfried Pirhofer(ed.): *Zwischenkriegszeit—Wiener Kommunalpolitik 1918–1938*. [The Interwar Years—Viennese Communal Politics, 1918–1938] Exhibition catalog, Museum des 20. Jahrhunderts, Vienna 1980. [*Wiener Festwochen* is an annual Viennese arts and culture festival; Museum of the Twentieth Century; Museum of Economics and Society.—Trans.]

5. Helene Maimann (ed.): *Mit uns zieht die neue Zeit. Arbeiterkultur in Österreich 1918–1934*. [The New Era Moves with Us: Working-Class Culture in Austria, 1918–1934] Exhibition catalog of the Austrian Society for Cultural Politics and the Meidlinger

Kulturkreis, at the Meidling Koppreitergasse tram depot, Vienna 1981.

6. [See translator's note for details on the suppression of the Social Democratic uprising.—Trans.]

7. Helene Maimann, Siegfried Mattl (eds.): *Die Kälte des Februar. Österreich 1933–1938*. [The February Cold: Austria, 1933–1938] Exhibition catalog of the Austrian Society for Cultural Politics and the Meidlinger *Kulturkreis*, at the Meidling Koppreiter tram depot, Vienna 1984.

8. [*einfaich bauen* can mean either “just build” or “build simply.” The settlers movement (Siedlerbewegung) grew out of pervasive homelessness and hunger in the immediate aftermath of World War I; the settlements were autarkic communal living situations, with collectively tended gardens, built on the city's perimeter, at first essentially squats and later financially supported by the city.—Trans.]

to remind audiences that nothing guaranteed it would always remain this way. By then, the Party had come under increased pressure, in the context of new environmental, feminist, and cultural initiatives, especially from its younger contingent, who took a lesson from the combative engagement of the “working masses” of the past and criticized Red Vienna on the same grounds that it now found fault with the Social Democratic Party in its present form: paternalism, complacency, and indecisiveness. This was the direction taken by the exhibition *einfaich bauen* that showed in 1985 at the Wiener Künstlerhaus and that for the first time on a grand scale commemorated the settlers movement from the years immediately following the end of World War I as a “movement from below.”⁸ The exhibition, conceived in Germany, began touring through the Viennese settlements in 1983 as an “expanding exhibition,” collecting materials and narratives of former activists as it traveled.⁹ Its maxim—“Against the Myth of No Alternatives”—was addressed to both the present and the past of Red Vienna. The exhibitions of the 1980s were still operating within an environment that regarded the

dominance of the Left as both a theoretical and a practical possibility.

It's not surprising that the exhibitions of the 1990s tended to historicize Red Vienna and to transform a living, fiercely contested history into a canon of knowledge that then found its way back into the museum.¹⁰ The fall of the Iron Curtain and the end of *Realsozialismus* initially relegated Red Vienna to an ostensibly distant past. Its welfare-state pretensions, its view of housing and social security as public undertakings, and its commitment to disentangling education from class privilege had already been gradually undermined by the growing dominance of neoliberal thought—which, at least at first, could be credited with introducing a measure of liberation from the narrow constraints of social conformity. Interest at this point was concentrated on architecture and the legacy of urban planning that Red Vienna left behind. Even into the 1980s, many buildings were for the most part in a fairly bleak state of disrepair, despite their being part of an active working-class and Party culture. Since the late 1990s, these buildings have seen gradual renovation, and, to an extent, structures like Karl Marx Hof have been

9. Klaus Novy, Wolfgang Förster (eds.): *einfach bauen*. Catalog for an expanding exhibition. A project of the Association for Modern Communal Politics, Vienna 1985, p. 9.

10. Cf. Walter Öhlinger (ed.): *Das rote Wien. 1918–1934*. [Red Vienna: 1918–1934] Exhibition catalog, Historisches Museum der Stadt Wien, Vienna 1993.

11. One of Karl Marx Hof's former communal laundries, *Waschsalon Karl-Marx-Hof*, now houses permanent and temporary exhibitions on the history of Red Vienna. <http://dasrotewien-waschsalon.at/startseite/> (April 1, 2019).

12. Wolfgang Kos (ed.): *kampf um die stadt. politik, kunst und alltag um 1930*. [fight for the city: politics, art and the everyday circa 1930] Exhibition catalog, Wien Museum, Vienna 2009.

discovered and capitalized on for their value as tourist attractions.¹¹

Otherwise, talk of Red Vienna appears to have quieted down. It came to be seen rather as a single episode within a grand narrative, as was the case with the 2009 Wien Museum exhibition *kampf um die stadt. politik kunst und alltag um 1930*¹² at the Wiener Künstlerhaus, which depicted Red Vienna as merely one among an array of perspectives elaborated throughout the 1920s and 1930s, when the city and urban space were highly contested objects of discussion and debate. Accordingly, Red Vienna could legitimately be consigned to the margins, not least because it had itself worked so intensively to keep non-Red, metropolitan Vienna at a remove from its own constituency, thus opening deep fault lines in its own historical moment. This is exemplified, for instance, in its rejection of professional soccer, which would have had working-class appeal, and in its stance on cinema, fashion, consumption, and art.

At the same time, this phase of historicization precipitated an intensification of research, and a higher quality of it. The move away from directly political questions opened a first avenue for “cooler,” more

in-depth analysis and contextualization of the memories and legacies of Red Vienna. Its rich visual inheritance—placards, films, photographs, and not least its architecture—began to be studied, each in its own aesthetic, intellectual, and technical context, using academic museological methods. And this set the stage for a rediscovery of the built environment of Red Vienna. Participatory cultural festivals like *Soho in Ottakring* collectivized the effort to locate traces of Red Vienna and drove it outside the museum—as was the case in 2014, with the pop-up exhibition at the housing complex Sandleitenhof.¹³

A HAUNTED PAST

In 2019, exhibition spaces were again expanded beyond the museum proper, with selected locations throughout the city temporarily opened to the public, enabling the exploration of lesser known, more experimental aspects of Red Vienna beyond the familiar buildings and housing complexes. This allows, in one sense, for a kind of “built utopia” to be conveyed, uniting the ideals of schooling, housing, and art. In another sense, however, such efforts remained

13. Geschichte Willkommen! [History Welcome!] A project by: Christiane Rainer, Kazuo Kandutsch, Katrin Sippel, <http://www.sohoinottakring.at/2014/04/geschichte-willkommen/> (April 1, 2019). [Sandleitenhof is a municipal housing complex in the Ottakring district of Vienna, a neighborhood that, since 2014, has become a center for alternative culture in the city. Every year it hosts a two-week arts and culture festival, *Soho in Ottakring*. In 2015, the Wiener Kunstschule (an art school) acquired the former communal laundry in Sandleitenhof, which has since been converted to an exhibition space.—Trans.]

detached, for the rich texture of Red Vienna harbors a conspicuous gap. In contrast with the wealth of representations—photographs, films, brochures, newspapers, and the like—that document the people’s mass participation in the project of Red Vienna, very few personal testimonials have survived.

14. [Association for the History of the Workers’ Movement.—Trans.]

In the summer of 2016, the *Verein für Geschichte der ArbeiterInnenbewegung (VGA)*,¹⁴ a cooperating partner in the present exhibition, received a friendly email. The sender was writing from a small town in Upper Franconia in Germany; she had been restoring her grandmother’s kitchen sideboard and found hidden “under the counter top two membership ID booklets in the ‘Social Democratic Workers’ Party of the Republic of German-Austria,’” the owners of which were completely unknown to her. These little booklets found their way into the VGA archive. It turns out they had belonged to a married couple, born in 1901 and 1909, soldier and housewife, respectively, members of Section XIII, Kagran District, of the Social Democratic Workers’ Party (SDAP), the former having joined in 1922, the latter in 1932. And a noteworthy detail was also remarked: The stamps indicating the payment

of monthly membership dues, each of which had been neatly pasted into the booklets, ceased abruptly in January 1934. Immediately thereafter, with the February Uprising and the ban on the SDAP, Red Vienna had come to an end.

Had the two Viennese party members at this point hidden their membership booklets inside the kitchen credenza? And had they then forgotten about them, or were they even still living, by the time the credenza eventually changed hands?

Objects secreted away that reappear after more than eighty years are indicative of ruptures. Audiences sympathetic to the historical project of Red Vienna may feel a certain melancholy, in recognition of the years lost to Austrofascism and, thereafter, the horror that was National Socialism. But objects belonging to Red Vienna also haunt the present in another sense: as phantoms of a time in which notions of a self-determined future were not yet stifled by the apparent inevitability of neoliberal conditions.¹⁵

[...]

Unequivocal and direct expressions of these historical ruptures, and the deep incisions they made into personal biographies,

15. Cf. in this regard e.g. Mark Fischer: *Kapitalistischer Realismus ohne Alternative? Eine Flugschrift* [Capitalist Realism without Alternatives? A Pamphlet], Hamburg 2013.

can be read in the stories of emigration. Olga Tandler managed to bring with her, as she fled to the US in 1939, a portion of her deceased husband Julius Tandler's literary remains, now kept by her grandson Bill, who values it explicitly as a memento of Red Vienna and its "humanism."¹⁶ While in exile in New York, the architect and interior design consultant Fritz Czuczka made drawings for his son George of the family's former Vienna apartment in Karl Marx Hof, which had been designed and furnished in accordance with progressive ideas, and of which, as Jews, the family was dispossessed in 1938. The drawings are at once documents of forced displacement and flight, and testimony—some of the little that remains—to the practical implementation of Red Vienna's housing ideals.¹⁷

Another story of political persecution likewise made its way to the Wien Museum in 1937, in the form of medium- and large-format photographs from the *Gesellschafts- und Wirtschaftsmuseum* (GWM), which had previously exhibited the aspirations and accomplishments of Red Vienna on stages both local and international. Otto Neurath—founder and longstanding

16. [Julius Tandler (1869–1936) served as city councilman for health and welfare in the Vienna city government from 1920 until, as a Jew, he was forced from public service in 1934 and later into exile. Tandler is credited with successfully managing Vienna's tuberculosis epidemic; he was also a strident advocate of eugenic policies, including sterilization.—Trans.]

17. We'd like to thank Philipp Rohrbach and Niko Wahl for referring us to these particular recollections.

director of the GWM, inventor of the Vienna Method of Pictorial Statistics, later termed ISOTYPE (International System of Typographic Picture Education), as well as other museum-education concepts—was forced to leave the country in 1934. He is one of the brilliant minds who advanced Red Vienna as an intellectual project first and foremost. But big names like Otto Neurath, like feminist social scientist Käthe Leichter,¹⁸ and like renowned city councilmen Hugo Breitner and Julius Tandler, make it easy to forget that, in the 1919 elections, organized laborers also rose to positions of prominence in Viennese politics and administration. Vienna's new mayor, Jakob Reumann, had apprenticed as a lathe operator in a meerscham pipe factory in his youth. In his inaugural address before the city council in May 1919, he felt himself called to steward the city's official business "as a representative of the working classes, who for decades have been without rights, an object of the administration." "This context is something I will never forget."¹⁹ Franz Siegel, the city councilman for technical affairs—whose official purview included the construction of municipal housing—had first worked as a mason, then served as

18. [Käthe Leichter (1895–1942) was a social scientist, labor unionist, and Director of Women's Affairs in the Vienna Chamber of Labor, known for her pioneering 1932 study of women industrial workers in Vienna, *So leben wir* (How We Live), which identified significant gaps between the actual lived conditions of Social Democratic women and the gender-equity rhetoric and policies of the Party. In 1940, while preparing documents to flee German-occupied Austria, Leichter, a Jew, was arrested by the Gestapo and deported to the Ravensbrück concentration camp, where she was gassed in 1942.—Trans.]

19. Inaugural address of Mayor Jakob Reumann at the constituents' city council meeting May 22, 1919, in: Verein für Geschichte der ArbeiterInnenbewegung (forthcoming: VGA), placard 3/92.

chair of the construction workers' union. His successor, Karl Richter, who also served as city councilman for administrative affairs, wrote in his curriculum vitae: "Member of the Workers' Education Association Apollo, as apprentice; 1896 Deputy Chairman, later Chairman of the Professional Association of Gilders."²⁰ Richter spoke with a good deal of pride about attending the workers' movement's educational institutions, "even the public university courses—and the first ones at that, those that were organized in 1891 or 1892."²¹ Same with the stripes he earned in a conflict with the Habsburg authorities, who accused him in 1911 of, among other things, maligning both the crown and the army.²²

20. Curriculum vitae for the city councilman of administrative affairs Karl Richter, n.d., in: VGA, Social Democratic Party Offices K77/M466.

21. Ibid.

22. Cf. *ibid.*

RED VIENNA 2019

An exhibition about Red Vienna in 2019, one hundred years after it first began, thus has a rich and layered history from which to draw. But which interpretations are apropos of the present? What was once, in the 1980s, looked upon critically in terms of the distance between its theoretical assumptions and actual accomplishments and then, in the 1990s, sidelined altogether, now seems all the more

worthy of renewed examination and exhibition: the interpretation of Red Vienna as a project of emancipation and participation, as “an idea of modern public solidarity,”²³ as journalist Robert Misik has described it. Red Vienna now appears as much more than the concrete space its architecture alone would suggest; it appears as a space of possibility within which the question “How should one live?” was intensely debated when it came to matters of housing, schooling, education, relations between men and women, leisure, and culture; it appears as a call to debate, to critical engagement, to the declaration of ideals, and to experiment.

23. Robert Misik: “Rotes Wien”—was heißt das im 21. Jahrhundert? [“Red Vienna”—What does it mean in the twenty-first century?], in: *Der Standard*, May 21, 2018, <https://derstandard.at/2000080115553/Das-Rote-Wien-was-heisst-das-im-21-Jahrhundert> (March 20, 2019).

DEBATE: WHAT IS RED VIENNA?

Participants: Lilli Bauer, curator of the museum Das Rote Wien im Waschsalon Karl-Marx-Hof;²⁴ Helmut Konrad, emeritus professor of contemporary history at the University of Graz; Hanna Lichtenberger, political scientist at the University of Vienna; Wolfgang Maderthaner, historian and managing director of the Österreichisches Staatsarchiv;²⁵ and Béla Rásky, historian and manager of the Wiener Wiesenthal Institut für Holocauststudien,²⁶ in conversation about the history and theory of Red Vienna.

24. [Red Vienna in the Laundry of Karl Marx Hof.—Trans.]

25. [Austrian National Archive.—Trans.]

26. [Vienna Wiesenthal Institute for Holocaust Studies.—Trans.]

Moderator: Werner Michael Schwarz, curator at the Wien Museum.

The conversation took place around the dining room table of (Red) Vienna's former mayor, Karl Seitz, in the Vorwärts-Haus, the former Party headquarters and home to the workers' daily gazette, the *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, located in the Wienzeile in Vienna's fifth district.

Schwarz What is Red Vienna for you? Field for experiment, laboratory, utopia, a project of late Enlightenment or left-populism—to name just a few terms that are often associated with Red Vienna. **Rásky** For me, there's a term missing here, one that Siegfried Mattl coined: "public moral institution." I'd argue for the phrase "project of late Enlightenment," if it weren't for this almost religious aspect and the high-handed claim to morality that turns up again and again in many of these texts. **Bauer** But wasn't this religious aspect a part of the claim to an education that aimed to show the working classes how a person should live? This, for me, overrides the contradiction—because you have to educate the workers, and until you do or until you have, all they can do is *believe*. **Konrad** I don't think this contradiction is so easily overridden. Red Vienna had set itself first and foremost a sociopolitical task, one that could only be approached in a rational manner: I have to change how support is provided to mothers and children, construct residential buildings, fight tuberculosis, build schools, kindergartens. At first, none of this has a religious aspect. Wolfgang Madert-haner and I have, for this reason, also discussed Red Vienna as a "model for a modern metropolis." That's late Enlightenment in its purest form, that's modernization: We have to make this Vienna cleaner, safer, healthier, more livable for our children. That's the one side. The other is the attempt to give Red Vienna an elevated public image. When you all of a sudden arrive on the scene as the "Bauvolk der kommenden Welt"²⁷—the builders of the world to come—then it doesn't

27. This is the first line of the song "Die Arbeiter von Wien" [The Workers of Vienna]. The text was written by Fritz Brügge and it was sung to the tune of the "Red Army March" (1920). It is not exactly clear when it first appeared. It was printed in the Social Democratic weekly *Volkspost* on August 7, 1926.

28. One such "psalm" (poem) was titled "Die neue Stadt" [The New City], published in Berlin in 1927. Josef Luitpold Stern wrote the text; the book in which it appeared was published by *Büchergilde Gutenberg*. Otto Rudolf Schatz designed the seventy-four pages, featuring seventy-four images using woodcut technique.

29. Karl R. Stadler (1913–1987), historian and professor of modern and contemporary history at the University of Linz.

30. [German original: *Veralltäglicung der Utopie*.—Trans.]

suffice to say: in Vienna there's no more tuberculosis; you've got to have something more. And what, then, do you fall back on? If the Enlightenment *disenchanted* the world, then, for instance, the educational policy-maker in Red Vienna, Luitpold Stern, attempted to *re*enchant it, and, in order to do so, he used a religious vocabulary, like "psalms."²⁸ In other words: We're more than a modern metropolis, we are the coming world. And for this, we need not only an exalted religious register but also the "New Human." This is where it then does become partially problematic. We know from Karl Stadler's²⁹ diaries of the time that he thought very seriously about separating from his wife because she had eaten a candy containing rum. To his mind, this violated everything they had been advocating. Later, he was by no means dead set against a rum candy. This shows, though, how strongly this moral injunction had affected young intellectuals. **Maderthaner** Before debating conceptual terms like morality or ethics, that often reveal a very subjective view of the past, I'd first like to establish: Red Vienna is a radical project of late Enlightenment. It's a project concerned with the routinization of utopia.³⁰

In this respect, it probably does have this religious quality. For me, Red Vienna is very fundamentally a parallel initiative to the depth-psychological project of Sigmund Freud, in its attempt to fashion subjects out of objects from the proletarian collective. That, for me, is what comprises the radical Enlightenment perspective. It has to do with setting free the elements of a future society in the here and now. There haven't been many other experiments that took this form, the implementation of a concrete utopia in the midst of a ruthlessly hostile environment. By this environment I also mean the Great Depression, as of 1929. **Lichtenberger** To my mind, concepts like "laboratory" or "experiment" are only partially plausible. A laboratory presupposes ideal conditions. You organize an experiment and in this way test theories. If something doesn't work, you repeat it. That's the one side. On the other side, there were—in the social sciences, in pedagogy, individual psychology or psychoanalysis—actual attempts at transforming theories into praxis, in which case concepts like laboratory or experiment would again be applicable. Veronika Duma and I, in our research, used the concept of "reform projects" or "radical-reformist projects." A lot of questions that were posed in Red Vienna we still consider current. This concerns questions about the redistribution of societal wealth, the accessibility of social and public infrastructure, the reorganization of relations of production, the right to housing. **Rásky** I still want to come back to the role of the religious in Red Vienna. One, there is the question of how the Social Democratic city is

representing itself to the outside, but the other question pertains to the Party itself. It experienced huge growth after 1918. And so the problem of cohesion emerged. Prior to this, ratio had dominated; but with the massive inundation of the Party, the influx of people, many of whom came from the provinces and had a religious background, increasingly, as a method of communicating, this elevated or lofty rhetoric came into play, and with it, a paternalistic element. **Konrad** But who is the avant-garde? Naturally, it's the Party leadership, and the question becomes: how to disseminate Austromarxist concepts to the Party's base?³¹ Here's where contradictions arise. The avant-garde is often two steps ahead of public opinion. For instance, apartment buildings with communal kitchens: These couldn't work because the family structure was not yet ready for them.³² And this contradiction was offset, in my view, by putting the model of Red Vienna out of reach of dispute, elevating it and at the same time trying to squeeze from it as much modernization potential as possible. It's a two-sided process. For this reason, the mayor of Vienna, Karl Seitz, was also called "the Maker." Who would use a term like that

31. [See translator's note for details on Austromarxism.—Trans.]

32. The idea underpinning the apartment buildings with communal kitchens, or *Einküchenhäuser*, was to centralize domestic labor and in this way relieve some of the burden on working women. One Viennese *Einküchenhaus*, Heimhof (in Pilgeringasse in the fifteenth district), was built between 1921 and 1923, according to plans drawn up by Otto Polak-Hellwig. Its original design featured twenty-five micro-apartments that shared a single, central kitchen and one dining room. The cleaning of apartments was likewise centralized.

today? But at the time, it seemed necessary to insist that it was sacrosanct, what the ones up top said. And that, in fact, is a paternalistic approach. **Maderthaner** Why don't we try to clarify some of the background concepts in the lineage of Red Vienna? Red Vienna is, first, a project of pedagogization; second, a project of hygienization; and, third, a project of democratization. The last seems to me the most enduring. So let's take a look at the theoretical elite of social democracy. They come predominantly from the upper middle class, are often assimilated Jews, and they bring with them a very particular concept: education, the cultivation of the self. This is conveyed very clearly by one term that you will often encounter reading Otto Bauer³³—the “will to culture.” From the quasi-uneducated barbarians an intellectually alert elite must emerge. And all the cultural treasures, particularly those of the German Enlightenment, must be provided to it. This alert elite could then further cultivate those qualities that would enable it to lead a social democracy. Those are concepts coming out of Vienna circa 1900, from a German culturalism which was sustained by an assimilated Jewry.

33. [Otto Bauer (1881–1938) was a leading intellectual figure in the “Austro-Marxist” Social Democratic movement. He was forced into exile following the suppression of the Social Democratic Uprising in 1934, though he continued to organize from Czechoslovakia, then Belgium, then Paris, where he died of heart failure. Bauer was also an avowed nationalist and pan-Germanist.—Trans.]

34. [The so-called *Anschluss* refers to the “annexation” of Austria to Nazi Germany in March 1938, though the idea is quite a bit older. The question of who belongs to Germany—which attempted to define German identity in both linguistic and cultural terms—dates back to the era of German national unification in 1871. Following the dissolution of Austria-Hungary in 1918, the short-lived Republic of German-Austria attempted to unify with Germany, but postwar international treaties forbade this in 1919. Still, pan-German sentiment persisted to an extent, including among leading Red Viennese intellectuals, and the idea of *Anschluss* remained an object of some political debate, notwithstanding the Nazi party was officially banned in Austria between 1933 and 1938. See also translator’s note, fn 3.—Trans.]

35. [Educational Work.—Trans.]

Red Vienna is difficult to understand if we don’t have in view its own cultural lineage. Though to what extent that was translated into praxis is a matter of debate. **Konrad** But you also have to tell the darker sides of this story. It wasn’t just German, but German nationalist cultural assets at issue. There was a strong German nationalist component that would later prove calamitous, like you can see in the meager resistance to the idea of the *Anschluss*³⁴ and in the eugenic rudiments in the sphere of hygiene policy. In these cases, one came up against boundaries—not to mention overstepped them—that today we are very sensitive to. **Rásky** Isn’t it exactly this culturalistic concept that failed? **Konrad** I don’t believe so! **Maderthaner** It’s the economic concept that failed, under the enormous pressure of the Depression, in fact. **Rásky** But this almost religious elevation of educational activity also at some point stopped being accepted. One example is the magazine *Bildungsarbeit*,³⁵ in which there was this rubric of “wrong ways.” The magazine was denouncing what was de facto happening in reality. You can observe how these high German culture-oriented concepts were no longer taken for relevant. It becomes

very clear after the July Revolt in 1927.³⁶ The youth, like Ernst Fischer, had completely new ideas that no longer conformed with this reiterating of older notions of culture. They were more concerned with topics like sexuality, new media, new aesthetic ideas. A real turn was happening. **Bauer** I want to pause a moment on this rubric of “wrong ways.” There was a lot of criticism in the air, about how Party assembly spaces were designed, or the fact that Gumpoldskirchen wine was served at a “Friends of Children” event. This experiment, in teaching the people how they should live, was battled out in public. Today, it would be hard to imagine such a public castigation of the work of a Party section. **Maderthaler** Much of what Béla says is true. In the 1930s, a new kind of youth really did emerge that was precisely the product of these concepts of education. But one point seems to me to come up short, in the context of the breakdown or failure of Red Vienna: And that is the collapse of the cultural and the social as a consequence of the total collapse of the economic. That’s not limited to Red Vienna; that’s a global phenomenon and the result of the first worldwide crisis of speculation and finance.

36. [The July Revolt, alternatively *Justizpalastbrand* (Palace of Justice fire), refers to a Social Democratic protest action in July 1927. A skirmish between right- and left-wing paramilitary forces had resulted in the death of two civilians. Three members of the right-wing paramilitary group were indicted then acquitted by jury trial. A general strike by the left followed the acquittal, which precipitated massive protests in the city center, during which protesters set fire to the Palace of Justice. Armed police were deployed to forcibly disperse the protest, which led to the deaths of five police and eighty-nine civilians.—Trans.]

Vienna itself had managed to keep a balanced budget until 1933, but the consequences of doing so were fatal for Red Vienna's cultural and reform projects. Add to that the campaign of financial annihilation waged against the state of Vienna by a federal government already in the hands of Austrofascists. In debates like these, you have to consider these things. **Lichtenberger** What I find interesting in this is how the crisis was responded to, the austerity policy in particular, and how much we can still learn from that today. For instance: Greece. The experience of the 1930s shows very clearly how quickly an economic crisis, once it encroaches on politics, becomes a structural one, how quickly an authoritarian politics establishes itself, back then by emergency decree, today by a government of experts. **Konrad** I suppose we agree that it was these underlying circumstances that made Red Vienna susceptible to breakdown or failure in the first place. It didn't break down from within; it was brought down—through the so-called “self-elimination” of parliament—by a federal government that was already authoritarian by 1933, if not earlier.³⁷ **Maderthaner** And in the end, by military

37. [See translator's note for details on the “self-elimination” of parliament.—Trans.]

intervention. **Lichtenberger** Still, it has to be said that the insufficient democratization of the economy was also responsible for this. **Konrad** On a municipal level? **Lichtenberger** The concepts were there, like with Otto Bauer. The Social Democratic Party had always been waiting for the fifty-percent-plus-one vote in the general election. But they also could have gone ahead with democratizing the relations of production even without having this majority. In which case, it would have been possible to take different measures in the face of the economic crisis.

Schwarz There is a theory that the comprehensive claims to food and housing in Red Vienna had made the working classes unaccustomed to political struggle, that the streets, which had been such important spaces for political action during the time of opposition, had over time been lost. Was political competence lost as well? **Maderthaner** That's a fine intellectual construct. **Konrad** I agree! Levels of organization and mobilization actually increased. The municipal housing complexes enabled much better access to the approximately 200,000 people that lived in them. In these circumstances, considerably more could be rallied into the streets for a May Day demonstration than when the people were miserable and hungry.

Schwarz There's a scene from a 1925 film that I'd like to discuss as a possible image for Red Vienna. The film was made at the *Volksfest des Republikanischen Schutzbundes* on the Wil-

38. *Das dritte Volksfest des Republikanischen Schutzbundes der Ortsgruppe XVI* (AT 1925). <http://stadtfilm-wien.at/film/134/> (March 13, 2019). [A People's Festival hosted by the Schutzbund, the paramilitary arm of the Social Democratic Party. NB: Political parties in interwar Austria had paramilitary wings as a matter of course.—Trans.]

helminenberg and shows a group of tight-rope walkers.³⁸ Tight-rope walking: very attractive, spectacular, risky, a constant effort at maintaining equilibrium. It's a question of the various powers at play and, in general, of the dynamics in Red Vienna, in the administration, in the Party, etc. **Maderthaner** I'd say that the dynamics arose first from necessity and second from successes achieved right from the start, and then from utopian aspects. **Bauer** They were also looking, in Red Vienna, to examples from other countries, like the settlements in Germany. Only in that case, they weren't taking any half measures. Or take the public health city councilman Julius Tandler. He came back from a visit to the USA completely enthusiastic about Prohibition. They definitely stole some ideas. **Maderthaner** I wouldn't call it "stealing." These were manifestations of the moment. Urban modernity was relatively similar everywhere. **Rásky** With the question about the dynamics, another film occurs to me: *Sonnenstrahl* by Paul Fejos. The final scene takes place in the twentieth district, at the residential building Friedrich Engels Platz Hof. The residents' unprompted willingness to help a neighbor allows a young couple to make an

installment payment on a taxi, thus enabling the young husband to make his way as a small business owner.³⁹ I think that's a nice example of how, in an economic crisis, solidarity could be reconceived undogmatically. **Lichtenberger** Of course, you always have to look at the dynamics within the Party, too. One example, for me, are the women's organizations that, during the monarchy, fought to get women's suffrage passed and that argued against looking at gainful employment for women as exerting downward pressure on wages, which is actually how many of their own Party comrades saw women's suffrage at the time. **Konrad** Ever since the founding of the journal *Der Kampf*,⁴⁰ theoretical concepts were available in well-elaborated form. You can see how, after 1918, there was a marked change in subject matter, toward the interaction between theory and the necessities of everyday political life. When children are dropping like flies and have to be packed off to Denmark or Switzerland just in order to survive, then it's clear that you need a radical concept of public health. That creates the dynamics. Or when you know how the workers in the city's outer districts are living, then you know something has to be done.

39. *Sonnenstrahl* [A Ray of Sunshine] (AT 1933, dir.: Paul Fejos).

40. [The Struggle. A Social Democratic Party organ published monthly in Vienna between 1908 and 1934.—Trans.]

Maderthaner During this first phase, mortality rates were incredibly high. The number of dead amounted to 120,000 by the end of the war and in the period shortly thereafter; that's the population of an entire district in Vienna. Out of 290,000 school children examined, 270,000 were undernourished to varying degrees. Something had to be done, socio-technologically too. And that's why they appointed a eugenicist, Julius Tandler, to lead the city's public health council. He brought concepts with him that were aimed at producing an improved human being. He took healthy mothers, healthy children as a starting point; also preventative medicine, preemptive welfare, so to speak.

Bauer Tandler wants to fight sickness, not the sick. **Maderthaner** But it's beyond debate that welfare has a disciplining quality. The municipal children's congregate care home⁴¹ was a huge cultural advance and, at the same time, an instrument of discipline.

Schwarz Do the dynamics of Red Vienna develop, at least at the beginning, out of crisis management? **Konrad** Yes, but highly enlightened and highly social. To my mind, the term "crisis management" would be too

41. [The *Kinderübernahmestelle* was a municipal facility akin to a halfway house. This was a first point of contact for children who had been removed from homes deemed unsuitable or dangerous. Here they were observed scientifically for some time before a decision was made as to whether they could be returned to their families or sent to an orphanage for adoption.—Trans.]

neutral. It had to do with an attempt to manage this crisis in such a way that the social and enlightened concept could be implemented. It wasn't passive, but very active. **Bauer** We shouldn't forget that the question of the dynamics didn't concern the administration alone but also the tightly knit infrastructure provided by Social Democratic associations, such as the "Friends of Children," or the "Friends of Nature,"⁴² which also offered their own public-health and education programming. **Lichtenberger** Not to mention the Workers' Funerary Association *Die Flamme*, which developed a counter-concept to Catholicism. That's interesting for two reasons: one, because of the socio-political aspect, since burial insurance allowed families to avoid high costs, and two, because of the symbolic aspect, to juxtapose another narrative against the Catholic one. **Rásky** But wasn't all of this just copied? I mean, the workers' whole festival culture. Whenever the Social Democrats didn't really rise to the challenges of the new society, that's where they failed, where it broke down. With the *Weihespiele*⁴³ and other types of festivals. More convincing, to my mind, are the activities that took place toward the end of Red

42. [*Kinderfreunde* (Friends of Children) and *Naturfreunde* (Friends of Nature) were originally founded in the early twentieth century as non-governmental organizations designed to promote child health and welfare and environmental preservation and leisure activities, respectively; both were later incorporated into the Social Democratic Workers' Party, and *Kinderfreunde* remains a part of the Social Democratic Party of Austria to this day.—Trans.]

43. [*Weihespiele* (consecration plays) are often large-scale performances depicting religious (Catholic) themes, typically for mass audiences. These plays had their roots in medieval mystery plays; Nazi festivals later adapted the form to cultic rather than Catholic ideas.—Trans.]

44. [The Red Players. A theater troupe comprised of workers, urban and agricultural.—Trans.]

Vienna, when they began working with new forms, like political cabaret, as did *Die roten Spieler*.⁴⁴ For me, those were successful projects, but they were impeded by Party leadership, because they were radical-left and the activists were in contact with the Communists. **Bauer** I find the term “copy” somewhat unfair. The bourgeoisie had the opportunity, since the Biedermeier period⁴⁵ at the latest, to go on outings to the countryside. Quite a long time had to pass before the workers were able to enjoy the same thing on the weekends. **Konrad** In their structure, they were actually copied. It’s true, the “Friends of Nature” built lodges that mimicked the bourgeois Alpine Club. But what should they have done: built a municipal housing complex on the Rax⁴⁶ instead? **Maderthaner** Isn’t it always just a matter of expression of the *Zeitgeist*? Red Vienna built a crematorium in 1923. That’s an unparalleled cultural break. But what was really radically new was how women were being represented publicly. The women gymnasts on May First, in shorts and t-shirts, their hair in bobs, that for me is a qualitative leap.

Schwarz There’s the fascinating study of women industrial workers by Käthe Leichter,

45. [“Biedermeier” refers to an approximately thirty-year period between 1815 and 1848 in Central Europe, during which the region underwent industrial urbanization, accompanied by a rise in the bourgeois middle class, whose attendant leisures became a prime mover of arts and culture. Biedermeier is an umbrella term referring to the dominant styles in a range of fields of aesthetic production.—Trans.]

46. [A mountain range in the Austrian Alps.—Trans.]

who showed, on the basis of a comprehensive survey, that by 1931 working women had only just begun to profit, or profited not at all, from Red Vienna's reform projects.⁴⁷ This pertained to housing, to raising children, and to leisure time. But you can also credit Red Vienna for having supported emerging social research through the close observation and monitoring of what was actually being achieved. I'd like to discuss the theory that Red Vienna also failed because its own media, its political advertising, had so ideally fantasized the world that the distance became too great between it and reality. Siegfried Mattl spoke of Red Vienna as a "brand" and of the birth of "politics from the spirit of advertising."⁴⁸ **Konrad** Let's not forget we're talking about a timeframe of around a good decade. If you compare it with other utopian projects, then, in my view, Red Vienna accomplished a lot more than might have been expected in 1919. Of course, there's a discrepancy between utopia and lived reality. And you can ask critically what actually happened at the laundry, but there was this effort to minimize the discrepancy. Let's picture the scenario without the world economic crisis, and hence without fascism, and imagine Red

47. Käthe Leichter: *So leben wir . . . 1320 Industriearbeiterinnen berichten über ihr Leben. Eine Erhebung* [How we live . . . 1,320 women industrial workers report about their lives. A survey], Vienna 1932.

48. Cf. Siegfried Mattl: *Die Marke "Rotes Wien". Politik aus dem Geist der Reklame* [The "Red Vienna" Brand: The Birth of Politics from the Spirit of Advertising], in: Wolfgang Kos (ed.): *kampf um die stadt. politik, kunst und alltag um 1930*. Exhibition catalog, Wien Museum, Vienna 2009, pp. 54–63.

Vienna had had one more decade. It would be interesting how we might be talking about it. **Lichtenberger** Among Red Vienna's successes I would count the many ideas that are still valid today. This very short span of time was unbelievably inspired. Let's consider what's left of the most recent ten years of government or city policy. It just doesn't compare. I asked my students what they thought might be the legacy of the current Viennese Red-Green municipal coalition government after ten years. It was shocking. The most frequent answer: Mariahilfer Straße. Then a few suggested maybe Seestadt.⁴⁹ **Rásky** It astounds me how little Red Vienna is remembered. It's true for tourism, too. I once tried to find a postcard of Karl Marx Hof. But there weren't any. **Bauer** We have them in the museum! **Rásky** But why is so little attributed to Red Vienna today? I'm thinking about the present city government as well. **Bauer** A lot does still exist: kindergartens, the welfare system, these don't need to be remembered. **Maderthaner** Actually the discussion of Red Vienna was once livelier. I was lucky enough to collaborate on a Red Vienna exhibition in the 1980s; the reactions at the time were powerful. Several hundred

49. [The Red-Green Coalition refers to the coalition government of the Social Democratic Party with the Green Party, both on the left of the political spectrum. Mariahilfer Straße is a popular commercial shopping district near the Vienna city center; Seestadt is a residential-commercial housing development project begun in 2010, located outside the city center as a designed suburban space.—Trans.]

thousand visitors, that's unimaginable today. But I'd also like to underscore what Lilli said. We continue to be proud every year that Vienna is ranked the most livable city in the world. A lot of that is the after-effect of Red Vienna. On the other hand, we live inside a previously unimaginable hegemonic neoliberal order. Today we can only speculate what might have been, had Red Vienna had strong partners. But it was essentially on its own. When and where else would it have worked, turning a social utopia into a reality? Maybe in the American student movement of the 1960s and 1970s.

Lichtenberger If we're asking what all was achieved, couldn't we also ask what else might have been achieved? When it comes to childcare, housing. It's true that the municipal housing sector in Vienna does depress average rents, but there is nevertheless a steep rise in rents and housing costs across the board. So you always have to ask: What can you justifiably invoke? What can you be proud of? What should you defend? If you consider what was accomplished in this one decade, under such difficult circumstances, then it looks like a whole lot more could still be possible today.

Rásky Red Vienna is indeed inscribed into the image of the city, but it still hasn't attained the status in collective memory that other epochs have. **Maderthaner** Yes, but at the same time, you can't overlook the civilizational ruptures of 1934 and 1938. **Konrad** As a non-Viennese in this conversation, yes, I find that the historical consciousness, that memory, is still very much alive in Vienna, in contrast to other cities. It's difficult to think of another place where a social experi-

ment so inscribed itself into the city and into daily memory. That this building where we're having this debate even exists—you can't take things like that for granted these days.