

Becoming Liberals Education, Revolution and State Service, c.1830–1861 Jonathan Kwan

In the Budget debate of February 1882 the long-term liberal leader Eduard Herbst gave an impassioned speech against Count Eduard Taaffe's conservative coalition government. Herbst pointed to the piecemeal, localized political deals of the Taaffe government as demoralizing the bureaucracy and endangering the traditions of the Austrian state. Herbst drew attention to his four years working in the Lower Austrian Finance-Procuration office, the legal department of the governorate, as giving an insight into inner workings of the Austrian state and its culture.

I knew the time of the *Vormärz*. I knew the bureaucracy in the unified Court Chancellery and the Governor's division (*Gubernien*). I know the spirit of self-reliance and loyal faithfulness to the inherited traditions [of Josephinist state unity] that prevailed in these institutions even in the time of absolutist regimes. Truly, a State like Austria, a polyglot State, where the centrifugal powers and elements are only too strong; in such a State there is a requirement for a powerful bureaucracy with a State conscience, not one infused with national convictions.¹

Herbst continued in this very personal vein:

We will stand up for our old Austria, as we have done during the twenty years of parliamentary activity [...] We have here the illustrious models of the great Regents Maria Theresa and Emperor Joseph. They created Austria. It is this Austria – given form by our illustrious forerunners, the Monarchs – and these Theresian and Josephinist ideas, to which the Germans in Austria will remain steadfastly faithful.²

In 1882 Herbst was sixty-one years old with a long parliamentary career behind him as well as a productive, though turbulent, stint as Justice Minister. The 1880s were difficult years of opposition for the liberal party (commonly referred to as the Constitutional Party), which had through its myriad of factions formed the majority in parliament from 1861 to 1879, governing for nearly all of the period. Herbst and his colleagues – near the end of their distinguished public careers – often spoke of their formative influences, the core beliefs of the liberal movement and the future of the Austrian state.

For example, a few years earlier, Herbst, in a feuilleton on the front page of the main liberal Viennese newspaper, *Neue Freie Presse*, had again evoked his time in the Finance-Procuration office during the 1840s. He described the handwritten notes from Maria Theresa and Joseph II as "gold-dust" teaching young bureaucrats about the Austrian state idea.³ Indeed, in a remarkable conjunction of talent, future liberal leaders and ministers Leopold Ritter von Hasner, Karl Giskra, and Josef Ritter (later Freiherr) von Lasser were all fellow junior officials in one department of the Lower Austrian legal office of the 1840s. Other future ministers also in the legal office, though in different departments, included Alexander (later Freiherr von) Bach, Johann Nepomuk Berger and Sigmund (later Freiherr von) Conrad. In effect, the older Herbst was highlighting this experience in the lower bureaucracy as an

¹ STENOGRAPHISCHE PROTOKOLLE ÜBER DIE SITZUNGEN DES HAUSES DER ABGEORDNETEN DES ÖSTERREICHISCHEN REICHSRATHES, IX. Session, 195. Sitzung am 16. Februar 1882, 6863. Taaffe's government was supported by a coalition of conservatives, Czech and Polish parties – the famous Iron Ring.

² STENOGRAPHISCHE PROTOKOLLE, IX. Session, 195. Sitzung am 16. Februar 1882, 6866.

³ *Neue Freie Presse*, 8 December 1880. The *Feuilleton* was written by Friedrich Schütz, a friend of Herbst, in honour of Herbst's 60th birthday.

important training ground for politicians, since it instilled the essence of the Austrian state, its traditions and ideals.

This article will focus on the formative experiences of the liberal politicians who emerged in 1848 and came to power in the 1860s and 1870s, many of whom would be government ministers responsible for constructing a constitutional Austria. It will try to place their experiences in the civil service and their ideas about the Austrian state within an overall trajectory of development. To some extent, it is the story of how the liberals emerged as the dominant political party and elite in the 1860s. Karl Mannheim's theory of generations will be used to analyze this particular political and social group.⁴ Mannheim stressed a certain schema underlying the formation of a generation as a "concrete group". According to Mannheim, when a process of dynamic destabilization disrupts societal patterns of experience and thought, the response is often a fundamental re-evaluation led by the youth of the day. Shared social and economic backgrounds (Mannheim uses the term *location*) coupled with common experiences at an early age create certain responses to the destabilization. This then forms a generation – in essence, a youthful cohort coping with upheaval through a number of shared, though sometimes conflicting, responses. A specific response based around an ideology, or, in Mannheim's words, "fundamental integrative attitudes and formative principles" can form a more compact sub-category or "generational unit".⁵ This shared ideological system often forges an intense bond amongst a cohort where certain slogans, symbols, words, ideas and actions are imbued with emotional significance. According to Mannheim, a "generational unit" is then formed. In this article I will use the term generation for Mannheim's technical term "generational unit", since the focus is on a specific liberal response and the formative experiences of future liberal politicians.

Seven key liberals will form the collective case study in this article. They would all become important political figures in the 1860s and 1870s. Knowledge of their background and development can provide an insight into the overall development of Austrian liberalism. To some extent, as well, the seven liberals were representative of a new generation (and elite) emerging out of the 1848 revolutions. They were born between 1811 and 1831 with the main grouping concentrated around 1820. Those born around 1820 include the Ministers, close friends and former lowly bureaucrats Hasner (1818), Herbst (1820) and Giskra (1820), who would be Ministers in the celebrated *Bürgerministerium* (1867–1870), the first ministry made up primarily of parliamentarians rather than aristocrats and high bureaucrats. The oldest to be discussed will be Moriz Edler (later Ritter) von Kaiserfeld (1811) and Josef Lasser (1815), while the younger members comprise Josef Unger (1828) and Eduard Suess (1831).⁶ This generation, which greatly marked the Monarchy's history and dominated political life for twenty years, has not been investigated in depth on an individual or group level.⁷ For example, there are no recent biographies for any of these seven figures.

⁴ MANNHEIM 1952.

⁵ MANNHEIM 1952, 305.

⁶ Particularly useful for the outlines of each individual have been the standard biographical dictionaries. Österreichisches Biographisches Lexikon, Constantin Wurzbach's Biographisches Lexikon des Kaisertums Österreichs, Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie, Neue Deutsche Biographie and most recently ADLGASSER 2014a, Other works on the background of individual liberals include POLLAK 1894–1898, SCHÜTZ 1909 and HARTMEYER 1949.

⁷ Amongst the books on Austrian liberalism FRANZ 1955 roughly covers this period but takes a thematic, generalized approach. There is much in Pieter Judson's rich book about new liberal rhetoric and practice, though he does not look at specific individuals or uses the concept of generations. JUDSON 1996, 1–10. The book contains a compelling new interpretation of Austrian liberalism's development. In my work on Austrian liberalism I followed the careers of Kaiserfeld, Herbst, Ernst von Plener, Adolf Fischhof and Heinrich Friedjung from 1861 to 1895 to give concrete examples of various themes over the course of thirty years. KWAN 2013.

This article makes two arguments. First, through shared experiences and a common core political programme, lasting and strong bonds were formed amongst the leading liberals. Much of the early historiography on the liberals, especially for the breakdown in the *Bürgerministerium*, emphasized liberal divisions, personal jealousies and factional differences.⁸ In fact, there was considerable ideological cohesion in the liberal movement – despite the obvious strong individualism and differing opinions – along with wide-ranging concrete achievements.⁹ In many respects, they formed a remarkably coherent generation. Nearly all had studied law, nearly all had their first experience of politics in 1848 and nearly all had worked in administrative positions either in the bureaucracy or with large landowners. Many knew each other from a young impressionable age, had common formative experiences and, above all, were fired with a shared overall political goal – to create a progressive, liberal, modern Austria.

The second argument is that the crucial formative experiences for the liberals were their participation in the 1848 revolutions and their reckoning with its multi-faceted legacy, often while working and progressing within the neo-absolutist system of the 1850s.¹⁰ It was not, as Herbst argued, the apprenticeship in the lower bureaucracy during the pre-revolutionary time which marked out and defined this generation. Herbst's purpose in presenting a stylized account of his and the other liberals' development was to attack and criticize Taaffe's government, rather than to reflect calmly and seriously on his formative experiences. In fact, on this generation of liberals, the 1848 revolutions left a lasting "imprint".¹¹ The 1848 revolutions evoked a common frame of reference and a sense of rupture with the past, leading to a form of generational consciousness.¹² This article will trace the formation of this generation, from their upbringings in the *Vormärz*, their experiences in 1848, through to their career progressions in the 1850s.

The oldest of the seven was Kaiserfeld, who, throughout his political life, remained essentially a provincial politician. He was born in the German "language island" of Pettau (Ptuj) in Lower Styria (present day Slovenia) on 24 January 1811. While the town was largely German speaking, forming a so-called German-language-triangle with Cilli (Celje) and Marburg (Maribor), the surrounding hinterland was overwhelmingly made up of Slovene speakers. Bilingualism, at varying levels of competence, was very common both within the town and in the countryside.¹³ Kaiserfeld came from a family with Slovene origins, which, through devotion to state service over the course of three generations had gradually assimilated into the Austro-German cultural and social world.¹⁴ His forefathers came from the nearby Cilli region and had the family name Blagotinšek. His grandfather, Franz Blagatinschegg, slightly Germanised the name and was extremely active as an Imperial Recruiting Commissioner in the Josephinist era, setting up three schools in the district and paying a state debt of 48 000 florins from his personal funds. His efforts did not go unrewarded. On 11 August 1817 he received a noble title, henceforth the family name became

⁸ The early accounts in general emphasize liberal divisions and disunity. For example POLLAK 1894–1898, I 206–224, KOLMER 1902, 362–363 and 388, CHARMAZ 1911, 85–100, REDLICH 1926, 638–671 and FRANZ 1955, 385–386. More balanced accounts include RUMPLER 2000, 674–712 and JUDSON 1996, 117–142.

⁹ This is what I argued in KWAN 2013, 7–13.

¹⁰ There is a short, impressionist sketch of generations in the 1848 revolution in LUTZ 1962. A similar approach is found in FEUER 1969, 68–74 and ESLER 1971, 96–117.

¹¹ This is the term used in JAEGER 1985.

¹² WOHL 1979, 210. I have paraphrased Wohl's general reflections on the nature of generations, though the focus of his book is on the 1914 generation.

¹³ Judson forcefully argues for the normalcy of bilingualism, and has written on this area of Lower Styria in the late nineteenth century. JUDSON 2006, 6 and 100–140.

¹⁴ The standard account of Kaiserfeld's life remains KRONES 1888. See also SUTTER 1986.

Blagatinschegg von Kaiserfeld. The family residence changed names from Dobje-Hofes to Rosenhof. Kaiserfeld's father, Franz Ludwig Blagatinschegg von Kaiserfeld, also entered state service, eventually reaching the level of Tax Inspector in 1840. Thus, in the course of three generations, the Slovene origins of the family gradually became obscured.

Kaiserfeld came from a typical successful, upper middle class family loyal to the Monarchy and to the values of service, education and hard work. His brothers became military officers, bureaucrats and lawyers.¹⁵ Kaiserfeld followed the standard education for his social class. He attended the Academic Gymnasium in Graz, where he was a good but not exceptional student, then studied philosophy and law (*Rechts-und Staatswissenschaft*) at the University of Graz. Unexpectedly, he did not take the state exams and instead became an administrator on various large estates. His biographer Franz Krones postulated that Kaiserfeld desired independence and wanted to live in the countryside.¹⁶ In 1837 he moved to Birkenstein, just north of Graz, and the next year married the estate's widow, Countess Clementine Manneville, who was nine years older than him. Kaiserfeld now began to move in aristocratic circles, though he retained his grounding in upper middle class values. His friends were mostly educated notables (*Honoratioren*) with whom he was connected either through common background, family connections, associational life or a shared education.¹⁷ They were members of the new emerging elite, not tied to extensive estates, mostly occupying prominent state positions and advancing primarily through education and merit.

In 1844 he and his family undertook an extensive trip through Vienna, Prague, rural Bohemia and the German lands (Dresden, Leipzig, etc.) to Belgium and France. Throughout he writes of the need for reform and "the spirit of the time":

Should Austria have reached its culmination point from which it can go no further, only backwards? While our neighbours, the Saxons and Bavarians, enjoy the blessings of a constitution, should we be incapable to judge and recognize for ourselves: what must be done to have a say where it concerns such high values as freedom and property? No, it will not stay like this, even if mean-spirited politics attempts to keep the status quo.¹⁸

It was an important trip for Kaiserfeld, who kept an extensive diary of his experiences.¹⁹ When visiting Leipzig, Kaiserfeld mused on the Battle of the Nations against Napoleon in 1813 and its effect on German national feeling: "From the Battle of Leipzig dates German unity, from it dates also German freedom."²⁰ Clearly the trip made him reflect on the condition of Austria in comparison with other countries, a process often crucial in forming a political education.²¹ For the younger upper middle class and aristocracy it was customary to travel as part of their general education and for many, especially before the onset of widespread railway travel, these lengthy trips were defining formative experiences.

Lasser was born in Weißenbach near Strobl, about 30 kilometres southeast of Salzburg, on 30 September 1814 and came from a distinguished noble family that had been in the Salzburg region for at least three centuries. He attended the Academic Gymnasium in Salzburg and then completed his doctorate in law at the University of Vienna. In 1839 he entered state service as a trainee in the Lower Austrian legal office where his talent as a bureaucrat was immediately apparent. His friend Hasner called Lasser a "true bureaucratic

¹⁵ Steiermärkisches Landesarchiv (StLA) Graz, Nachlass Kaiserfeld, Karton 1, H2.

¹⁶ KRONES 1888, 13.

¹⁷ KRONES 1888, 39. See also MARKO-STÖCKL 1993.

¹⁸ KRONES 1888, 23

¹⁹ StLA, Nachlass Kaiserfeld, Karton 2, H6.

²⁰ KRONES 1888, 29.

²¹ This point has been made by OAKESHOTT 1991, 64. Oakeshott's work will be used in greater depth later in this article.

genius”.²² He rose quickly through the bureaucratic ranks becoming an actuary in the General Court Chamber in 1847. Lasser’s trajectory was much more conventional than Kaiserfeld’s. An important difference and a turning point for Lasser was his university study in Vienna. From then onwards he was based in Vienna with his civil service career spent in the Imperial bureaucracy. Nevertheless, Lasser remained loyal to his roots in the region of Salzburg being elected there as representative to the Viennese parliament in 1848 and again in 1861, also participating in the Salzburg Diet from 1861 to 1871. Compared to Kaiserfeld, however, Lasser was more centralist, more committed to the Josephinist ideals of a unitary state. He was also more naturally a member of the governing elite.

Coming to the cohort born around 1820, Hasner was born in Prague on 15 March 1818. His father, ennobled in 1836, had been for decades a high-ranking bureaucrat in the Bohemian capital. Hasner attended the Academic Gymnasium in Prague’s Old Town and went on to Charles University where he completed his law studies in 1840. After having started his career in Prague, he moved to Vienna in 1842 and received his doctorate there in the same year. But he remained close to his hometown and represented it in the central parliament from 1861 to 1867, until he was named to the Upper House. Like Lasser, the move to Vienna prompted him to follow a more centralist, Imperial direction. Hasner had already become a civil service legal trainee while in Prague and he transferred to Vienna upon taking up study there. Hasner’s circle of friends revolved around his university and professional contacts.²³ He met Herbst at the University of Vienna and they quickly became close friends. Even as a young law student, Herbst was gaining a reputation for great learning and sharp debating skills.²⁴ After graduation both became assistant law professors in Vienna under Anton (later Freiherr) von Hye while also working in the Lower Austrian legal office. According to Hasner, ”in everything, [Herbst’s] sharp gift for observation and dialectic went straight to the heart of the matter.”²⁵ Later in the 1850s when they were both law professors in Prague, Hasner and Herbst shared a flat. They were friends in private life and colleagues in the political field.

Herbst was the dominant figure amongst the group of reform-minded law students at the University of Vienna in the late *Vormärz*. He was born in Vienna on 9 December 1820, though his family roots lay in Bohemia and were, apparently, Czech. His forefathers – with the family name Podzimek (early winter in Czech, hence Herbst) – fled Prague during the Thirty Years War and settled in Saaz (Žatec), in the North-West of Bohemia where his great grandfather, Johann Podzimek, occupied the distinguished position of Rector of Saaz’s schools. Herbst’s grandfather, in accordance with the family’s belief in education, was sent to Göttingen University where he studied medicine. Back in Austria, he settled in Baden near Vienna, changed his name to Herbst and set up a pharmaceutical practice. Herbst’s father – Karl Herbst – studied law in Vienna, married into an old Viennese middle class family and became wealthy as a private lawyer in the early nineteenth century.²⁶ Thus, like Kaiserfeld, Herbst’s family, originally Slavic in background, had over the course of time become assimilated into the educated, German-speaking higher social circles.

Herbst was initially educated at home, then attended the renowned *Schottengymnasium* where he was an outstanding student. He decided to follow his father’s path and enrolled in law (*Rechts-und Staatswissenschaft*). In his yearly university cohort of 1841 there were four future ministers – Herbst, Giskra, Conrad, Adolf Freiherr von Kriegs-Au – three of whom would also spend time in the Lower Austrian legal office. He graduated in 1843 as doctor of laws, immediately becoming an assistant at the university. By 1846 he was

²² MÜLLNER 1962, 3.

²³ See the comments in BAHR 1947, 4–7.

²⁴ HASNER 1892, 35.

²⁵ HASNER 1892, 56.

²⁶ See the summary in SCHÜTZ 1909, 80–82 and WYMETAL 1944, 4.

giving lectures at the university while also working in the civil service. He was already publishing legal essays and in 1847, at the age of twenty-seven, was named Professor of Legal Philosophy and Criminal Law (*Rechtsphilosophie und Strafrecht*) at Lemberg University. He quickly became friends there with the Governor of Galicia Franz Graf Stadion, even editing a relatively liberal official journal under Stadion's patronage. They spent evenings in Lemberg talking about politics and the future of the state, with Stadion filling the room with smoke from his strong cigarettes.²⁷ Stadion's determination and openness particularly impressed the young Herbst.²⁸

A fellow law student and life long friend of Herbst's was Giskra. Born on 29 January 1820 in Mährisch Trübau (Moravská Třebová) about sixty kilometres north of the Moravian capital Brünn, Giskra came from a German "language island", like Kaiserfeld. His father was a tanner in the provincial town and the family was relatively impoverished. Giskra attended gymnasium in Brünn before coming to Vienna for his legal studies. As students, he and Herbst would often go for Sunday walks together.²⁹ Compared to Herbst, who was cool, learned and sarcastic, Giskra was impassioned, impulsive and spontaneous – a natural speaker. He supposedly stated that "repose would be my death, I am a 'stormy bird' (*Sturmvogel*)."³⁰ He followed a similar path to Hasner and Herbst, completing his legal studies in 1843, becoming a university assistant and working in the lower civil service. Rumours of financial impropriety were already circulating about this popular young teacher at the university, especially when he embarked on a luxurious trip to Paris.³¹ Later, in 1875, Giskra's political career would effectively end with a sensational appearance at the Ofenheim corruption trial involving railways, monetary favours and ministerial patronage. In his testimony Giskra conceded to receiving substantial bribes, stating that "it is customary to accept gratuities."³²

The final two individuals to be investigated were slightly younger. Unger was born on 2 July 1828 in Vienna to a Jewish family. His father Martin, originally from Hungary, had pursued various business ventures in Vienna in order to obtain official tolerance for residence there. By 1829 he had lost his initial capital and his wife's dowry, yet still did not have a permanent right of residence. He was a broken man, now dependent on his wife's family, which ran a prosperous Bohemian business. Around this time the Unger family employed a personal tutor, Alois Czaslawski, who would later join the civil service though he continued to live with the Unger family. Martin Unger died in 1851 whereupon his widow Flora converted to Catholicism and promptly married the tutor Czaslawski in a Catholic service on 12 February 1852. Unger himself converted to Catholicism a few months later. He lived with his mother and his former tutor, now step-father until May 1880.³³

Unger was an exceptionally gifted student, though prone to depression. He attended the Academic Gymnasium from 1838 to 1844, achieved outstanding results, then commenced legal studies at the University of Vienna in 1846. His health had already led to a long stay in 1845–46 with relatives in Italy. Throughout his life he would periodically be affected by his nervous disposition. Nevertheless, his academic gifts were apparent and marked him for a bright future. The music critic Eduard Hanslick later recalled being introduced to Unger in a legal seminar with the accompanying words from Professor Hye: "Yes, don't you know, then,

²⁷ Neue Freie Presse, 8 December 1880.

²⁸ SCHÜTZ 1909, 87.

²⁹ CHARMATZ 1947, 86

³⁰ CHARMATZ 1947, 85.

³¹ HAINZ 1962.

³² JUDSON 1996, 91–92.

³³ These events are laid out in FRANKFURTER 1917, 42–47.

the brilliant (*genialen*) Unger?"³⁴ Unger was not even twenty when the 1848 revolutions broke out, but he quickly became immersed in student politics.

The final figure, Suess, was also heavily involved in the 1848 revolutions, despite being a sixteen-year old student at the Viennese Polytechnic Institute at the time. Born on 20 August 1831 in London into a relatively wealthy business family, Suess spoke English for the first years of his life. Only with the family's move back to Prague (his mother's hometown) did Suess learn German. Suess began gymnasium in Prague where he became friends with the son of the celebrated Czech historian František Palacký, even visiting the Palacký home frequently. His father moved to Vienna in 1845 to take over a leather factory and Suess continued his education at the Piarist Gymnasium in Vienna's Josefstadt before moving to the Polytechnic Institute.

On the cusp of the tumultuous events of 1848, then, how does this small group match Mannheim's schema? First, there was as yet no real dynamic destabilization. The catalyst had not yet occurred. There were, however, signs of underlying social and economic changes. Giskra's successive moves from his hometown, first to Brünn for gymnasium, then to Vienna for university highlight the increased access to transport. Kaiserfeld's entry into the minor aristocratic world demonstrates some social mobility. Certainly Unger's and Giskra's educational achievements from quite humble backgrounds point to a relatively open and meritocratic system, especially considering the Monarchy's general conservatism and the strong traditions of the Catholic church. In particular, despite the difficulties his father faced in obtaining official residence, Unger's ascent within the traditional system as a lower middle-class Jew indicates a world of increased opportunities for the highly educated, academically gifted young elite. Undoubtedly, landed wealth and family lineage still held the key to access to the highest rungs of Viennese society and to certain positions (especially around the Imperial Court and the diplomatic corps), yet in the wider world, wealth and ability were allowing some mobility and softening the traditional rigidity.³⁵ These processes were gradual but beginning to make a substantial impact, especially for the privileged few who could attain a university degree and progress through the civil service.

As for the particular social and economic standing shared by a generation, granting them similar opportunities – Mannheim's "location" – this potential generation of putative liberals required a certain level of wealth that would enable attendance at gymnasium followed by university, then the awkward period – sometimes lasting many years – until a suitable permanent and salaried position was found. Since education was so important for this generation, a certain shared bourgeois desire to improve personally and socially – at least to some extent – was also an important factor. It is interesting that inherited landed property did not feature amongst the background of the seven individuals. The fathers were either bureaucrats, from the free professions or businessmen. Finally, which common experiences could potentially influence or shape the collective generational reassessment of traditions and values in response to some future upheaval? The general pattern for these young liberals was gymnasium, then legal studies at the university followed by a stint in the civil service, possibly with an assistant position at a university as well. Only Suess of the seven did not study law. In a recent article Franz Adlgasser has shown how prevalent lawyers were in the early years of Austrian parliamentary life.³⁶ This was particularly the case for the liberals in comparison with the conservatives, who often relied on landed wealth or a background in the Church.

³⁴ Neue Freie Presse, 2 July 1898: Eduard Hanslick, Mit Unger (Persönliche Erinnerungen).

³⁵ For changing society in the *Vormärz* see JUDSON 1996, 11-28. For a similar view in relation to Germany, David Blackbourn in his book on nineteenth century Germany has sections on the *Vormärz* entitled "A Changing Society" and "The Development of Political Life". BLACKBOURN 1997, 106–137.

³⁶ ADLGASSER 2014b, 39–52.

What of the stint in the lower bureaucracy, so prominent in Herbst's recollections? In an essay published in 1951 entitled "Political Education", the political theorist and philosopher Michael Oakeshott stressed the "tradition of political behaviour" that is passed on by observation and imitation of elders.³⁷ For Oakeshott, abstract ideals communicated through formal education could not capture the essentials of political education. What was required was a practical everyday apprenticeship under the tutelage of experienced politicians steeped in a particular tradition. To some extent those years within the lower branches of the bureaucracy, learning the procedures, needs, habits, customs and thinking of the Austrian state from within were important to the budding liberals. As Herbst stated, it gave them a sense of the state and its traditions. Yet when the 1848 revolutions broke out they were still very young and lacking in experience, especially in positions of responsibility. Moreover, this experience in the lower bureaucracy did not appear decisive in determining the thinking and leading ideas of the young reformers.

As young men making their way in the world, a common experience was the influence of a mentor. Mentors serve, Oakeshott argues, as guides in the traditions of political (and other) behavior.³⁸ For the assistants and students in the legal faculty of Vienna University, Professor Hye was a trusted and popular teacher. Hye was born in 1807 – so about ten years older than the median for the generation – and became a full Professor in Law in 1842. While mainly staying far from political questions, Hye was generally in favour of academic freedom and he became a focal point for reformers. Hasner, Herbst and Giskra were assistants, while Unger would develop into his most famous student. Many stayed in regular correspondence with Hye for the rest of their lives.³⁹ Other examples of mentors were Unger's tutor turned step-father Czaslawski as well as his gymnasium teacher Wilhelm Podlaha, who possibly influenced Unger's conversion to Catholicism.⁴⁰ For Herbst, his conversations with Stadion clearly provided a stimulus for his political thinking. There does not seem to be any outstanding figure in the legal office of Lower Austrian civil service who inspired and guided the young trainees.

Another common experience for this generation was participation in associations. Typical was the involvement of Kaiserfeld who from a young age was a member of the Inner Austrian Industry Association, Styrian Agricultural Association and Styrian Music Society. Associational life provided forums for sociability, discussions and autonomous self-government.⁴¹ Reading associations gave members access to a large number of books (when prices were astronomical for those on an average income), newspapers and journals. One of the most prominent for the members of the younger educated elite in Vienna was the Legal-Political Reading Association formed in 1841. It was open to everyone and its early membership was only one-third lawyers, while there were physicians, historians, writers, musicians and many other professions in its ranks.⁴² Hasner, Herbst, Giskra and Lasser were members of the association in the *Vormärz*, while Unger was a prominent member later on. The number of books available rose enormously in the first few years and there were constant clashes with censorship authorities. The range of books went further than just legal titles and showed a tendency towards political works as well as many international newspapers and journals.

³⁷ OAKESHOTT 1991, 58–61.

³⁸ *IBID.* 62. Oakeshott uses the term elders.

³⁹ Österreichisches Staatsarchiv, Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Nachlass Hye, Karton 22.

⁴⁰ FRANKFURTER 1917, 45–46, 77–79.

⁴¹ See for example the discussion in HOFFMANN 2006 and the classic account of the development in HABERMAS 1989.

⁴² BRAUNEDER 1992, v, vii.

On the eve of the 1848 Revolution, then, this generation did not have a sharp profile.⁴³ There was a general desire for reform amongst much of the educated youth but it was disparate, undeveloped and lacking focus. Moreover, their shared educational, professional and social experiences were not substantially different from before. While there were some signs of society and the economy changing, there was no destabilization or defining common experience for the generation. This all changed, however, when news of the Revolution in Paris led to calls for reform by the Hungarian parliament, convening at nearby Pressburg (Pozsony, today Bratislava).

The revolution broke out in Vienna in the second week of March 1848 and quickly gathered momentum. Kaiserfeld was in Styria, Herbst was in Lemberg, while Lasser, Hasner, Giskra, Unger and Suess were all in Vienna. Significantly, at the outset, the two young students Unger and Suess were the most heavily involved in the street marches, committee meetings and public demonstrations. Suess recalled how word spread that students should meet at the University at 9 am on 13 March 1848, the day the Lower Austrian Diet would convene. He and his fellow Polytechnic students marched to the University where the atmosphere was "serious and determined".

An indescribable feeling of brotherhood, of freedom and of love for the Fatherland, of elation and of willingness to die for the cause (*Todesmut*) enflamed us. Of course, there was also a boundless over-estimation of the cultural and intellectual condition of humanity. That is the golden privilege of youth – the ethical glory of such a movement and, at the same time, its danger.⁴⁴

Suess was in the streets with the crowds for the next few days as the students took control of the city. A student committee comprising members from the main university and the Polytechnic Institute was formed, and both Unger and Suess were members. Outside the university, the Legal-Political Reading Association exerted considerable influence and gave the slightly older age group a forum and focal point. Professor Hye was prominent, as were Giskra, Bach (soon to be Justice and Interior Minister), Berger (later Minister without Portfolio in the *Bürgerministerium*), Ignaz Kuranda (editor of the progressive journal *Die Grenzboten* and future liberal leader), amongst many others. The general demands were for press freedom, a constitution and a National Guard, though the exact details and form of implementation were still unclear. As the revolution continued, widened and deepened, Giskra, Suess and Unger served first on the central committee, then on the security committee.⁴⁵ Giskra in particular gave fiery, pro-democracy speeches at the university.⁴⁶ On 15 and 16 May 1848, Giskra, Unger and Suess were members of the delegation that met with the Minister of the Interior Franz Freiherr von Pillersdorff demanding a constitution to be drafted by an elected constituent assembly.

These demands as well as general unrest in the streets prompted Emperor Ferdinand and the court to flee to Innsbruck. The May Days in Vienna provoked some more cautious reformers into questioning the direction of events. Initially, Hasner had welcomed the changes but the turbulent situation in Vienna prompted him to leave the National Guard and return to Prague.⁴⁷ He then took on the editorship of the *Prager Zeitung* offered by the Bohemian Governor Leo Graf Thun-Hohenstein, a politically-minded aristocrat, high ranking bureaucrat and intellectual inspired by the Catholic Enlightenment. From 1 July 1848 to 31 October 1849

⁴³ There is a short sketch of student life just before 1848 in ESLER 1971, 103–106.

⁴⁴ SUESS 1916, 27–28.

⁴⁵ There is some debate about Unger's involvement on the security committee. FRANKFURTER 1917, 53–55.

⁴⁶ SCHÜTZ 1909, 57.

⁴⁷ BURIAN 1974 and BAHR 1947, 8–9.

Hasner participated in everyday politics as a journalist, often writing the paper's lead articles. In general, he espoused a constitutional monarchy with administrative and territorial unity. This was a Josephinist vision of an integrated Austrian *Gesamtstaat* fulfilling its role as a European "Great Power". Hasner's aversion to revolutionary upheaval and belief in a strong state was evident in his later support for the dissolution of the Austrian Parliament and for the issuing of Stadion's moderate March 1849 constitution. Stadion even tried recruiting Hasner for the official government paper but Hasner refused on ethical grounds.

Kaiserfeld, too, regretted the radical turn of events and from his base in Graz refused to recognize the Viennese Security Committee's jurisdiction in any provincial matters.⁴⁸ His views were neatly distilled in the phrase he used against the Security Committee in July 1848: "Freedom has its limits – and that is the law!"⁴⁹ From the beginning of the revolution, Kaiserfeld had published a series of anonymous articles in the *Grenzboten* and the *Grazer Zeitung*. He had also participated in the Styrian Diet since its first meeting on 13 June 1848. In a number of articles at the end of November and the beginning of December, Kaiserfeld attempted to summarize his opinion of the Revolutions. His views mixed bourgeois fears of revolutionary radicalism with a belief in gradual reform and a commitment to the Austrian state, in particular its foundation on German language and culture. He was against a *Großdeutschland* based on the Frankfurt Parliament and in favour of reconciliation with the various Austrian nationalities. According to Kaiserfeld, Austria had to become, above all, a true *Rechtsstaat*.⁵⁰ Despite the radicalism in the streets of Vienna, the Slav Congress in Prague and the escalating war in Hungary, Kaiserfeld continued to have faith in Austria's cultural mission of bringing liberal values and Western culture to the East.⁵¹ Kaiserfeld's views were very close to Hasner's, though less centralist. In general, the liberal opinion from the provinces was in support of reform but wary of radicalism.⁵²

Elections for the Frankfurt Parliament occurred in April and May 1848 while elections for the Austrian Reichstag were held in early July 1848. These democratic processes moved authority from provisional committees towards more formal representative assemblies, shifting the balance from youth towards more established figures. Both Unger and Suess now took a backseat. Unger, possibly because of his nerves, went to his grandmother's home in Gräfenberg (Gräfenberk) in Austrian Silesia. Suess now sat in the galleries of the Riding School Hall on the *Michaelerplatz* following the debates of the *Reichstag* on the future of the Monarchy. Herbst, too, sat in the galleries. He had returned to Vienna in the early months and had heard Lajos Kossuth speak, later stating that "to speak like that would be worth the efforts of an entire life!"⁵³ There were rumours that Stadion, now Interior Minister, would make Herbst a Head of Department (*Sektionschef*). This never eventuated and Herbst soon returned to Lemberg.

Lasser, who was thirty-four years old with considerable experience in the civil service, was elected both to Frankfurt and to Vienna. He opted for Vienna and sat on the left, though near the centre. He participated in the important constitutional and financial committees – then in September 1848 became a Vice-President of the *Reichstag*. He also presented a draft and made a notable speech in the groundbreaking discussions on the emancipation of the peasants. In November 1848, when the whole parliament moved to the provincial town of Kremsier (Kroměříž), Lasser followed. He continued to participate in

⁴⁸ KRONES, 1888, 65.

⁴⁹ Quoted in SUTTER 1986, 262.

⁵⁰ KRONES 1888, 72–74.

⁵¹ KRONES 1888, 73–74.

⁵² See for example the description given by Suess of his trip to Upper Austria and his meeting with the peasants there. SUESS 1916, 60.

⁵³ KRONES 1888, 89.

important discussions, including the constitutional committee, but Lasser, like Hasner, was firm in his centralism and support of a strong state.

The Frankfurt Parliament ran parallel to the Austrian Reichstag and dealt with a wide variety of matters, including the vexing and complicated question of German unification. Giskra, at the centre of action in the early days of the revolution in Vienna, was elected by the students to the Frankfurt Preparatory Parliament and then by his hometown Mährisch Trübau to the official assembly. He quickly made his name as a powerful and passionate speaker. Initially Giskra was fired by revolutionary idealism hoping for "Greater Germany" including the Austrian lands, with the remaining parts of the Monarchy – principally Hungary, Croatia, Northern Italy and Galicia – sharing the Monarch in a personal union. In a celebrated speech he coined the phrase: "No Prussia, no Austria – one Germany!"⁵⁴ He gradually moved towards a stronger Austrian patriotism and a defense of the Monarchy as a *Gesamtstaat*.⁵⁵ Kaiserfeld also attended the Frankfurt Parliament, though not from its inception. In December 1848 he was elected as a replacement representative, arriving in Frankfurt on 30 January 1849. Kaiserfeld quickly felt uncomfortable with the "hyper radical Doctors, such as Giskra and Berger" and kept company with the more moderate representatives from Tyrol, Upper Austria and Salzburg.⁵⁶ Kaiserfeld felt out of place in Frankfurt and confessed that he no longer was a democrat.⁵⁷ His experiences in Frankfurt were an important step in his turn towards a more conservative liberalism. In general, Kaiserfeld was never overly committed to the work of the parliament and he left Frankfurt on 14 April 1849 to return to his estate in Styria.

By the middle months of 1849, in the many theatres of the revolution in Central Europe, the momentum for change was slowing, even turning. In early March the Austrian *Reichstag* in Kremsier was dissolved, shortly after it had produced a constitutional draft. Stadion's moderately progressive March constitution issued shortly afterwards did not make use of the constitutional committee's draft. Lasser, who was in discussions with Stadion, had counseled some parliamentary involvement in the new constitution but Stadion's constitution was decreed by the new Emperor Franz Joseph, rather than passed by a constituent assembly. Lasser was offered a post in the Interior Ministry under Stadion and decided to take it:

How would opposition help now? I don't agree with everything but how would dissatisfaction help? I am, above all, attempting to provide remedies, to avert and to improve; not simply to criticize and generate displeasure.⁵⁸

Lasser's subsequent rise in the civil service was meteoric. In August 1849 he became a Ministerial advisor and in the next years provided trusted support for the new Interior Minister Bach. Lasser was named Head of Department (*Sektionschef*) on 10 November 1859, following the fall of Bach, then became Minister without Portfolio, heading the Justice Ministry on 20 October 1860 in Anton Ritter von Schmerling's mildly liberal, bureaucratic government. He was instrumental in drafting the 1861 February Patent that set up a central parliament. In the subsequent elections he was immediately elected to the Salzburg Diet and the Imperial *Reichsrat* in 1861 as well as remaining in government, now as State Minister (or Minister for Political Administration).

Herbst had not been directly involved in the revolution and at the resumption of the university year returned to his professorship in Lemberg. His rise in the academic world was swift: Rector and Pro-rector in 1853/4, then Dean of the Law Faculty in 1857. His two-

⁵⁴ SCHÜTZ 1909, 53.

⁵⁵ HAINZ 1962, 32–45

⁵⁶ KRONES 1888, 89.

⁵⁷ KRONES 1888, 93.

⁵⁸ MÜLLNER 1962, 16.

volume handbook on Austrian criminal law appeared in 1855 and cemented his reputation in legal circles. Three years later he moved to Prague University as Professor of Criminal Law and Jurisprudence and was elected Dean of the Law Faculty in 1859. His old friend Hasner had already been named Professor of Legal Philosophy at the same school in October 1849, a position created by his protector and the new Minister for Education, Count Thun-Hohenstein. Hasner would become Professor of National Economy in 1851 and served as Dean of the Law Faculty in 1852. In Prague the two old friends shared a flat, frequented coffeehouses and discussed Austria's situation. They also both participated in the wave of Schiller Celebrations in 1859, giving speeches alongside their Czech colleagues.

University life provided a refuge for Unger as well. After 1848 he followed the example of his good friend – and later University and ministerial colleague – Julius Glaser by registering as a student at a foreign university.⁵⁹ Glaser had gone to Zurich while Unger chose Königsberg, Kant's University in the far North East of Prussia, where he completed a degree in philosophy, writing a dissertation strongly influenced by Hegelian thought.⁶⁰ Aspects of Hegelian thought persisted in Unger's work, even as he moved towards the German historical school of jurisprudence exemplified by Friedrich Carl von Savigny, the long-term Professor of Roman Law at the University of Berlin.⁶¹ Unger returned to Vienna in 1850 to complete his law degree, which he passed on 4 November 1852. The examination board recognized his academic gifts by allowing him to give lectures in Vienna upon graduation. Shortly afterwards he was named extraordinary Professor in Civil Law at Prague University – at the tender age of 25. Minister Thun-Hohenstein, who had been following Unger's work, had made the appointment. The minister was seeking to change the basis of university legal methodology from the old positivist, rational traditions to the burgeoning historical-philosophical school.

Unger's astonishingly swift career progression is all the more remarkable considering his past as a revolutionary and a Jew. The official attitude towards his actions in 1848 is contained in the ministerial report prepared for Unger's appointment as Professor in Prague. It stated that during the events of 1848 he had generally held a distance from radical actions and had withdrawn from the scene after the May Days.⁶² Following the appointment in Prague his Jewish past was raised by a few clerical newspapers, which expressed general concern at the potential influence of "free thinkers" on young developing minds. Minister Thun-Hohenstein was motivated to write an anonymous defence in the *Wiener Zeitung* where he conceded Unger's revolutionary past and Jewish background yet stated that he had always been far from anarchist tendencies and had left Vienna quite early. In addition, Thun-Hohenstein wrote that the Protestant idea of freedom of research would not be introduced in Austrian universities. The purpose of Unger's appointment, the minister asserted, was simply to promote the historical school of jurisprudence and to aid domestic talent.⁶³

In Prague Unger moved in the same circles as Hasner and Herbst. After two years there he returned to the University of Vienna as *extraordinarius* Professor. In the same year he went on a trip to Berlin with his friend, the music critic Hanslick, and met his intellectual forefather Savigny.⁶⁴ Unger's rapid ascent was crowned with a full Professorship (*ordinarius*)

⁵⁹ Glaser and Unger were well known in Vienna as being the best of friends. Glaser was also a convert from Judaism. See the heartfelt tribute UNGER 1885.

⁶⁰ In his fragmentary reflections at the end of his life Unger acknowledged Hegel as one of his intellectual heroes. UNGER 1909, 20.

⁶¹ For an overview of Unger's legal methodology and thinking see SCHERL 2005.

⁶² FRANKFURTER 1917, 55–57.

⁶³ FRANKFURTER 1917, 89–93.

⁶⁴ Neue Freie Presse, 2 July 1898: Eduard Hanslick, Mit Unger. It should be noted that Hanslick, a native of Prague, was taught journalism by Hasner. SCHÜTZ 1909, 74. Hanslick would later become

in Civil Law at the University of Vienna in 1857. Around this time, he was in the process of writing and publishing his key work on Austrian Private Law, which, though remaining unfinished, would eventually encompass three weighty volumes appearing in 1856, 1864 and 1868. Already, in his inaugural lecture at Prague University, Unger had stated his intentions to represent Austrian private law as a complete system. The three volumes appearing over the next decade received widespread acclaim and would become classics in the field.

Nevertheless, some of his contemporaries, including fellow liberal-minded law graduates, were prepared to criticize his work. This was typical of the strong opinions and forceful individuality within the broad umbrella of the liberal movement. Berger, who had participated in the 1848 Vienna revolutions and the Frankfurt Parliament, published a lengthy critique of Unger's first volume as did Unger's childhood friend, Heinrich Jaques. It led to a lifelong enmity between Unger and Jaques. They had grown up together as two gifted Viennese Jews, often playing music together (Unger was an extremely talented pianist who had in his youth played for Liszt, while Jaques was an accomplished cellist). They mixed in the same social milieu, a world of highly educated, wealthy, cultured, often Jewish families.⁶⁵ Unger would in 1882 marry a member of this social world, Freiin Emma von Schey, widowed Freiin von Worms, who was also a convert from Judaism and whose family similarly traced its origins to Hungary.

Kaiserfeld, back in his life in Styria and sobered by the experiences in Frankfurt, continued to be preoccupied with thoughts of reform. Throughout 1849 and 1850 he wrote numerous articles for the local Graz newspapers outlining his ideas as well as trying to make sense of events and his personal experiences.⁶⁶ Many of the articles revolved around the themes of regional autonomy, German predominance and a strong Austrian state. His last article appeared in January 1850 whereupon Kaiserfeld focused on his estate in Birkfeld and his work there as Mayor. In private, however, Kaiserfeld remained immersed in the larger questions of Austria's governance, administration, finances, laws, religious policy and general institutional framework. He even drafted a lengthy memorandum on these issues in the mid 1850s and sent it to the Emperor.⁶⁷ In the paper, he expressed his strong support for the unity of the Austrian state but left the door open on a possible link to Germany. Kaiserfeld, however, was no simple centralist and argued for a strong autonomous local authority.⁶⁸ Overall, he believed that Bach's bureaucratic, centralist, non-parliamentary system had neither promoted patriotism, loyalty, civil rights nor cultural progress. "Whoever observes the domestic situation of Austria will have to say that until now the government has not fulfilled the great tasks which it has faced" he opined.⁶⁹ In conclusion Kaiserfeld argued for an "imperial representative body or an imperial committee" to participate in governmental decision-making.⁷⁰

Kaiserfeld's belief in a powerful Austrian state subject to a *Rechtstaat* and representative bodies reflected the prevailing liberal ideas in the wake of 1848. Liberal ideals such as a constitution and parliamentary institutions were not sacrificed, rather they could co-exist with and aid the development of a modern, centralized state. The state needed to be responsive to the populace (Bach had also recognized this) and the representative bodies could mediate this interaction. Soon there were small steps in this direction. In 1859 the

the most famous music critic in Vienna and was immortalized as the pedantic Beckmesser in Wagner's opera *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*.

⁶⁵ For evocative descriptions and in-depth analysis of this world see ROSSBACHER 2003 and COEN 2007.

⁶⁶ KRONES 1888, 91–115.

⁶⁷ KRONES 1888, 127

⁶⁸ KRONES 1888, 131.

⁶⁹ KRONES 1888, 141.

⁷⁰ KRONES 1888, 148.

Emperor called a Styrian commission for consultation into local authority and Kaiserfeld was ready to pick up his public activity again, now with his fully formed ideas alongside considerable political and administrative experience. A stream of articles from Kaiserfeld's pen appeared in the course of 1859 and 1860 as the Emperor and the Monarchy deliberated its future. In 1861 he was elected to the Styrian Diet (and was also named as deputy to the *Landeshauptmann*, the president of the diet and head of the autonomous administration of the province), then was sent to the *Reichsrat*.

Another Austrian representative at Frankfurt, Giskra, was committed to the German parliament but eventually had to return home to Austria. He arrived back in Vienna on 12 July 1849, was immediately met by the police chief and then taken to his mother-in-law's house. Throughout the 1850s he was not allowed to practice as an independent lawyer in Vienna and was under constant police surveillance. Financially Giskra did well, particularly in dealings with Hungarian financial institutions, however his professional career stalled and he repeatedly petitioned for permission to practice law. Eventually he was allowed to open a law office, but not in Vienna but back in Brünn in 1860. One year later he was elected to the Moravian Diet, and then to the *Reichsrat* where he quickly became a leading figure. He would also be Mayor of Brünn from July 1866 to December 1867, whereupon he became Interior Minister in the *Bürgerministerium*.

Giskra was not alone in suffering under the 1850s system. Suess was imprisoned for his involvement in the 1848 revolution but then prospered under the tutelage of Minister Thun-Hohenstein. Initially, Suess continued his life as before. In late 1848 and the early months of 1849 he stayed with his maternal grandparents in Prague. He returned to Vienna in the summer of 1849 and continued his studies at the Polytechnic Institute. It seemed as if Suess's involvement in 1848 would be passed over by the authorities. It was not until December 1850 in a bizarre scene more suited to a spy novel that Suess's history caught up with him and his family. While his father was walking through St. Stephen's Square in the centre of Vienna, a former employee suddenly approached, warned him to expect a house visit from the police and then disappeared. The family immediately searched their home for any incriminating items but found nothing. The expected police visit came at 6.30 am on 16 December 1850 and Suess was taken into custody. He was then placed in the jail for political prisoners without a trial or any charges being made. After a month in jail he received a message from his father (hidden in a soufflé) to say that he would be freed. He was subsequently released, again without any legal or bureaucratic paperwork.⁷¹

Suess could not return to the Polytechnic Institute after such notoriety and in any case, the study of geology had begun to capture his interest. He worked in the Court Museum's geological division, quickly becoming an assistant to the director. He met the director's niece and they married in 1855, including a honeymoon trip to Paris. It was time for Suess to further his career, but a university post was not possible since he had never attended University. His further education had continued informally through participation in regular Monday night meetings about the natural sciences and through private research into geology, yet this had provided no clear career path. Suess decided to send a letter to Count Thun-Hohenstein along with references from various professors and was called in for a meeting with the minister. Thun-Hohenstein wanted to help the young researcher and named him *extraordinarius* Professor at Vienna University. Suess was only twenty-five years old. Around this time he went on a long research trip to Berlin, Belgium, Paris and Normandy where he met many luminaries in his field. Suess was rapidly advancing in his career and his revolutionary past seemed far in the past. In March 1863 he was approached by the Viennese City Council to advise on the city's water supply and was shortly afterwards, in an organized backroom deal, elected unopposed as a councilor. He was then elected to the Lower Austrian

⁷¹ These events are recounted in SUESS 1916, 77–90.

Diet in 1869 and the *Reichsrat* in 1873, where he quickly became a leading voice amongst the liberals. He was also on the path to becoming a world expert in geology.

Over the 1860s and 1870s, the liberals began to occupy important positions within the ministries, representative bodies, high bureaucracy and local administration. They were nearly all in their forties or fifties and were becoming the new establishment. This ascension to political dominance seemed a distant possibility in the days of the *Vormärz* and in the immediate years after 1848–49. How, then, can one assess the development of this liberal generation from the *Vormärz* through the 1848 revolutions and the decade of the 1850s? What sort of political education did they collectively acquire? What were their key shared experiences and how were their common ideas formed and shaped? The answer from Unger was clear: "I was born in 1828 but I first saw the light of the world in 1848."⁷² Indeed, the 1848 revolutions were *the* defining event for the generation. The multiple and interconnected 1848 revolutions functioned – in accordance with Mannheim's model – as a process of dynamic destabilization when traditional institutions and ways of behavior were questioned and fundamentally reassessed. Indistinct, abstract ideas took shape and acquired detail through the many and varied experiences in public meetings, press articles, committees, representative bodies and private discussions. Pieter Judson in his history of Austrian liberalism has emphasized the formation of a "common discourse" around the rights and duties of citizens during the 1848 revolutions.⁷³ The course of events forced people – especially the young, engaged, educated elite – to take sides, to argue positions and to form groupings.

The issues raised by the 1848 revolutions – constitution, citizen rights, administration, social reform, national demands, amongst many others – revolved around ideas about politics and society. Ideas stood at the centre of the liberal movement; they defined the liberals as a distinct group. According to Mannheim, ideology plays an important role in forging a generation's identity, especially when a movement covers a wide geographic area. Kaiserfeld, for example, had little contact before the 1860s with his fellow reform liberals in Vienna, however, there was a shared belief in constitutional reform and a mildly progressive Austrian state and society, which promoted a sense of brotherhood and common mission. During the *Vormärz*, these ideas of the younger generation were unformed and indistinct, focusing around vague conceptions of a constitution, representative bodies, citizen rights, freedom of the press and "reform". In the course of 1848 and 1849 these ideas took specific shape and acquired detail in committee meetings, public debates and vigorous press commentary.

Yet the 1848 revolutions had not ostensibly achieved its grand overall goals – either in building a modern, progressive Austria or in forming a united Germany – though many individual achievements, such as peasant emancipation (Lasser was very involved in the debate), remained. In the decade of the 1850s, the liberals had to deal with and explain the course of the revolutions and the reassertion of the conservative Monarchy and traditional, authoritarian state. Liberal ideas continued to be debated in private but had to be adjusted in the light of events. In general, liberal thinking over the course of the 1850s moved closer to the Austrian state, becoming more respectful of order and more accommodating towards central, bureaucratic, administrative reform.⁷⁴ There was recognition that important changes could be implemented through a strong state, such as the reforms implemented by Thun-Hohenstein's Education Ministry and Karl Bruck's Finance Ministry.

⁷² UNGER 1909, 20.

⁷³ I have been influenced by Judson's pioneering work. JUDSON 1996, 29–68 and in more depth JUDSON 1998.

⁷⁴ This point has been made by JUDSON 1996, 69–73. In Germany, there was a turn towards *Realpolitik* by the younger generation of 1848 revolutionaries. MÖLLER 2003.

Unger was typical here. In his final reflections on life he noted: "Without subordination – no order. Without order – no freedom. *Law and order* [English in original] is the talk of all English parties."⁷⁵ In relation to parliament, Unger rather resignedly conceded that "a bad parliament is still better than none at all."⁷⁶ In relation to government, taking into account Austria's diverse population and political system, Unger advocated:

A government which stands high above the parties, as God's spirit floats above the waters – "a government from above, not below" [original in English], not all powerful parties, rather state sovereignty. A government with iron discipline which oversees the bureaucracy so there are no political party viewpoints or national motives, so that the bureaucracy is guided in strict accordance with laws and rights according to the constitution (*Government comes before the Liberty: John Seeley* [original in English]). The bureaucracy enters into individual lives, often enough with a harsh hand, while the constitution deals with the whole collective, with the state.⁷⁷

For Austria, these attitudes balancing order and freedom, a powerful bureaucracy and constitutional government were typically of the liberals (or of the Left). For them, the state could play an important role in the liberal vision of a regenerated Austria, but it had to be constrained by the constitution, the law, representative bodies and institutional "checks and balances" (such as an administrative court or substantial local government autonomy). Kaiserfeld, for example, articulated a version of this moderate liberal position in his writings from the 1850s. In general, the liberals combined respect with caution towards the Austrian state. While they placed themselves in the traditions of Maria-Theresa and Joseph II (especially in favour of a unified state and reform from above), they were wary of absolutist, executive tendencies within the bureaucracy. In general, the core beliefs in a constitution, the gradual modernization of the Austrian state and the leading role of the German element were slowly emerging as focal points for the movement, though there continued to be a wide diversity of opinion (or heterogeneity) within the broad umbrella of Austrian liberalism.

Personally, the 1850s was a decade when many of the future liberal leaders achieved great success and recognition. This also had the effect of moderating viewpoints and of engendering respect for the Austrian state. For the three legal professors Hasner, Herbst and Unger, the 1850s were the great years of career advancement – their first publications, rise within departments, University responsibilities and administration. It was only Giskra, amongst the seven liberals covered in this article, who faced considerable, lasting setbacks in building a career and gaining professional experience. Count Thun-Hohenstein played a key role in the process of incorporating talented, younger individuals into the academic establishment.⁷⁸ He was an intellectually-oriented reformer as well as a political conservative. Despite the minister's strict Catholic convictions, he facilitated the careers of many future liberals, both professionally and personally, and was on friendly terms with many of the younger generation of reformers.⁷⁹ Unger, for example, felt comfortable speaking with Thun-Hohenstein about obtaining a professorship in Music (*extraordinarius*) for his friend Hanslick.⁸⁰ In his memoirs, Suess noted that all shades of the political spectrum respected

⁷⁵ UNGER 1911, 168. This is an enlarged edition, possibly for the German market, of UNGER 1909.

⁷⁶ UNGER 1909, 16.

⁷⁷ UNGER 1909, 99.

⁷⁸ For some examples of Thun-Hohenstein's personal involvement in university appointments, including details about Unger, see LENTZE 1962, 113–148.

⁷⁹ A recent essay outlines some different aspects of Thun-Hohenstein's ideas and life linking this to the multi-faceted legacy of the Enlightenment. FILLAFER 2017.

⁸⁰ Neue Freie Presse, 2 July 1898: Eduard Hanslick, Mit Unger. Hanslick only became a Professor in Aesthetics (1861) after Count Thun-Hohenstein had left the ministry of education.

Thun-Hohenstein, even where there were profound differences of opinion.⁸¹ Suess's admiration is hardly surprising considering the help the minister had provided at the outset of his academic career. Thun-Hohenstein's influence can also be seen in Hasner's initial appointment to Prague University, to Herbst's transfer from Lemberg to Prague and Unger's meteoric rise in academia.

Thun-Hohenstein was not alone in promoting talented youthful individuals. For Lasser, it was first Stadion and then Bach who smoothed the path for career progression at the higher levels of bureaucracy. Bach was involved in the early days of the 1848 revolutions, especially in the Legal-Political Reading Association, then became Justice Minister in July 1848, working with Lasser on the draft for peasant emancipation. He would later be entrusted, as Interior Minister, with shaping the administrative structure and institutions of neo-absolutist Austria. Part of this task was to incorporate the young talent into state service.⁸² Lasser, only a year younger than Bach, was a valued colleague throughout this process of "reform from above", involving centralization and standardization on the basis of the Monarch's sole authority.⁸³ Many other reform-minded bureaucrats who would later become liberal ministers also participated in the reforms of the 1850s – Ignaz Edler von Plener, Adolf Freiherr von Pratobevera, Josef Freiherr von Kalchberg, Ludwig Ritter (later Freiherr) von Holzgethan and Sisinio (later Freiherr) de Pretis, amongst others. Thus in the crucial decade after the 1848 revolutions many of the "liberal generation" were working inside the centralist, absolutist state.⁸⁴ They participated in and gave form to the new bureaucratic ethos inspired by Bach, which was based around the ideals of loyalty, service, objectivity, moral propriety and engagement with the populace.⁸⁵

By 1861 the liberal generation had reflected deeply on its basic ideals while also acquiring experience of higher offices within various institutions and the state. As the press became freer and Emperor Franz Joseph searched for a new system of government, there was an outpouring of publications from many liberals who now had an opportunity to voice their thoughts. Kaiserfeld, for example, wrote numerous articles while Unger co-authored a lengthy brochure.⁸⁶ Berger, Kalchberg and Jaques along with many others published pamphlets on a wide variety of political and legal topics.⁸⁷ Hasner, Herbst and Giskra were at the forefront of parliamentary debates and liaised with the liberal press.⁸⁸ The liberals were ready to assume leadership of Austrian politics in 1861 and had far-reaching, deeply-considered ideas of reform. In becoming the new elite, the practical experiences in the higher bureaucracy during the decade of the 1850s were far more important to the liberals' political education than the time in the Lower Austrian legal office during the *Vormärz*. For Lasser the time in the interior ministry under Stadion and Bach was invaluable in giving a sense of the workings of the Austrian state as well as its manifold challenges and possibilities. This proved crucial in implementing far-reaching reforms to the institutional, legal and political framework in the

⁸¹ SUESS 1916, 108–122. An example of liberal animus against Thun-Hohenstein was Herbst, who criticized Thun-Hohenstein's University reforms. FEICHTINGER & FILLAFER 2017.

⁸² Neue Freie Presse, 18 November 1893: Alexander Bach. Nach dessen Mitteilungen.

⁸³ For the European context see CLARK 2012. There have been a number of recent works on neo-absolutism. HEINDL 2013b, BRANDT 2014, 2015, SEIDERER 2015 and AICHNER & MAZOHL 2017.

⁸⁴ See HEINDL 2013b, 45–75, HEINDL 2014 and DEAK 2015, 121–135..

⁸⁵ HEINDL 2013b, 54–59.

⁸⁶ Kaiserfeld's articles of the early 1860s are chronicled in KRONES 1888, 157–189. For Unger see FISCHHOF & UNGER 1861.

⁸⁷ BERGER 1861; KALCHBERG 1860; JAQUES 1861 a, b and c. Others included CARNERI 1861, CZEDIK & EYSENBERG 1861, FRIEDMANN 1862, PERTHALER 1860a and b, RESCHAUER 1861 and SCHUSELKA 1861 along with numerous anonymous pamphlets and, of course, the flood of newspapers and journals.

⁸⁸ See KWAN 2015, 135–14.

post-1861 liberal era. There was still considerable resistance to the liberal wave of the 1860s from conservative institutions such as the Catholic church, the aristocracy, the army and some parts of the bureaucracy. Any effective liberal government required a bureaucratic minister who knew the workings of the Austrian state and related institutions from the inside. Lasser served in this capacity in the Schmerling (1861–1865) and Prince Adolf Auersperg (1871–1879) cabinets, while Count Eduard Taaffe performed this function in the *Bürgerministerium*, including a stint as minister-president (1867–1870).⁸⁹ Ultimately, the liberal reformers gained their skills for future parliamentary and governmental work during the 1848 revolutions and the neo-absolutist 1850s, rather than their short stints in the lower bureaucracy of the *Vormärz*.

To conclude, we return to Herbst's assertion about his time in the legal office during the *Vormärz*. Why then did he and others place such a stress on this experience in later assessments of individual Austrian liberals and of the liberal movement itself? For example, Ernst (later Freiherr) von Plener, the only son of Ignaz and the liberal leader following Herbst, described his predecessor in the following words:

He was the [typical] old liberal of the *Vormärz*, who retained good faith in the constitutional ideas and therefore overestimated the importance of parliamentary life for Austria.⁹⁰

Similarly, when the *Neue Freie Presse* assessed Unger's life, stress was placed on the *Vormärz*:

He had contributed to forcing open the narrow, church dominated Austria of the *Vormärz* and to imbue [Austria] with the spiritual life of German humanism and the free individualism of European liberalism.⁹¹

In other eulogies and obituaries for liberals written from the 1880s to the early years of the 20th century, the *Vormärz* was portrayed as a time of stasis, backwardness and drift, while the 1848 generation of willing reformers was cast as idealists and activists for a progressive, modern Austria.

The reason for this heavily stylized narrative lay in the political context of the 1880s and afterwards, when the liberals were in eclipse, challenged both from above and below. Count Taaffe's conservative government in the 1880s and early 1890s followed by a series of bureaucratic cabinets (with a short interlude from late 1893 to mid-1895 of a coalition government including the liberals under Ernst Plener) forced the liberals to question their implicit assumption, held since the 1860s, that they were the natural governing party – the natural heirs to Austria's state traditions. In addition, the new younger German nationalists were forming strong activist associations and professional political networks in opposition to the hitherto dominant liberals.⁹² Under these circumstances, both the liberal press and the liberal politicians attempted to highlight the achievements of two decades at the heart of the political and governmental system. By emphasizing the backwardness of the *Vormärz* and the sweeping changes that had subsequently been introduced, the liberals were defending their record as well as trying to shore up shifting bourgeois support, which was increasingly moving towards German nationalism and the Christian Socials. Moreover, by emphasizing the idealism of *Vormärz* liberalism, a distinction was being drawn between the noble goals of

⁸⁹ See the interesting comments from Giskra on Taaffe's importance to the *Bürgerministerium*. POLLAK 1894–1898, II 223.

⁹⁰ PLENER 1921, 440

⁹¹ *Neue Freie Presse*, 2 May 1913: Georg Jellinek, Josef Unger. This Feuilleton was first published in 1898.

⁹² KWAN 2013, 121–140, 157–178.

freedom, a progressive state and an open society compared to the horse-trading of the Taaffe government, the narrow focus of the nationalist parties and the general emerging cynicism about politics. The political context of the 1880s also explains Herbst's references to Josephinism and the experience of bureaucratic work in the *Vormärz*. Herbst was not making a reasoned, balanced assessment of his upbringing. Rather, his statements were coded attacks on the Taaffe government for dismantling the Josephinist state and its traditions as well as stressing how the liberals had participated in building that state and had sustained its traditions. By presenting the *Vormärz* symbolism as a time of stasis, inaction and suppression (in fact, there were considerable changes socially, economically and ideologically, especially after 1830), the liberals were "de-authorizing the fathers" and defending their alternative progressive vision.⁹³ The *Vormärz* as a negative caricature was part of the system of shared symbols and understandings that bound the 1848 generation together.

Indeed, despite the many personal rivalries and intrigues, the many differences of opinion and the contrasting backgrounds, the liberal generation of 1848 was an astonishingly coherent, compact grouping. Held together by a common set of beliefs, forged by shared experiences and close personal contacts, the generation follows Mannheim's schema fairly closely. The social and economic backgrounds of the liberals were important so far as enabling a formal education and instilling bourgeois values of service, hard work and self-improvement. Ultimately, though, it was their experiences in 1848 and their common ideological commitment to political, administrative and legal reform that defined the liberals and distinguished them from the predecessors and successors. Giskra described his relations with Herbst as follows:

Our comradeship began in early youth. The year 1848 led us in different directions. Afterwards, when we had got in touch again, we went into parliament shoulder to shoulder. The negotiations over Herbst's entry into the government were begun by me and completed by me. At the start he didn't want it at all. I forced the issue and then he agreed. In government we worked together on all the great questions.⁹⁴

Even with the many disagreements and rifts in the liberal movement, its followers could unite around shared core beliefs and act as a collective. Examples include the defence of the constitution (such as against the suspension of the constitution in 1865 or against the Hohenwart government's agreement with the Czech politicians in 1871), state control of education and overall religious matters (the Education and May Laws of 1868), parliamentary control of spending (numerous military debates) and building a framework of liberal institutions (local government, legal reforms and the separation of justice and administration). Personal friendships were also an important factor in creating a coherent group. At Giskra's funeral in 1879, Herbst spoke the eulogy, then, in an uncharacteristic show of emotion, broke down crying.⁹⁵ Herbst, Hasner, Giskra, Unger, Suess and Lasser were all on friendly terms, despite their occasional rivalries and disputes. Kaiserfeld had a similar circle of intimate social and political friends in Styria.⁹⁶ This liberal generation of 1848, both as individuals and as a collective, had the ideas, experience and opportunity, to leave a lasting impact on the Habsburg Monarchy.

⁹³ FEUER 1969, 12–15. See also SPITZER 1973, 1365.

⁹⁴ Quoted in HARTMEYER 1949, 45.

⁹⁵ CZEDIK 1917, 93.

⁹⁶ See MARKO-STÖCKL 1990 and 1993.