
NEW TITLES

History

FIN DE SIÈCLE VIENNA:
Politics and Culture
 by Carl E. Schorske
 Knopf, 1980
 378 pp. \$15.95

No sooner did Vienna's well-to-do professionals, academics, and merchants come into power in Austria's new parliament in the late 1860s than they lost all hope of enjoying the rewards. An entrenched Hapsburg nobility ridiculed their liberal republicanism and rebuffed their advances into high society. After the legislators broadened the franchise, lower-class Slavic nationalists, Pan-German anti-Semites, and Christian Socialists mixed parliamentary maneuvers with mass demonstrations and street brawls to paralyze the government. "The Viennese upper middle class," observes Princeton historian Schorske, "reigned though it could not rule." Out of that predicament, however, came an incredible explosion in the arts. As an escape—and, perhaps, to assert their dominance in the intellectual arena, if nowhere else—the city's *haute bourgeoisie* cultivated a passionate interest in the support of art. They took comfort in Freud's oedipal and sexual explanations of behavior. Freud, posits Schorske, provided "an a-historical theory of man and society that could make bearable a political world spun out of orbit and beyond control." Gustav Klimt's sexually explicit paintings mirrored Freud's dream theories; Otto Wagner broke with his spiritual fathers to design modernistic buildings; Arnold Schönberg's atonal music fled the diatonic scale. Even as Vienna's social fabric unraveled, its artists leaped ahead into the 20th century.

CHINA AND THE WEST:
Society and Culture,
1815–1937
 by Jerome Ch'en
 Ind. Univ., 1980
 488 pp. \$22.50

Starting with Marco Polo, Westerners viewed the Chinese as dishonest, and the Chinese saw Europeans as barbarous. The situation changed—somewhat—in the period 1815–1937. This era of increased trade and travel between the Chinese and the British, French, and Americans, asserts York University histo-