

# LETTRES À L'ÉDITEUR

## MURDEROUS ATTACK UPON GEORG SIMMEL

*In the evening edition (no. 510) of the Königlich privilegierte Berlinische Zeitung—known more commonly as the Vossische Zeitung—for 1st November 1886, there appears the following report :*

'The factory owner Guggenbüchler from Hof Gastein, who conducted a bronze goods trade inside the house at Feilnerstrasse 2a, was indebted for twoquarters rent and therefore to be evicted by the administrator of the house, Dr. Phil. Simmel. On the morning of 30th October, Guggenbüchler presented himself at the house in Landgrafenstrasse 1 occupied by Dr. Simmel and, having met the latter in the street in front of his home, asked whether he could continue to reside in his dwelling if he were to now pay the rent arrears. Dr. Simmel replied in the affirmative though remarked that Guggenbüchler would also have to pay the outstanding legal costs incurred. At this juncture, and with the words "I can't pay it ; everything is finished", Guggenbüchler pulled out a revolver from the pocket of his overcoat and, from a distance of only one pace, fired a shot at Simmel which missed him and then fired two further shots at Simmel who had turned to flee. One bullet pierced the latter's hat and grazed the head of the fleeing figure, whilst the second penetrated the flesh of his left shoulder. Since the revolver's calibre was unusually small, the wound—from which the bullet was immediately removed—was not a dangerous one. The perpetrator of the crime, a passionate person, who has already been convicted of causing bodily harm, immediately took to flight after the deed and, since no pursuit was instituted, has disappeared. So far it has not been possible to apprehend him'.

Then on the 4th November, a warrant was issued and the description of the perpetrator published in which, amongst other details, the following particular were given : Age : 55 years ; Build : powerful ; Hair : mottled-grey ; Face : oval, puckered ; Facial colour : grey ; Speech : Viennese dialect ; Dress : dark blue winter overcoat, dark trousers, black felt hat, wearing gold breast-pin and gold-rimmed spectacles...

*This is merely one of the 'fortuitous fragments of reality' from the life of Georg Simmel. Yet it is a fragment that only came to light because one of Georg Simmel's letters referred to this attack.*

*This information is made public with the request that the reader should inform the author of all correspondence, which might also still be in private hands, or other documents which can contribute towards the completion of the biography of Georg Simmel (Address : 1 Berlin 19, Holtzendorffstrasse 3).*

KLAUS CHRISTIAN KÖHNKE

A. M. HENDERSON IS NOT L. J. HENDERSON

*Dr. Winkelmann writes (cf. Archives européennes de sociologie, XVIII (1982), pp. 354 sq.) : 'Im Jahre 1944 veröffentlichte Talcott Parsons die von ihm überarbeitete Übersetzung [of the first part of Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft] seines Lehrers A. M. Henderson'. That's nonsense. A. M. Hen-*

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*derson was Parsons' colleague at Harvard not his teacher. But, more importantly, the translator was another Henderson altogether, a Britisher by the name of L. J. Henderson. This Henderson has been asked by a British publisher to do the translation, and had not been up to the task, so that T. P. took over.*

LEWIS A. COSER