



Moritz Schlick

Entrance  
to the former  
Mathematical  
SeminarPresumed library of the Department  
of Philosophy and meeting place of the  
Vienna Circle, Boltzmannngasse 5

Due to building renovations, the historic rooms in which the Vienna Circle met no longer exist in their original form. Therefore, they cannot be visited. Instead, you can explore the online exhibition of the Wienbibliothek (Vienna city library) and the related entries in the Wien Geschichte Wiki (Vienna history wiki).

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### Further Information

[www.wienbibliothek.at/veranstaltungen-ausstellungen/ausstellungen/orte-wiener-kreises-wien-wissenschaftliche-weltauffassung](http://www.wienbibliothek.at/veranstaltungen-ausstellungen/ausstellungen/orte-wiener-kreises-wien-wissenschaftliche-weltauffassung)

Vienna history WIKI  
[www.geschichtewiki.wien.gv.at/Wiener\\_Kreis](http://www.geschichtewiki.wien.gv.at/Wiener_Kreis)

About Schlick in English  
[plato.stanford.edu/entries/schlick](http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/schlick)

About the Vienna Circle in English  
[plato.stanford.edu/entries/vienna-circle](http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/vienna-circle)

# Moritz Schlick Memorial Plaque Vienna Circle

Boltzmannngasse 5  
Meeting place of the Vienna Circle  
1924–1936

Im Erdgeschoss dieses Gebäudes traf sich  
der philosophische Diskussionszirkel  
um Moritz Schlick (1882-1936) von 1924 bis 1936,  
der als WIENER KREIS Weltgeltung errang.  
Mord und Vertreibung führten zu dessen Auflösung,  
doch sein Erbe prägt bis heute  
das Denken in Philosophie und Wissenschaft.

## The beginnings of the Vienna Circle

The building at Boltzmannngasse 5 is now home to the Faculty of Physics. It formerly housed the Institute of Mathematics and Physics at the University of Vienna. It was the workplace of the physicist and professor of philosophy **Moritz Schlick (1882–1936)** from **1922** onwards. The world-famous **Vienna Circle** met there under Schlick's leadership from **1924 to 1936**. Every other Thursday evening, around 20 women and men from three generations, together with an equal number of international guests gathered there to discuss philosophy as well as the foundations and methods of science.

Before moving to Liebiggasse in **1927**, the left wing past the entrance also housed the Institute of Philosophy and the philosophy library, directed by Schlick's assistant **Friedrich Waismann**. In addition to courses, lectures, coffeehouse gatherings and private meetings among members, there were intensive discussions on the scientification of philosophy using modern logic and mathematics, as well as on the emerging analytic philosophy of language. Particular attention was given to **Ludwig Wittgenstein's** *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (**1922**).

The fundamental problems of formal logic, mathematics and natural sciences were debated in light of **Kurt Gödel's** revolutionary results as well as the theoretical upheavals in physics triggered by the theory of relativity (**Albert Einstein**) and quantum mechanics (**Erwin Schrödinger**).

## An international centre of scientific thought

Therefore, it was no coincidence that the Vienna Circle met there, where the mathematicians **Hans Hahn** and **Karl Menger** engaged in teaching and research, at the same time as **Rudolf Carnap** wrote his groundbreaking book *The Logical Structure of the World* (**1928**) and the Ernst Mach Society published the anti-metaphysical manifesto *The Scientific Conception of the World*. The **Vienna Circle** (**1929**). From **1928 to 1936**, **Karl Menger** organised the Mathematical Colloquium and popular lectures in this building, which served as a forum for domestic and international researchers.

## Murder, expulsion and exile

This golden age of scholarship was violently shattered by biographical and political events characterised by anti-Semitic excesses. As early as **1930**, **Herbert Feigl** left Vienna for the United States due to a lack of professional prospects for Jews. **Hans Hahn** died unexpectedly in **1934**, and following the civil war in February 1934, **Otto Neurath**, like many other like-minded individuals, was forced to flee abroad.

On **22 June 1936**, **Moritz Schlick** was shot by a former student on the Philosophenstiege staircase in the University's Main Building for personal, philosophical and ideological reasons. This marked the de facto end of this philosophical avant-garde, before their final expulsion.



Schlick plaque on the assassination in 1936 in the Main Building on the Philosophenstiege stairway

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Almost all of the remaining members were forced to flee into permanent exile, mostly Anglo-American exile by the time of the Anschluss in 1938. They continued their work under difficult conditions there. Only a few members, such as Viktor Kraft, were able to continue living in Vienna despite discrimination. After World War II, Kraft attempted to revive the Vienna Circle for a few years between **1948 and 1954** with the so-called Kraft Circle.

The group only returned symbolically through guest visits by **Rudolf Carnap**, **Herbert Feigl**, **Karl Popper**, **Karl Menger**, **Philipp Frank**, as well as by **Oskar Morgenstern**, **Paul Lazarsfeld** and **Marie Jahoda** from the Circle's wider milieu at the Forum Alpbach in Tyrol and the Institute for Advanced Studies in Vienna.

## Memory and rediscovery

During the Second Republic, the historic premises were renovated. Therefore, the meeting place of the interdisciplinary circle can now only be traced through a few photographs and eyewitness accounts. The commemorative plaque at the entrance to the Faculty of Physics at Boltzmannngasse 5 and the lecture hall designations inside the building are therefore unique reminders of the

flourishing scholarship of that time. It was not until **1991** that the **Institute Vienna Circle** was founded in Vienna as the Society for the Advancement of the Scientific World Conception. It was established in **2011** by the University of Vienna as a separate university department within the Faculty of Philosophy and Education. Since then, the association has continued to exist as the **Vienna Circle Society** in close cooperation with the university department. Another highlight of this belated recognition came in **2015** with the first major exhibition on the Vienna Circle. Held in the Main Building of the University of Vienna on the Ringstrasse street to mark the 650th anniversary of the foundation of the University of Vienna. Subsequently, it toured six European capitals. In **2025**, the Wienbibliothek im Rathaus (Vienna city library) organised a small exhibition at the City Hall about locations associated with the Vienna Circle. This exhibition is now available to the public online in both German and English and supplements the entries on the Vienna Circle in the Wien Geschichte Wiki (Vienna history wiki).

## The memorial plaque

The commemorative plaque, which was unveiled on **22 June 2026** to mark the 90th anniversary of Schlick's murder, succinctly summarises the significance of this historic site:

The philosophy discussion circle led by Moritz Schlick (1882–1936) met on the ground floor of this building, gaining international renown as the **Vienna Circle**. Murder and expulsion led to its dissolution, yet its legacy continues to shape philosophical and scientific thinking to this day.



Entrance at Boltzmannngasse 5

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