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OF THE AUSTRIAN SOCIALISTS IN GREAT BRITAIN

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Dr. KARL RENNER — AUSTRIAN PRESIDENT

The Austrian Federal Assembly (a joint session of Parliament and Federal Council) unanimously elected Dr. Karl Renner President of the Second Austrian Republic.

Thus a man becomes Head of the State who twice within 25 years played a predominant part in building an independent and free Austria. It can be said without exaggeration that it was due only to Renner's untiring efforts, to his experienced statesmanship and to his diplomatic skill that the rebirth of the Austrian Republic was achieved in a comparatively short time and in an astonishingly peaceful way.

Renner is a Socialist but to-day the whole country looks to him as a strong moral force, as the venerated man who symbolizes Austria at her best. A few days before his election he celebrated his 75th birthday and he was honoured not only by his comrades and many personal friends but by representatives of all political parties and from all parts of the Republic.

The fact that a man who enjoys the confidence of the people and who is a true democrat occupies this high office will undoubtedly be an important safeguard for Austria's democratic Constitution.

A COALITION GOVERNMENT

The first official act of the new President was the appointment of the new Austrian Government which is composed as follows:

Chancellor and Foreign Affairs: Dr. Leopold Figl (People's Party).

Vice-Chancellor: Dr. Adolf Schärf (Socialist).

Interior: Oscar Helmer (Socialist).

Under Secretary of State for Security: F. Graf (People's Party).

Education: Dr. Felix Hurdes (People's Party).

Finance: Dr. Zimmermann (non-party).

Commerce and Reconstruction: Dr. Eugen Fleischhacker (People's Party).

Agriculture: Josef Kraus (People's Party).

Safeguarding of Property and Economic Planning: Dr. Peter Grauland (People's Party).

Under Secretary of State: Karl Waldbrunner (Socialist).

Food: Frenzel (Socialist).

Social Administration: Karl Meisel (Socialist).

Transport and Post: Vinzenz Uebeleis (Socialist).

Justice: Dr. Josef Geroe (non-party).

Electric Power: Dr. Karl Altmann (Communist).

Ministers without Portfolio: A. Weinberger and Dr. K. Gruber both belonging to the People's Party, the latter charged with the conduct of Foreign Affairs.

The new Cabinet is a Coalition Cabinet composed of all the three parties represented in Parliament. Most of its members have spent many years in concentration camps and prisons and they wish to be called a "Concentration Government" in the double sense of the word. About half of the Ministers were members of the Provisional Government.

Of the Socialist Members, Dr. Schärf is the chairman of the Party, Helmer one

of its Deputy Chairmen, *Meisel*, the President of the Metal Workers' Union and *Uebeleis* the President of the Railway Workers' Union.

In London, political observers point out that the Socialists have not received the representation in the new cabinet which might have been expected. Although the elections have proved the two parties to be of practically equal strength a disproportionately large share of the actual power in economic and especially foreign policy has gone to the People's Party. It is asked whether the Austrian Socialists, cut off for so long from the democratic world, felt that a strong stand would not have found support in the West.

In this connection the following remark in an article on Austria by John Ennals in last week's *New Statesman and Nation* deserves attention. "The reputation of the Labour Government suffers

in the eyes of European Socialists when its representatives abroad appear to continue to base their policy on the prejudices which the British electorate rejected so uncompromisingly in July."

The New Parliament Meet

The new Austrian Parliament which has the functions of a Constituent National Assembly met on the 19th December. *Leopold Kunschak* (People's Party) was elected Speaker, *Johann Böhm* (Socialist) and *Dr. Gorbach* (People's Party) first and second Deputy Speaker.

During the first meeting a Government proclamation was read on Austria's independence in which the Anschluss that had been forced upon her is declared null and void, all obligations towards Germany are declared invalid and all Austrians are once more vested in their rights and duties as Austrian citizens.

POLICY AND PROGRAMME OF THE NEW GOVERNMENT

We publish here a condensed version of the Government's statement made by Chancellor Figl after the nomination of the new government.

Thanks to the work of liberation by the great Allied Powers to preserve the world from barbarian invasion, Austria, the first victim of Fascist imperialism, is free and independent again. As Federal Chancellor it is my sacred duty to thank the Allied Powers in the name of Austria for their great deed of liberation.

The Occupying Powers have recognised the result of the elections as the democratically expressed will of the Austrian people. Indeed, the Austrian people has given evidence of its determination, of its unwavering courage to form a democracy, a democracy which does not mean unbridled liberty of a majority or a group, but represents an organic co-ordination of the interests of all. Austria has proved her political maturity and has shown that she rejects unconditionally any form of Fascist ideology. The Austrian people have solemnly declared for Austrian inde-

pendence and sovereignty and have rejected and condemned for ever all imperialist ideologies.

The Austria Of To-Morrow

The new Government is formed in accordance with the election results and is the result of the desire of all parties to meet the wishes of all parties by concentrating all constructive forces, and putting aside for the coming months all party politics to secure the vital needs of our nation and its citizens.

The Austria of to-morrow will be a new, revolutionary Austria; it will be reorganised from top to bottom so as to make a repetition of 1918, of 1933 or of 1938 impossible.

The whole State apparatus must be reorganised. All constructive effort in Austria will be impossible, so long as this territory, which economically, politically and administratively has for centuries been one unit, remains divided into four zones. The restitution of the unity of Austria is one of the most urgent

WHO PROTECTS THE HEIMWEHR—FASCISTS ?

In the course of his address to the Socialist Party's Conference, Dr. Schärff made the following very important statement about the Austrian Heimwehr-Fascism: "Up to now there was a government based upon the agreement of all the three parties. Everything had to be decided upon unanimously or else had to be left undone.

Thus the property of our party has not yet been restored because there were cer-

pre-requisites for all constructive work in this country. The abolition of the demarcation lines is indispensable. For this reason, I should like to use this opportunity to appeal urgently to the Allies to deal soon with the question of the restitution of the administrative, economic and political unity of Austria and to solve this question in the interests of Austria.

Ruthless Against The Spirit of Fascism

A strong State authority, backed by the confidence of the freely elected Parliament, must in future carry out the reconstruction of the Austrian administrative machinery, which must be made thoroughly democratic not only in the State, but also in the provinces and in the local authorities. The Bureaucratic State within the State must end; ability and performance must become the only touchstones for appointment to administrative posts.

National Socialists must be removed from administrative posts; and in doing this, we do not worry so much about the ordinary hanger-on, who repeated out of fear or under pressure a programme which he never understood, as those who frequently did not belong to the Nazi Party but who championed in a still more dangerous fashion the Nazi and authoritarian spirit. The Government will proceed with redoubled severity against war criminals, members of the underground Nazi Party and the party functionaries, in order ruthlessly to exterminate the spirit of Fascism. Right must again become

tain people who thought *they* would be the heirs of the Social-Democrats.

Thus something had to be left undone which is very near to our hearts: the settlement of our account with Heimwehr-Fascism."

This remarkable statement indicates clearly that all the efforts of the Austrian Socialists to uproot the Austrian brand of Fascism have so far been frustrated by other political forces.

right in our Austria as in the rest of democratic Europe.

Food And Fuel

In economic reconstruction, our Government is faced with formidable problems which cannot be solved without the assistance of the Allied Powers.

Of the Government's immediate programme, the most urgent task is safeguarding nutrition in the coming winter. I must make clear that it cannot be solved without the active co-operation of the Allies.

We shall endeavour to produce the greatest possible quantities of food, but for this the lifting of the barriers along the demarcation lines is an indispensable requirement.

But even so Austrians will be unable to overcome the difficulties *unaided*. Therefore, I thank the Allied Control Council for its appeal to UNRRA that immediate aid should be granted to Austria. Austria has received this decision as a deliverance, and will strain every nerve and muscle to tide over the intervening period by its own devices and with far-reaching sacrifices. UNRRA has already established contact with the Austrian Government.

Next to the food problem, comes the question of heating, which gives the Government cause for the greatest concern. The most rigorous part of the winter still lies ahead. We shall leave nothing undone to get at least the most indispensable fuel. This is, in the first place a transport problem, and again we are dependent on Allied support. A re-

lated problem is that of getting clothes for the poorest people.

The Children—The Only Treasure

But it will be our greatest and most sacred task to get our children through this winter. The Government will launch a big Help-the-Children Relief Scheme. We shall send children to the country, we shall establish feeding centres, and there will be foreign help. No sacrifices must be too great for us to safeguard the lives of our children. We have become a poor country and the children are our only treasure.

Social Services

Nearly one-third of Austria's population is made up of manual workers. We must put an end to the enslavement of the workers brought about by the Hitler regime. Social justice, fair wages, healthy working conditions and the assurance of an untroubled age for old age pensioners and disabled workers must be among the cardinal social demands of any Austrian government.

There are great tasks ahead for us because the great social institutions of Austria, once a model for the whole world, were shattered by National Socialism. All social institutions and trade unions as well as the political parties and their organisations of social and cultural policy, who have been deprived of their property since 1934, shall be entitled to restitution.

We Have Become Beggars . . .

In addition to the Government's programme for immediate action which cannot brook a moment's delay, it is also urgent that measures should be taken now for the planning and preparation of our overall economic reconstruction. Austrian economy represents an organic unity which was killed by Nazism. It was broken up, economic traditions were destroyed, inroads were made into the substance of our economic system which was brought to ruin.

To-day we have become beggars and we must start again from the begin-

ning to an extent unprecedented in Austrian economic history.

But to make sure of a successful reconstruction our economy must not be hampered by unnecessary burdens. In this connection I must also appeal to the Allied Powers and request them to reduce their occupation forces to a size proportionate to the capacity of our economic system. The Austrian people have shown themselves worthy of such an act of confidence.

In the interests of workers and employers alike we want to build up a system of agricultural and social insurance.

A Tremendous Loss Of Capital

Industry, trade and commerce have been ruined by the Nazis. The destruction of many factories represented a tremendous loss of capital. Even so, determined and successful efforts were made towards a gradual reconstruction out of the chaos.

Vienna, in particular, has suffered from the consequences of the war. But in Vienna work to recommission gas works, electricity, water and other public utilities, has been exemplary and proof of Austria's will for reconstruction.

Here again the abolition of the barriers between the zones is an essential pre-requisite, because the movement of raw materials and finished goods must be unrestricted.

Once this condition is established, the raw material situation in a number of branches of industry will not be too bad. The Government is particularly anxious to rebuild the small industries based on craftsmanship which were systematically destroyed by the Nazis.

Full Employment And Nationalisation

One of the Government's chief concerns will be to provide employment for all. To find work for large groups of workers, the Government contemplates the establishment of new industries. Whenever such measures are in the true interest of the State and the people, the Government will apply the law promulgated by the late State Government on the nationalisation of key industries,

AUSTRIAN SOCIALISTS' PARTY CONFERENCE

Unanimous Decision To Enter Government

The Austrian Socialist Party held its first annual conference after 12 years in Vienna on the 14th and 15th December. The most important item on the agenda was the question of the Socialists' participation in the new Government. After a report by Dr. Schärf, the conference unanimously decided to approve the Party's participation in a coalition government.

In his address, Schärf said *inter alia*:—"In the new Parliament we will be faced with three possibilities: first, opposition on principle. Times have changed so fundamentally that not even the smallest party could afford to maintain an attitude of opposition on principle where such grave issues are involved. That leaves us with only two possibilities. We could support the Government without participation, share the responsibility without exercising an influence corresponding to our strength. The third alternative is participation in the Government, sharing responsibility in determining Government policy.

It will strengthen democracy within

and transfer such industries to national or municipal ownership. The overwhelming majority of the Austrian population has decided in favour of maintaining private initiative and of the principle of efficiency in this state. Where private initiative proves a failure in the economic and social sphere, adequate measures will have to be taken.

The Government attributes first and foremost importance to the solution of the housing problem. This is really a question of rehabilitation, which will put the solidarity of the entire nation to the test.

Care For Prisoners Of War

Another problem which in recent months has become of increasing importance is that of our prisoners of war and returning citizens. The overwhelming majority of our Austrian workers, peasants and employees were called up as a result of Hitler's war, and without exception

the State if a virile party acts as guardian, and nobody is better suited for that role than the Socialists.

Participation in the Government will be necessary if we want to complete the reconstruction of our party and if we want to maintain the political strength of the workers."

The conference also elected the new Executive Committee composed as follows: Josef Afritsch, Johann Böhm, Heinrich Hackenberg, Oskar Helmer, Rosa Jochmann, Dr. Ernst Koref, Theodor Körner, Hilde Krones, Reinhard Machold, Karl Maisel, Wilhelmine Moik, Franz Popp, Gabriele Proft, Anton Proksch, Erwin Scharf, Dr. Adolf Schärf, Karl Seitz, Paul Speiser, Felix Stika, Peter Strasser.

Karl Seitz who had been chairman of the Party for many years had asked to be relieved of this duty because of his age and Dr. Schärf was elected chairman.

Delegates of the French, Italian and Hungarian Socialist Parties conveyed greeting from their parties.

were sent to the most distant fronts. This was done, above all, because they were not Nazis. Those who had been Nazis were having a good time at home. Our returning fellow-citizens are now suffering strenuous mental pressure.

We therefore propose to extend special help to our Austrian prisoners of war. From this there arises a special obligation for Austria herself and for the Austrian Government; for the Great Powers have already promised that our prisoners of war will shortly be released to return home. We must do everything to shorten this intervening period.

We shall devote particular attention to the welfare of the war disabled, and the same applies to other victims of the Hitlerite regime, the former concentration camp and prison inmates. To assist the widows and orphans of our fallen is a sacred duty.

Austria's Key Position In Europe

As a result of being recognised by the leading old-established Powers, Austria will again be able to carry out an active foreign policy. Throughout the centuries, Austria, in her culture, leaned towards the West; she was always the open forum for the great and valuable contributions of the East, and thus occupied a key position in Europe. The geographical and economic structure of our country also contributes to our endeavour to bring about co-operation, both in the economic sphere and in foreign politics, with all peace-loving nations, particularly with the great Allied Powers. We hope for extremely close relations with our immediate neighbours, especially Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Yugoslavia. The Austrian Government will make it its foremost aim in foreign policy in the immediate future to establish regular relations with those countries and to arrive at the necessary clarifications and solutions. We do not want to live under the injustice of certain frontier settlements of 1918.

South Tyrol And Carinthia

One matter, however, is for us not a matter of policy but one that is very close to our hearts: the question of South Tyrol. The return of South Tyrol to Austria is the prayer of every Austrian! The second immutable law of our foreign policy must be the territorial integrity of our province of Carinthia within its old frontiers.

On the basis of its policy in foreign affairs, free democratic and independent Austria considers herself as part of the United Nations and will endeavour to be recognised as such as soon as possible. It goes without saying that my Government freely recognises in foreign affairs, the authority which the Allied Powers have established for themselves by their work of liberation.

Our New Austria is a small State, but she wants to carry on as a stronghold of peace in the midst of Europe. Never again must people come and claim that we are not Austrians at all, but only an

excrecence of the German nation. We are nothing else but Austrians, and this I say with the passion that goes naturally with any declaration of allegiance.

Appeal To Youth

For our task we need the active co-operation of youth. It was our youth, above all, which, for seven years, has had to bear the brunt of the internal hate-mongering propaganda of the Nazis. Yet, young people filled the ranks of the Resistance movements of all the parties to fight loyally for their Austrian homeland.

The educational task in this field is tremendous. We must give our youth that intellectual equipment of which it has been cheated for years. The work of the schools and universities, enlightenment of the people, and adult education must be renewed in the true Austrian spirit. The very best men must be employed in this task. But, in addition, I appeal to Austrian youth itself for its collaboration. As the leader of the new Government, I call upon youth, because we want to build a new Austria, a young Austria, your Austria.

PARLIAMENT ASKS FOR RETURN OF SOUTH TYROL

The Austrian Parliament resolved unanimously: The first freely elected Parliament of reborn Austria urgently requests the Federal Government to do everything to lead back South Tyrol to the Austrian community and administration.

The Times Statement Corrected

It was officially stated in Vienna that the assumption of *The Times* that the New Austria had claimed the Trentino is based on a misunderstanding. The note to the Allies refers *only* to the German speaking part of Tyrol north of the Salurn Gap. Austria is well aware of the distinction between the northern and southern parts of South Tyrol, and would not weaken her position by putting forward exaggerated and therefore dangerous demands.

AUSTRIAN T.U.C. DEMANDS

The Austrian Trade Union Council has submitted a resolution to the three political Parties and the Federal Chancellor advocating:—

Concentration of all spheres of economic life into a Ministry of Economic Affairs, in the direction of which the Austrian trade unions claim a substantial share;

Nationalisation of the mines, key industries and industrial production, and the carrying out of suitable agricultural reform;

Immediate reintroduction of all social legislation in force in 1934;

Adequate old age and disability insurance;

Participation by the workers in factory management;

Self-administration of unemployment insurance and the Labour Offices;

Complete reorganisation of the legislation providing for agricultural and forestry labour;

Safeguarding of the existence of war-wounded and war-disabled;

Compensation for workers who suffered under National Socialism;

Improvement in the food and housing situations.

THE PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENTS

are composed as follows:—

Lower Austria

Governor: Josef Reither (People's Party); Deputies: Franz Popp (Socialist); August Kargl (People's Party).

Carinthia

Governor: Hans Piesch (Socialist); Deputies: Ferlitsch (People's Party); Herke (Socialist).

Salzburg

Governor: Albert Hochleitner (People's Party); Deputies: Anton Neumayer (Socialist); Dr. Adolf Schemel (People's Party).

British Christmas Parties For Children

Over 23,000 Viennese children, between three and 12 years of age, residing in the British Zone in Vienna were invited to Christmas parties by the British authorities.

OTTO NEURATH

The death of our friend, Otto Neurath, who died suddenly at Oxford on December 22nd, aged 63, deprives the world of a dynamic personality and a great innovator in the field of statistics. He was one of the brains behind the great housing development of the Socialist municipality of Vienna.

Neurath was a Viennese and became a lecturer on political economy at Heidelberg University. After the first World War he was Minister of Nationalisation in the short-lived Bavarian Soviet Government of 1919. Sentenced to death, he fled to Vienna where he became a leading figure in the Municipal Housing Office and later the founder and director of the City's Sociological and Economic Museum. He invented the method of pictorial statistics known as "isotypes" which has gained world-wide renown.

Exiled from Vienna after 1934, Neurath first continued his work in Holland, then fled to Britain with his wife in 1940. Here he founded the Isotype Institute at Oxford and was at the time of his death, among many other activities, engaged on a scheme of housing reform for the industrial town of Bilston in Staffordshire.

A gigantic and benevolent figure—for signature he often used to draw a picture of an elephant—he dominated through his personality as much as through his ideas. His originality and his energy helped to make Red Vienna an example to progressives throughout the world.

JOHANN LENK

A lifelong rebel, a faithful socialist, a good friend and comrade died the bitter death of an exile. In *Johann Lenk*, who at the age of 39 passed away after long suffering, Austrian Socialism loses a great and interesting character. His spirited and fierce eloquence, his untiring devotion to our cause, his unsparing readiness to act wherever and whenever necessary made him an inspiring personality.

Johann Lenk was an employee of the Co-operative in Woergl, Tyrol, and the leader of the local group of the *Republi-*

kanischer Schützband. During the fateful days of February, 1934, when Clerico-Fascism deemed it timely to crush the last democratic forces in Austria, when fighting started in Linz and Vienna, in Styria and Lower Austria, there was only one place in Tyrol where Socialists took up arms: in Woergl under Lenk's command. It took the Austrian Fascists several days and some heavy howitzers to defeat them.

Severely wounded, Lenk was taken to prison, and was condemned to several years of penal servitude.

After being freed from prison by an amnesty he went to Prague. There he became one of the most important links between the German Socialists in exile and the German underground movement. For years he worked as a courier. Many a time he risked his life by crossing daringly the frontiers, with faked identity papers in his pocket, carrying clandestine material, papers, information in and out of Nazi-ridden Germany. When the history of the German socialist underground movement after 1933 will be written, his name as one of its leading figures cannot and will not be omitted.

He came to England in 1939 and later became a member of the London Bureau of the Austrian Socialists. During the war he did an important job in this country, a job important also for Austria herself. This was mentioned in a short commemoration at our club by *Gordon Walker, M.P.*, who said: "I knew Johann Lenk very well, our working places were near each other. I am sure, his passing away leaves a gap not only in Austrian and German Socialism, but it is a big loss to International Socialism as well!"

More Viennese Children Leave For Switzerland

A second transport of 500 Viennese children has left for Switzerland. It is planned to send 3,000 Viennese children; two transports are to go every month. The Swiss Red Cross will also send milk, chocolate, Ovomaltine, etc., for children in Vienna and Lower Austria.

30,000 JEWISH CHILDREN IN AUSTRIA MURDERED

One of the most dreadful chapters in the history of the barbarous Nazi regime is the fate of Jewish children in Austria. It is estimated that, before the Nazi invasion, there were about 40,000 Jewish children in Austria. A few thousands were sent to Britain and Palestine during the first few months of the Nazi regime; about 30,000 stayed behind. Of these, only 300 are still alive, apart from 73 juveniles returned from concentration camps. All the others have been exterminated by the Nazis.

AID FOR AUSTRIA

An Aid-to-Austria Appeal Committee has been founded under the chairmanship of Sir Walford Selby former British Minister to Vienna. An appeal sponsored by the Archbishops of Canterbury and Westminster, the Chief Rabbi and several members of both Houses of Parliament of all parties asks for donations to buy food, clothing and medical supplies to be sent to Austria. The new fund merges the two hitherto existing relief funds for Austria: the Aid-for-Austria Fund and the Austrian Relief Committee.

Donations should be sent to the Hon. Treasurer, *J. B. Priestley*, Aid-to-Austria Appeal Committee, Room 156, 21 Bloomsbury Street, London, W.C.1.

AUSTRIAN LABOUR CLUB

31, Broadhurst Gardens, N.W.6.

SUNDAY, January 6th at 7 p.m.

Group of Austrian Socialists (Members only).

SUNDAY, January 13th at 7 p.m.

W. Warby, M.P.: "The United Nations Organisation."

SUNDAY, January 20th at 6 p.m.

Chamber Music (Commemorating 40 years "Arbeiter Symphoniekonzerte.")

SUNDAY, January 27th at 7 p.m.

Florence Paton, M.P.: "Flashback Vienna, 1918."