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THE "STATE OF AUSTRIA" RECOGNISED

The four occupying powers have recognised the new Austrian Government as well as the State of Austria in a similar worded statement addressed to the Presi-

dent, Dr. Karl Renner, and the Chancellor, Dr. Figl. The official British announcement reads:—

"(1) His Majesty's Government recognises Austria as a State with the same frontiers as 1937 pending a final definition of the frontiers.

"(2) They recognise Dr. Renner as the duly elected head of the Austrian State, and recognise the present Austrian Government, formed as a result of the elections held on November 25, as the de jure Government of Austria."

The Austrian Government have been informed that this declaration in no way affects the control exercised over Austria and the Austrian Government by the Allied Council for Austria, which is maintained in its existing form pending the conclusion of a new agreement on the subject between the Governments of the four occupying Powers.

Thus a further milestone on the hard way to Austria's rehabilitation has been reached. In October last the Provisional Government of Dr. Renner was recognised after it was broadened by the inclusion of representatives of the Provinces, which incidentally resulted in a strengthening of the People's Party.

The recognition just announced, though satisfactory as it is, should not obscure the fact that Austria is, it is true, a liberated country, but she is not a country at liberty.

Austria is occupied by foreign armies, estimated at 900,000 men, a force about thirty times as big as the pre-war Austrian army.

Furthermore, Austria's economic basis and therefore her whole existence as an independent country is endangered as long as two fundamental principles remain unsettled. One is the question to whom Austria's industries belong, the other the division of the country in four separate, economically, almost hermetically closed zones.

The Potsdam agreement laid down that

German external assets should come under the control of the Allies and that such assets could be used to satisfy Allied reparation claims. After the collapse of the Nazi regime most of the big Austrian industries turned out to be nominally German property because they had been taken over by German banks and German industrialists after the annexation. In the same way the whole property of the First Austrian Republic became automatically the property of the German Reich. But the fact remains that all these assets, private as well as state owned represent the bulk of Austria's national property without which the existence of the Second Republic would seriously be endangered. Pending a decision on this vital issue, Austria's economic life is paralysed at present.

The other issue is the partitioning of the country small as it is, in four parts, each of which has been forced to develop into an autarch economic unit. This division makes it impossible to bring food supplies from agricultural districts into industrial areas where people are living on

a starvation diet. It makes it impossible to transport raw materials from their sources to factories where they are needed and could be manufactured into badly needed consumer goods. The country's economic sinews are dead.

The Provisional as well as the present Government have repeatedly implored the occupation powers to lift the barriers and to allow a free flow of foodstuffs,

raw materials and goods between the various zones but all was of no avail.

The Austrian people do hope that the formal recognition of Austria as a State will be followed quickly by the withdrawal of the occupation forces, by the restitution of her economic assets and by the integration of her economy. Only then will the recognition become a reality.

A PEOPLE WITHOUT A NAME DR. RENNER ON AUSTRIA'S RESISTANCE

Owing to a delay in the transmission we can only now publish part of the report which Dr. Renner, in his capacity as Chancellor of the Provisional Government submitted to the newly elected Austrian Parliament. This extract is the more remarkable as it repudiates the assertions that the Austrians have not done enough for the liberation of their country. Dr. Renner said *inter alia*:—

"It was not the lot of the Austrian people to shake off in open revolt the rule of the foreign power that had annexed it, nor to defeat the tyrants who had oppressed it at home. Attempts there had been many and the victims were numerous: those who died on the gallows as well as those who perished in concentration camps. Those who fought in the Resistance but were lucky enough to survive, bear sad witness to it. Our critics abroad who deem that not enough has been done by us to be considered a liberated people in the full sense of the word, will do more justice to Austria if they remember this.

"How could a people, fettered by physical force, deprived of its own government, reduced to an incoherent, unorganised mass of individuals, smash Fascism with its own resources if it has taken the Allied Great Powers five years of united armed effort to achieve this?"

"Since 1938, Austria was a people without a name, a people without a government, without institutions of its own. It could not liberate itself and therefore it owes a great debt to the victorious armies, and above all the Red Army.

"And behold: our people have quickly felt at home in the traditional institutions, it has got rid of all foreign influence and has gladly accepted the newly established Austria; down to the last village it has helped to build up the Second Republic.

"The Austrian people have thus given proof that they are willing and able to clear their country of every vestige of Nazism and that they are capable and ready to govern and administrate their newly established country as they had done in those years of the First Republic until they had been misled and finally destroyed by foreign Fascist influence.

"Our people, heavily tried in two world wars, has proved by its model behaviour in these eight months of rebirth that it deserves to govern itself and that it is worthy of full freedom."

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According to the book "Ewiges Wien" ("Eternal Vienna") by Hans Riemer, Public Relations Officer of the Vienna Municipality, which has just reached this country, six thousand political death sentences were carried out in Vienna during the Nazi regime.

AUSTRIAN REFUGEES MAY RETURN FROM U.S.A.

The ban on the exit of Austrian refugees in the U.S.A. has been lifted. Those who wish to return to their country—this applies in particular to Austrians who emigrated to the U.S.A.—are fully entitled to do so. They must, however, produce a permit for return issued by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

AUSTRIA'S VITAL PROBLEMS

AN INTERVIEW WITH VICE-CHANCELLOR DR. SCHÄRF

Vice-Chancellor Dr. Adolf Schärf gave an interview to a representative of the U.S. News Agency recently. Concerning the currency and financial position of Austria and the prospects of changes or improvements in the currency law, he said: "The problem depends largely on the occupation troops. Should the costs of occupation prove *too high*, it might have a *harmful* effect on the currency. Up to date, the Austrian Government knows nothing concrete about a reduction of the occupying forces, but the Government has been assured that a reduction can be expected.

As it is, more troops are stationed in Austria than in any territory of the same size in Germany.

The Socialist Party's immediate action programme comprises two distinct fields: first, the nationalisation of the big industries suitable for such action, and the

removal of the demarcation lines; secondly, the introduction of social legislation abolished by the Nazis.

The immediate return of prisoners-of-war is essential for the recovery of Austrian economy; Austria suffers from an acute shortage of men aged 20 to 50 years.

There is also the psychological aspect: the absence of fathers and of older brothers from family life had led to a certain demoralisation among youth. The repatriation of prisoners-of-war is continually being brought to the attention of the Allied Control Council.

Concerning a settlement of the ownership of German assets in Austria, Schärf said it was very much to be hoped that a decision favourable to all parties would be reached on this issue, since **an unfavourable decision might entail the worst consequences for Austria.**

DEMARCATIION AND STARVATION

Austria is still divided into four zones of occupation, and the lines of demarcation are insuperable barriers. This is a widely known fact. But it is not generally realised, what exactly Chinese walls within such a small country mean in terms of actual distress.

In a letter of thanks for gifts of food the Mayor of Wiener Neustadt writes:—

"52,000 bombs rained down on our city, and then hunger came. The women have to carry their children, for they are undernourished to such a degree that they cannot move by themselves.

"Despairing mothers implore the town administration to give them poison in order to relieve themselves and their children from so unbearable a suffering. Home-coming men find their flats destroyed, their wives killed and their children taken away.

"But we will not lose our courage. Perhaps there will be a time when we shall be able to thank you not only in words."

This letter was addressed to Socialist organisations of Vienna and Salzburg who had collected food for the industrial areas of Lower Austria, where food supplies are indeed on a starvation level. The town of Wiener Neustadt is most probably hardest hit by hunger and distress in the whole country.

It is situated in a district where the ordinary consumer obtains 800 calories per day, whereas in other parts of the country, food with a content of 1,500 calories is distributed.

The Hungry Feed The Hungry

Luckily enough there are no demarcation lines for Socialist solidarity. The workers of Vienna got together and collected what meagre gifts of food they could. Members of the Socialist Party of Ottakring, Margarethen and Simmering (districts of Vienna), railway workers of Floridsdorf and Leopoldstadt, employees of the co-operatives, they all did their very best. The food rations in Vienna, averaging to about 1,500 calories daily, are certainly small enough. But

a tablespoon of flour here, and a lump of sugar there—in the end the gifts amounted to 79 tons.

Two youth organisations of Salzburg, the "Kinderfreunde" and the "Rote Falke" took part in this relief work, they collected 30 tons of food. It was a real adventure to get that food from Salzburg to Wiener Neustadt. Somehow they got hold of four lorries and a huge trailer, and the convoy began its journey. There were delays and breakdowns, two lorries got lost for hours, there were excitement and seemingly endless discussions and difficulties at the demarcation line between Upper and Lower Austria, but eventually the convoy reached its destiny.

Thus the children of the industrial towns of Lower Austria, of Voelau, and Feuerwerksanstalt, Hainfeld, Lilienfeld, Wimpassing and Wiener Neustadt felt Father Christmas had not forgotten them and they had at least something to eat.

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NO MORE SCHOOL MEALS FOR VIENNESE CHILDREN

The Director of Education (Stadt-schulrat) notified Vienna headmasters and directors, that the food required for school meals could NOT BE OBTAINED, and the school meal scheme, which should have begun on January 7th, had to be postponed indefinitely.

DEMARICATION LINES ALSO HAMPER JUSTICE

In an interview given recently, the Minister for Justice, Dr. Gerö, discussed the punishment of Austrian National Socialists and war criminals and emphasised the difficulties arising from the shortage of politically unimpeached judges and other officials. All judges and officials now working in the Vienna Criminal Court had blameless political records.

The most seriously incriminated National Socialists had fled from Vienna to the West when the Red Army approached, and were now hiding beyond

the demarcation line, where nobody knew them and where they pretended to be good Austrians. The Austrian judicial authorities maintained close contact with the Allied Judicial Commission, but the demarcation lines and the division of Vienna into four zones seriously hampered the prosecution of Nazi criminals.

Something like diplomatic negotiations were necessary to obtain permission for the transfer of arrested persons from one district to another or to act outside the seat of the Court of First Instance.

CARINTHIAN SLOVENES LOYAL AUSTRIANS

Slovenes in Southern Carinthia have formed the *League of Austrian Slovenes*. This non-party organisation aims at uniting all Slovenes who believe in Austria and democracy. The League demands for the Slovene minority undisturbed economic and cultural development, but rejects emphatically the dismemberment of Carinthia and separation from Austria for historical and economic reasons. It states that the overwhelming majority of Slovenes in Carinthia have no connection with the small separatist group in the country; the leaders of this group have no right to speak for Carinthian Slovenes.

AUSTRIAN "UNDERGROUND" NAZIS MAY LOSE CITIZENSHIP

The Austrian Government has decreed that all persons in Austria who were members of the Nazi Party before the Anschluss in March, 1938, are to be regarded as German citizens and will be ineligible to regain Austrian citizenship. Such persons may also be expelled from Austria, but Austrian officials point out that the question of deporting all pre-Anschluss Nazis is not one for solution by Austria alone.

Austrians who joined the Party after the annexation will retain their Austrian citizenship.

NATIONALISATION — A WEAPON AGAINST FASCISM

In the last issue of the *London-Information* we published a resolution passed by the Austrian T.U.C. outlining the Council's demands in the sphere of economic and social legislation.

These demands were emphasised in a speech by *Karl Krisch*, the General Secretary of the Austrian Trade Union Council, held at the Socialist Party's conference and in which he said:—

"In our capacity as Socialist trade unionists we submitted a resolution in which the Socialist members of the Trade Union put forward views which must become the views of the Party as a whole. In particular, we demand the introduction of regulations concerning maximum working hours, not necessarily contenting ourselves with the 48 hour week **but reducing them to 40 hours if and when economic conditions permit.** Participation by the workers in management is also an essential, for only in this way will it be possible for us to influence the country's economic life. Apart from these social demands, we want to put a stop to the state of affairs in which the capitalists are able to employ their factories in a way detrimental to the interests of the population. Experience has shown us where this leads and that **capitalists are not averse to arming Fascist hordes to be unleashed against the workers.** An end must be put to this sort of thing by the nationalisation of factories, which have been found ripe for this measure. Only when these demands have been met shall we be able to establish the economic system we all desire."

A New Labour Law

Karl Maisel, the new Minister for Social Administration, in an interview surveyed his Ministry's tasks and said:

"In close co-operation with the trade unions and Chambers of Labour we are working on new social legislation. Our most urgent task is to create a *new Labour Law*. The Workers' Holiday Law will be renewed in the near future and

a new Works' Council Law promulgated. A new law for the protection of women and juveniles is under consideration. Social Insurance Institutes, now under public administration, are to be returned to self-administration. The introduction of the eight-hour working day is in progress. For miners, a 40-hour week is demanded. The amended Workers' Holiday Law provides, for seasonal workers, the introduction of "holiday vouchers" which remain valid in the case of a change of job.

AUSTRIANS IN THE NORWEGIAN RESISTANCE

Forty-six Austrian members of the Norwegian Resistance Movement have returned to their country. They were formerly members of the German Armed Forces—officers and soldiers—who in Norway gave information to the Allies, supervised the training of Norwegian patriots and supplied them with arms.

MEDICINES THROUGH THE BLACK MARKET ONLY

The Black Market has recently been almost the *only* source of supply for medicines. It is almost impossible to have a prescription made at a dispensary.

Austria is almost entirely dependent on the imports of medicaments and the small quantities which reach the country mostly get stuck on the other side of the demarcation lines. The most glaring example is salvarsan, of which there is enough in Vorarlberg to rid Austria of her greatest anxieties, if it could be brought to Vienna. Only energetic Allied help can improve the present desperate situation.

Doctors have now become accustomed to making do with the minimum of medicines. But some medicines are *indispensable*, e.g., insulin, salvarsan and calcium. The X-ray specialist is hampered by lack of electricity and cannot obtain films. There is not enough soft soap, so important in the fight against tuberculosis, or even camomile tea.

BRITISH LABOUR AND AUSTRIAN SOCIALISTS

Our friend, Karl Czernetz, who has spent the last six years in this country and who has recently returned to Austria compared the British Labour Party and the Austrian Socialist Party in a talk over the Vienna Radio the other day.

He opposed the view, frequently expressed in Austria, that the Austrian Socialist Party differed fundamentally from the British Labour Party, the Austrian Socialists—so it was alleged—being a doctrinaire Internationalist Marxian class party, while the British Labour Party was a broadminded nationally conscious party of the people.

In point of fact, the difference between the two parties, due to their different historical background, has considerably diminished in the last 25 years. The British Labour Party had conducted and won the recent elections on a fully-fledged programme of Socialist reconstruction, and although a thoroughly democratic party, it had grown increasingly aware of the problem of

power within the State. Both the British Labour Party and the Austrian Socialists were parties of working people, not of the working class alone. On the other hand, no other Socialist Party in the world was so dominated by the trade unions as the British Labour Party. As to Internationalism, the Labour Party's record of hospitality to Europe's Socialist exiles and similar acts of assistance had vindicated the Party's practical if not theoretical Internationalism.

"But the fundamental likeness of the two Parties had impressed itself upon me most deeply during the visits to local branch meetings," Czernetz said. "In the midst of a heated discussion at a branch meeting of the British Labour Party, one might be surprised that the discussion is not in our language. In fact, we both use the same language, the language of Socialism. Both here and there, these people are filled with a burning resolve to achieve socialism in our time."

INSUFFICIENT PURGE OF THE UNIVERSITIES

Reuter's Correspondent reports from Vienna that the Ministry of Education is inviting all exiled Austrian scientists and professors to return home and help rebuild democratic schools and universities.

This step follows a strong press campaign against the Vienna University authorities who were accused of retaining Nazis and non-Nazi pan-Germans.

The new Minister of Education, a member of the Catholic People's Party, has announced his intention of seeing that every trace of Nazi influence is eradicated from the University. Socialists and Communists, however, are not satisfied.

They claim that non-Nazi professors, who are mainly Catholic and who mostly supported the "Clerical Dictatorship" of Dollfuss and Schuschnigg before the Anschluss, are nearly as undemocratic and dangerous as the Nazis themselves.

Left Wing Parties hope that the return of liberal-minded scientists, including many Jews, from abroad will redress the situation.

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In connection with this report, an article in the *Arbeiter-Zeitung* is of special interest. It points to public uneasiness about the present state of affairs in Austrian universities and colleges and then says:—

"The public knows very little about the steps taken to remove Nazi professors. They are taken by Committees *behind closed doors*. All the public knows is that *not much* has been done. But the investigation into the political reliability of university teachers is not a matter of university privilege but an affair concerning the whole nation. The working-class is fully conscious that, on this decision, depends the education of their future judges, civil servants, teachers and industrial managers."

WE ORGANISE RELIEF FOR AUSTRIA

THE AID TO AUSTRIA APPEAL COMMITTEE

Ways and means of how to help starving Austria were discussed at a meeting of the Austrian Labour Club on Sunday, January 6th, when Dr. Scheu reported on the "Aid to Austria Appeal Committee." While it is impossible to send food from England, this Committee has permission from the Government to transfer the money collected and to buy food from Denmark and other countries where there is a surplus. The Society of Friends will organise the distribution of this food. Channels are also open for sending clothes, and experienced British representatives of the Committee will provide effective liaison between those who give to the Appeal and the Austrian Authorities.

It has to be noted however, that in future no separate Austrian Organisation will be allowed to appeal to the Public for aid to Austria but only in the name of the Aid to Austria Appeal Committee.

What can we, the Group of Austrian Socialists, do?

We collect money and clothes, we organise Socials, Concerts, Sales in Aid for Austria.

You can write to the Austrian Labour Club for labelled sacks to pack and send in your collected clothes and shoes. The clothes should be clean, shoes mended. The women members in London meet regularly to do the necessary mending. When you have filled a sack and sewn it, you either inform the nearest group of the Society of Friends to collect it or else you send it back to the Austrian Labour Club in London.

The Aid to Austria Appeal Committee will soon issue tickets (Bausteine) at 6d. and 1/-. This will make it easier to collect money. You may also ask the Austrian Labour Club for collection lists.

Further suggestions as to how to raise more money for the Aid to Austria Appeal Committee are most welcome. Do not forget: this money means food for our children.

The Christmas Sale held in the Austrian Labour Club on December 15th attracted many members and friends. When it was over we counted £175 which we hope will soon be turned into food parcels for starving Austrian children. Many people had helped to make the Sale a big success. It was impossible to thank everybody individually, but we should like to tell all members and friends outside London how grateful we are for their unflinching co-operation. We should also like to thank Mrs. Gross for her Piano Recital, Miss Blacknell and Miss Evans for their Cockney Ballads and Annie Hirsch and her friends for their Punch and Judy Show.

At the same time we received many parcels of clothes and shoes for Austria. We tried to acknowledge the receipt of every parcel, but shortage of staff and the busy time before Christmas may be responsible for one or the other mistakes. We should like to apologise and to thank all those who contributed. We are glad to say that we have collected and packed 24 sacks. The first lot (10 sacks) was collected for transport by the Society of Friends on Friday, January 11th. Transports will continue at intervals of four weeks, we are promised.

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RELIEF FROM SWEDEN AND U.S.A.

The Swedish Trade Unions sent food parcels to 4,000 individual members of Austrian Trade Unions who were known to have been active in the underground movement from 1934 to 1945.

Austrian Socialists in the United States purchased 500 food parcels in Sweden and sent them to our comrades in Austria.

The Head Office of the *Socialist Youth* announces that its first training course for youth leaders in Lower Austria took place in Puchberg am Schneeberg from January 7th to 13th.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE AUSTRIAN SOCIALIST PARTY

According to the new statute of the Austrian Socialist Party anyone who wishes to join the Party—irrespective whether he or she was a member of the Austrian Social Democratic Party or not—has to file an application which has to be vouched for by two members. According to an arrangement with the Party's Central Secretariat, members of the Group of Austrian Socialists in Great Britain can apply for membership through the Group if they have been a member of the Group on April 30th, 1945 and fill in the application form. The vouching will be done by the Group. Requests for application forms should be made to the Secretary, Austrian Labour Club, 31, Broadhurst Gardens, London, N.W.6.

AUSTRIAN LABOUR CLUB

SUNDAY, January 20th at 6 p.m.

In Commemoration of 40 years "Arbeiter Symphoniekonzerte." *Chamber Music*: Schubert: Works for Piano, Violin. Songs. The Trout Quintet. Admission 2/6.

SUNDAY, January 27th at 7 p.m.

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

SUNDAY, February 3rd at 7 p.m.

Jenny Lee, M.P.: "The American Loan and Its Implications."

SUNDAY, February 10th at 7 p.m.

Group of Austrian Socialists. Annual Meeting. (Members only).

Burg-Theater To Be Rebuilt

Steps are being taken to rebuild the world famous Burg-Theater on Vienna's Ring. The stage and auditorium were completely burned out; provisional roofing has been placed over the whole building. The iron safety curtain withstood the fire which gutted the theatre, although it was somewhat buckled as a result of the intense heat. There is a tremendous amount of clearance to be done. The place was a mass of twisted steel girders and rubble of all sorts. This is gradually being removed. The cost of reconstruction of the Burg-Theater is estimated at 21,000,000 schillings and will take at least three years.

ONE CAN WRITE TO AUSTRIA

The mail service between this country and Austria has been restored. It is however restricted to postcards and letters up to 1oz. only. The fees are 3d. for ordinary letters and 5d. for air-mail letters. The "Arbeiter Zeitung" points out that the correspondence is liable to censorship.

Rebuilding Of Stephanskirche Begun

The task of rebuilding St. Stephen's Cathedral—burned out during the battle for Vienna—is going ahead with the help of the British Army authorities and 60 German prisoners of war lent by them to the cathedral authorities. Transport is generally short in the city, but Lieutenant General Sir Richard McCreery, commander of British troops in Austria, has provided lorries to help in the work.

In spite of all difficulties—lack of raw materials and transport, short rations for local workmen, and cold weather, one hopes it will be possible to roof over the nave in time to prevent irreparable damage to the structure.

It is estimated that the complete reconstruction of the cathedral will take about ten years and cost about 7,000,000 Austrian Schillings (about £175,000). The City Council of Vienna has given the cathedral authorities permission to take what stone they need from ruined buildings in the centre of the city.

Occupation Authorities Withhold Window Glass

A survey of the glass procurement scheme, issued by the Vienna Municipality, states that the 60,000 sq.m. of glass produced by the Brunn Glass Factory in October and November could not be made available to the population as it was not released by the Occupation Authorities. For November, the Allies promised to supply 270,000 sq.m. for window panes, to be imported from Czechoslovakia but only 115,000 sq.m. arrived.