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DER ÖSTERREICHISCHEN SOZIALISTEN IN ENGLAND

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AUSTRIAN PARLIAMENT HAS TO REVOKE BILL

How limited the power of the Austrian Government and Parliament in fact is made obvious when, **on the instructions of the Allied Council, the Austrian Parliament, within 24 hours had to revoke one of the most important economic bills which has been in force since May, 1945.**

After the collapse of the Nazi regime almost all the large industrial, commercial, banking and insurance enterprises, as well as many smaller factories, workshops and business firms were suddenly left without management since either the owners or the managers, being Nazis or compromised Germans, had fled or had been put under arrest.

In May, 1945, the Provisional Government passed a bill which gave power to the Minister of Commerce to appoint Public Administrators for all these enterprises. About 6,000 Public Administrators were appointed who, though acting on their responsibility, were guided by general principles issued by the Government, which in this way could co-

ordinate the work and influence industrial and commercial policy.

About two months ago the Allied Council raised a protest against this Bill whereupon the Austrian Government entered into negotiations with the Allied Powers, trying to meet as far as possible their wishes, **but at the beginning of this month the Allied Council insisted on the Bill's immediate revocation and the Austrian Parliament had no choice than to obey this instruction.**

Under the new Bill which replaces the revoked one the Public Administrators will be appointed by the occupying powers and the Austrian authorities will have no say whatsoever in this matter. To make things worse each of the four powers will most probably have its own ideas in the handling of this vital problem, thus increasing the danger of a further disruption of Austria's economic life.

It may be noted that the People's Party has long been known to resent the original Bill because in its views it paved the way for nationalisation which the People's Party is known to oppose.

FROM 800 TO 1,200 CALORIES

The Starvation Diet in Lower Austria

The desperate food situation in Austria was once again brought to the fore by an announcement made by the Provincial Governor of Lower Austria, Reither, **that from the next rationing period the rations in Lower Austria will be increased from 800 to 1,200 calories.**

In relief planning 2,000 calories a day is recognised as a minimum level under which there would be marked effects on

the ability to work and danger of the development of disease.

Health Condition Very Serious

A report from the director of the Ministry of Health indicates the very serious condition of health of the Viennese population. They are continuously undernourished, a fact which specially endangers the health of children, juveniles and elderly people over 55. Pulmonary and throat tuber-

culosis show a disastrous increase. At present not one sanatorium for children or adults has yet been opened in Vienna; only a small sanatorium will open in spring to accommodate about 80 to 100 children. The sanatoria in Rekawinkel and Perchtoldsdorf as well as the one in Alland would be usable *if the inventory was available*. In Vienna 700 beds are needed for T.B. cases. Besides, the most vital foodstuffs are lacking, such as milk, butter, vegetables and fruit. Children are suffering from diseases due to the lack of vitamins A and D, and rickets with babies are on the increase.

V.D. are also spreading and the consequences are even more serious through the complete lack of drugs. Owing to the lack of fuel frozen limbs and bladder trouble are frequent complaints. The only hope, the report adds, is that the demarcation lines will soon be abolished so that foodstuffs and medical supplies might be made available.

Malnutrition And Freezing

In Vienna medical examination of pupils in vocational training schools are carried out under the aegis of the Labour Chamber and the Austrian Trade Union League to test the state of health of working juveniles. First examinations revealed **serious physical defects due to malnutrition. The juveniles also lacked necessary clothing; of the 29 juveniles examined, only one had good shoes and only three had winter overcoats.**

The U.S. Relief Organisation for Austria has made available milk powder to the equivalent of 12,000 litres of fresh milk for distribution to children.

War Criminal Trial In Vienna

The first war criminal trial before a People's Court took place in Vienna recently. The defendant was *Dr. Rudolf Neumayer*, Minister of Finance in the infamous Seyss-Inquart Cabinet, which carried through the "Anschluss." Neumayer was charged with high treason and sentenced to penal servitude for life.

IN MEMORY OF FEBRUARY 12th

For the first time the Austrian workers could openly and solemnly celebrate the memory of those who in February, 1934, fell whilst fighting the battle against the Austrian brand of Fascism. They celebrated the day when the workers rose for freedom and democracy and against dictatorship. There was a memorial rally by the graves of the fallen, Vice-Chancellor Schärff spoke over the Vienna Radio and Deputy-Mayor Speiser addressed a memorial meeting attended by many hundreds of Socialist functionaries. On the 12th February at 9 in the morning work stopped in all factories for five minutes and at the same time the Lord Mayor of Vienna, Körner, spoke over the radio.

VIENNA HOUSING AND FOOD

The Lord Mayor of Vienna, Koerner, said in an interview: "No one in Vienna is without shelter but dwellings are frequently shared by more people than is desirable from hygienic or social points of view. Since the end of the war 100,000 flats were temporarily repaired, but the housing problem will only be solved when factories are removed to the outskirts of the town. This year 8,000 new dwellings are planned, 6,000 by repairing at present uninhabitable ones and 2,000 medium-sized new flats.

Food supply remains insufficient; although calories are stable, potatoes and vegetables are badly needed. At present only about one-tenth of the average potato supplies between 1933 and 1937 is available, and then rice was undoubtedly preferred. A short time ago I was notified of the return of 19,000 prisoners-of-war, let us hope that the remaining 150,000 prisoners from Vienna will also come home soon. On the whole we may look forward to the coming spring with optimism."

A Socialist Minister in Moscow

Karl Waddbrunner, Socialist Under-Secretary of State in the Ministry of Planning was appointed Austrian Minister to Moscow.

AUSTRIAN SOCIALIST M.P.s DEMAND FOR NATIONALISATION

True to their election programme, the Socialist members of the Austrian Parliament submitted a Bill for the nationalisation of several important branches of economic activity. The industries affected are: iron ore and coal mining, and foundries with the big works in Upper Styria and Linz, which are the basis of the Austrian metal industry; crude oil production, in particular the large Zistersdorf field whose enormous economic importance is still not fully realised by the public. With more than 500 productive wells, this field has put Austria in third place as a European oil

producer, after Russia and Rumania. Next in importance comes the power industry. Large electrical industry firms, too, are to be nationalised, as also the manufacture of road and railway vehicles. The Bill includes the sugar industry and the large privately owned food industry enterprises, so that the production of essential food would no longer be the object of profit-making and speculation. The Socialist Bill also includes banks and insurance companies.

Compensation is to be made in the form of State Bonds for both Austrian and foreign owners.

COMPULSORY LABOUR BILL

The Government has submitted to Parliament the draft of a compulsory labour law which concerns in particular persons up to 30 years of age. According to this law all persons who come under the law banning the Nazi Party and all persons not engaged in full-time employment or production are to be drafted for compulsory labour. Married women running their own households without help are exempted. The age limit for men is from 15 to 60 years, for women 15 to 45 years. In the case of former National Socialists the age limit is extended by 10 years. The law, which is intended for the present situation, is valid only for the current year and will become invalid on 31st December, 1946.

Russian T.U. Delegation In Vienna

A Russian trade union delegation arrived in Vienna to visit the Austrian T.U. League. The League's Chairman, *Boehm*, and the newly-appointed Austrian Minister to Moscow, *Waldbrunner*, received them. *Boehm* expressed pleasure at being able to welcome representatives of the Russian T.U. Movement. The delegation's leader conveyed the greetings of the Russian organisation and said that it was their

aim to get acquainted with the Austrian T.U. Movement, its members and conditions under which they worked. The Russian delegation will also take up contact with the T.U. organisations in the U.S., British and French zones.

THE TERRIBLE FATE OF AUSTRIAN JEWRY

When Hitler marched into Austria there lived there 206,000 Jews (186,000 of them in Vienna). 136,000 succeeded in emigrating, whereas 36,000 were deported to the East and 16,000 to Theresienstadt. All of these unfortunate victims of Nazism perished in the Concentration Camps and Gas Chambers with the exception of about 1,500 who have become human wrecks for the rest of their life. Of those who stayed behind in Vienna only 200 survived by a sheer miracle, but 15,000 died slowly tortured by starvation.

At present about 4,000 Jews are living in Vienna and before long elections will take place for the representative body of the Community. Chancellor *Figl* assured representatives of the Jews that he would do everything in his power to ease the situation of the Jews and make the Austrian population understand the grim conditions with which the Jewish refugees were faced.

AUSTRIA GIVES REFUGE TO ANTI-NAZI SUDETEN GERMANS

Among the tens of thousands of displaced persons who still live on Austrian territory there is one section whose fate is especially tragic: these Sudeten Germans, mostly Social Democrats, who fought Nazism as faithful citizens of the Czechoslovak Republic and who were driven from their homesteads after the liberation of Czechoslovakia.

According to an announcement of the Resettlement Office of the Provincial Government of Upper Austria (where most of the expelled Sudeten Germans are at present living) permits of residence for an unlimited period may be granted to:

Ethnic and Sudeten Germans over 60 years of age, if they are given hospitality by blood relatives of Austrian nationality.

Ethnic and Sudeten Germans who resided in Austria before 13th March, 1938, provided they took no part in the exploitation of Austria, were not German State officials or members of the Nazi Party.

Ethnic and Sudeten Germans who were persecuted by the Nazis for reasons of race, nationality, political views or religion.

Persons who are valuable for reconstruction work and those, who, for reasons of health or age, cannot be moved at present will be granted limited permits of residence. All the others will be re-settled in Germany.

Under no circumstances will persons be allowed to stay who had any connections with, or advantages from, Nazi activities.

AUSTRIAN ENVOY'S STATEMENT

The new Austrian Minister to London, *Heinrich Schmid*, who arrived in this country a few days ago made the following statement:

"My most important task in London will be to work for the restoration of Austria's full independence and sovereignty, and thus to see Austria admitted to the United Nations. I hope to find special understanding for this in Britain. Austria occupies a half-way position between East and West; but we must not become a bridgehead either against the East or against the West. I shall also advance in Britain Austria's claims to South Tyrol, and emphasise our interest in a free port in Trieste. For Austria this is not a political, but a communication and trade problem. Particular attention will be given to the resumption of trade between Britain and Austria, now greatly hampered by the demarcation lines. I shall also try to obtain speedier postal communications between our prisoners-of-war in Britain and their relatives. For the fulfilment of my mission I count on the co-operation of

the Austrian colony in London which includes many leaders who, we hope, will resume their activities in, and for, their old Homeland."

A Message For The "London Information"

We are very pleased to publish the following message from Minister Schmid.

"The Editor,
'London Information.'

As the first representative of the Austrian Government in London, I am glad to send through the 'London Information' my best greetings to my Austrian compatriots in this country and to forward to them the best wishes and kindest regards from our old country. We fully realise what our Austrian colony here have done for their country during these last years and we are grateful to them. Austria has now come to life again and the way to a peaceful development is open to her. Great obstacles are still to be overcome, but I am hopeful that our common efforts will contribute towards re-establishing Austria to her legitimate place in the community of nations and enabling her

THE LIBERATION OF INNSBRUCK

Resistance Of Austrian Anti-Nazis Inside The Wehrmacht

Little has been known so far about anti-Nazi activities in Austrian detachments of the Wehrmacht.

Only now details are made public about the Resistance inside the Army.

The Panzer Ersatz-Company of the Regiment 137 in the Conrad Barracks was a centre of anti-Nazi activities; their leader was First Lieutenant Anton Huber who had been convinced for a long time that the war was lost and unjustifiable. Huber was therefore determined not to sacrifice his soldiers by sending them into the front line. He was assisted by the then Army doctors (Stabsarzt) Dr. Eckl and Dr. Kesch. They issued certificates to keep their soldiers away from the battle line.

During discussions between the then Battalion Commander Major Heine and his assistant Lt. Steiner, who were both anti-Nazis, further plans were prepared. On May 1st, 1945, the Resistance was in complete possession of the barracks.

On May 2nd, 1945, Major Heine and First Lieutenant Huber for the Army, and Architect Sackenheim for the

civilians, started to act. At noon Dr. Eckl and a small group of soldiers had occupied the Kloster Barracks. Barbed wire was put across the gates and officers and men of the SS taken prisoners. In the meantime the Inn Barracks and other army buildings had been occupied and by 5 p.m. all military and police quarters were in the hands of the Resistance.

But the Headquarters of the Commandant for Tyrol, General Boehaimbs, a fanatical Nazi, had still to be taken. Led by Heine, Huber and Sackenheim, a small group of 30 men drove to Maria-brunn, surrounded the Headquarters, took the General and his officers with them as prisoners.

In the same night the Camp of Rum, near Innsbruck, was to be occupied. Heavy fire received the Resistance. SS troops had barricaded themselves there. In the end their resistance was broken with the result that the capital of Tyrol and the best part of the country were handed over to the Allies without a shot being fired by them.

to take a modest but useful part in the peaceful progress of mankind.

Yours Sincerely,

Dr. Heinrich Schmid."

* * *

At the annual meeting of the Group of the Austrian Socialists in Great Britain, the following resolution was passed unanimously:

"The Group of Austrian Socialists in Great Britain welcomes with satisfaction the arrival of the first diplomatic representative of the Austrian Republic. The Group declares its readiness to support with all its means the Austrian Minister in his efforts to represent the interests of the Austrian Republic and its people."

Salt produced in Aussee, hitherto exported to Czechoslovakia in exchange for glass, will now also be available for the home market. Graz has already received the first consignment.

AUSTRIAN LABOUR CLUB

SUNDAY, February 17th at 7 p.m.

Bertl Linder, Brussels: "Political Activities in Concentration Camps."

SATURDAY, February 23rd at 7 p.m.

CARNIVAL: Music—Dance—Variety Programme — Quiz — Fun — Raffle. Tickets 2/6.

SUNDAY, March 3rd, 7 p.m.: Dr. Paul

Bondy: "Impressions from a Journey Through Germany." (In German).

At the annual meeting of the Group of Austrian Socialists in Great Britain (which also runs the Austrian Labour Club) the Executive was elected with Karl Ausch as Chairman, Siegfried Mühlstein as Treasurer and the following members: Gertrude Danneberg, Hans Dub, Louise Dub, Robert Fischbach, Max Grünwald, Bettina Hirsch, Jacob Linder, Hedi Schwarz, Emmerich Weisman, Lotte Winter. The Control Committee consists of Max Hirsch and Karl Bindermann.

AID TO AUSTRIA APPEAL COMMITTEE

"The world-wide emergency in the supply of foodstuffs, which had been drawing nearer every week since last summer, has abruptly reached its eleventh hour . . . the worst areas are Warsaw, Budapest and the urban districts of Austria . . ."

(Times leader from February 7th).

We may easily be seized by an overwhelming feeling of helplessness, even of despair. What can we do?

I have heard many of our comrades say: "We cannot stop the disaster, we are only deceiving ourselves, it is no use."

I say to these friends: "Many will perish, but if you and I have helped to save *one* man, *one* child, it would still be better than to despair." Limited as our possibilities are, we still must do what is in our power.

The Non-Party Relief Work

"Agreed," say some of our comrades. "If it is a question of saving a few only let us make sure then that help will be given to the good men, and not to Fascists."

In an emergency it is only human and natural to think of one's own family and friends first. Austrian Socialists in Great Britain feel the fate of Austria's anti-Fascists as their own. "Let us help our comrades." Everybody was eager to save of his or her ration, to give warm clothes, money. But there were no trains, no planes to carry these things to Austria.

The British authorities, however, are not in favour of relief for members of one political party only. Its main reason was probably the argument that a voluntary organisation with its very limited capacity would naturally concentrate on helping the neediest first: the children and the sick ones. And it would be impossible to give food to children only whose parents belong to a certain political party.

Many of our comrades were disappointed. They had been at Buchenwald, their families been sent to the gas chamber. They could not bear the thought of helping to feed a guilty man. We understand them. Although in theory there should be no guilty Nazis outside the prison, we know only too well that there are quite a number of them enjoying freedom. It is not the fault of the Austrian government. Zoning made it easy for a Nazi to disappear and to live in another district where he was not known.

It would be very pessimistic, I think, to estimate that every twentieth starving Austrian was a Nazi. We do not wish to lessen his burden. But if it meant to let nineteen good Austrians go without relief, what then? We trust the local Authorities in Austria to see to a fair distribution. When the poverty-stricken towns of Austria, Vienna included, were collecting for Wiener-Neustadt's starving children they gave from their meagre supplies for these children without asking questions. Austria has become a very poor country. Their children are her only hope.

Give generously to the Aid to Austria Appeal Committee. Collect more clothes for Austria! H.W.

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

Clean, mended and serviceable clothing only may be sent to: The Austrian Labour Club, 31 Broadhurst Gardens, London, N.W.6.

Austrian Children For Norway

Negotiations are in progress between Austrian welfare offices and Norwegian relief organisations which aim at providing a holiday of several weeks in Norway for Austrian children. The Norwegian aid committee hopes to include 300-400 children in the first transport.