

# LONDON-INFORMATION

OF THE AUSTRIAN SOCIALISTS IN GREAT BRITAIN

DER ÖSTERREICHISCHEN SOZIALISTEN IN ENGLAND

No. 5.

MARCH 1st, 1946

Single Copies: 4d.

## VIENNA WAR DAMAGE — 3,000,000,000 SCHILLING

On the 12th February, 1934, the freely elected Lord Mayor of Vienna and the City Aldermen were arrested and imprisoned by the Austro-Fascist Dollfuss Government. On February 14th, 1946, the freely elected Municipal Council met again for the first time after 12 years of dictatorship and fascism. General Theodor Körner (Socialist) was unanimously elected Lord Mayor, Paul Speiser (Socialist) and L. Weinberger (People's Party) were elected Vice-Mayors.

In his address Lord Mayor Körner remembered those whose sacrifices had paved the way for the re-establishment of a free municipal administration, and also the victims of February 12th, 1934. "Fascism and Nazism," he said, "had not only killed millions of people but had driven many others from their homeland, among them many artists and scholars. To all those we want to say to-day that **we still regard them as ours and that we reckon with their return in the near future. We shall welcome them with open arms in the knowledge that their activities abroad have enhanced the reputation of our city.**"

### A Sad Legacy

Körner then went on: "We have taken over a sad legacy. The great achievements of the past have been squandered and much destruction was caused by the war. And we have now to bear the burden of occupation." He recalled the utter desolation of the city when they took office in April, 1945. Their first task had been to organise the essential public services, and to provide food and shelter for the people. The

warehouses were empty, there was neither food nor coal since the Nazis and the German forces had removed or destroyed all stocks. "Vienna not only lacked supplies, but was also short of manpower since most of the men of working age had been pressed into military service. Most of these men were still not free, and he appealed to the Allies to send home the prisoners-of-war.

"Great things have been achieved during the past few months. But much more could have been done if the men had been back, if the working population had been better fed and if the shortage of transport could have been alleviated. To this must be added the lack of raw material, machines and equipment, and all the unproductive work of clearing the rubble in our factories and workshops."

"It is my duty to thank the Red Army and the Soviet Government for the great sacrifices they made to liberate us from the Fascist yoke, and for their great assistance in supplying food for the population of Vienna from June to August. When the occupation of Vienna was taken over by troops of all four powers, the provision of food was taken over by the four Commanders, to whom we are equally indebted for their help."

### Consequences Of Under-Nourishment

"The division of the city and of the State into four occupation zones has caused grave disadvantages. Vienna is the worst hit, since much of our food supplies used to be obtained from areas now beyond the demarcation line."

"We can provide fresh milk only for the

smallest children, while there is surplus milk and butter in the Western and Southern Provinces of the Republic which they would gladly supply to Vienna. The state of under-nourishment of our population, and of our youth in particular, has become grave. People have largely lost their power of resistance, and an influenza epidemic would be disastrous. The rise of the mortality rate clearly reflects the result of the past few years, and in particular of the past few months' under-nourishment. The Viennese were thankful for the relief supplies sent by Switzerland and Sweden, and other foreign and Austrian help."

### **Real Authority Needed**

"Decisive help in our great distress can, however, only come from the great Allied Powers. We hope that the elections and the setting up of a recognised Austrian Government will help to solve the many urgent problems which our State administration hitherto could not tackle, and we hope that our Government will be given the authority needed for effective administration, and that the extent of the occupation will be reduced."

"Thanks to Allied help, fuel has reached Vienna. Nevertheless, most Viennese are freezing in their cold houses, though at least we know that our children have warm schoolrooms. This is a sad statement for a Lord Mayor of Vienna to make when taking office; it is equally sad to have to admit that *we ourselves cannot change* the situation; but the Municipal Administration will do everything in its power to alleviate as far as possible the population's difficult lot. We also appeal to the Allies to tide us over with food and coal supplies until the promised UNRRA help arrives, and to open the frontiers at present dividing our small country into four parts."

The first concern of the Municipal Administration would again be welfare measures for mothers and young people. The past regime has harmed greatly the bodies and souls of the young. Great

efforts would be needed to remedy this and to make young people once again valuable members of our society. That presupposed a complete reform of the educational system. The young people must be taught to think for themselves, to recover their courage and enthusiasm. They must become reliable citizens, a bulwark against Fascist and Nazi aspirations. Equally important were measures for the aged.

The reconstruction of public utilities would involve great efforts. The city transport system was *completely destroyed* during the fighting, but great progress had been made in establishing the tram services. The electricity supply system must be improved to make good the past years' neglect. Some of the streets and houses could now be lit. By an extension of the grid system, another 30,000 flats would be provided with electricity.

### **100,000 Flats Destroyed**

"Our most difficult task is the rebuilding of our houses and the reconstruction of our town. It is so extensive that it cannot be accomplished during the term of office of the present municipality."

"We must clear our streets of rubble, and press on with the repair of urgently needed municipal and public buildings. The loss of 100,000 flats forces us to concentrate on the more easily repairable houses. We hope to be able to make 6,000 dwellings habitable every year. We shall promote by every means private building through settlement and building societies, and we hope that this will provide another 2,000 dwellings per year." The Lord Mayor was well aware that the realisation of these plans would be very difficult, since the building material industry *had not yet started production*. Both material and labour were short.

### **A Heavy Price**

Much work was needed to rehabilitate cultural institutions and places of entertainment. The Municipality would contribute to the rebuilding of the State Opera, the Burgtheater, St. Stephen's



Cathedral and other important cultural monuments. The rehabilitation of the City would need much money. Experts estimated that the damage to Vienna amounted to 3,000,000,000 Schilling; the Municipality's share was estimated last summer at RM465,000,000. The Municipality suffered a further loss through the investment of RM359,000,000 in Reich Treasury Bonds. All this meant great sacrifices and they will have to pay a heavy price to make Vienna a habitable city. But the utmost efforts must be made for the sake of the population and of future generations, as well as for the position of Vienna as a European cultural centre.

### The Men Who Will Rebuild Vienna

The Municipal Council also elected the City Senate, consisting of 12 Aldermen in charge of the 12 Municipal Departments. Though the Socialists have a strong absolute majority in the Municipal Council, the City Senate is composed of members of all the three parties, Socialists, People's Party and Communists. Between 1918 and 1934 the Socialists held all the seats of the City Senate; the change does not mean that

the Socialists are now weaker, but since the Federal Government and all Provincial Governments are now based on a collaboration of all the existing political parties it was necessary to accept the same principle in Vienna too.

The following Aldermen were elected to the City Council:

Staff Department: *Speiser* (Soc.); Finance: *Honay* (Soc.); Cultural Affairs and Popular Education: *Matejka* (Communist); Welfare: *Dr. Freund* (Soc.); Health: *Weinberger* (P.P.); Building: *Novy* (Soc.); Technical Affairs: *Rohrhofer* (P.P.); Housing: *Albrecht* (Soc.); Economic Affairs: *Flödl* (P.P.); Food: *Sigmund* (Soc.); General Administration: *Afritsch* (Soc.); Public Utilities: *Dr. Exel* (P.P.)

We are particularly glad to note that our friend Franz Novy, who has spent the last years in this country, and who was the Chairman of the Group of the Austrian Socialists in Great Britain, as well as a member of the London Bureau of the Austrian Socialists, has been appointed to so important an office. His will be the task to plan and to direct the rebuilding of the shattered city, the building of a new Red Vienna.

### ALLIED COUNCIL'S INSTRUCTIONS TO PARLIAMENT

We have already pointed out how limited is the power of the freely-elected Austrian Parliament which is virtually dependent on the decisions of the Allied Council. At its last session Parliament had to repeal or amend not less than three laws on the instructions of the Allied Council.

Law concerning German Mining Property, dated 24th July, 1945, was repealed at the request of the Allied Council because it was contrary to the Potsdam decisions. Another measure of the Provisional Government was repealed, also on request of the Allied Council because it was incompatible with the democratic distinction of Legislature and executive, namely the Re-promulgation Law. Deputies regretted its repeal because it

would have simplified the survey of the legal situation. The Passport Law, dated 12th September, 1945, was amended on Allied Council instructions. Austrians leaving or entering Austrian territory require a Ministry of Interior visa; diplomatic passports will be issued by the Chancellor's Office and special provisions are made for the so-called "small frontier traffic."

### Graz Municipal Workers' Elections

At the recent staff representatives elections in Graz municipal offices about 4,200 officials, employees and workers were entitled to vote. The Socialist Party gained 69 seats, the Austrian People's Party five, the Communist Party three and independent candidates two.



## "AUSTRIA ONE OF THE GREAT QUESTIONS OF EUROPE"

In the course of the Foreign Debate in the House of Commons Captain Bullock (Cons.) spoke about Austria. He said *inter alia*:

"All of us who have been studying Austria in the last 20 years are worried as to what line His Majesty's Government propose to take at the forthcoming Peace Conference on the subject of Austria. I hope that the Foreign Secretary and his advisers are studying the past 20 years and making notes, as to the history of the Austrian Republic during those 20 years."

"Unfortunately, those years have been 20 years of failure. Austria relied on the League. As time went on she was greeted only with platitudes. She looked towards her neighbours and found mistrust, high tariffs, jealousies and little support."

"I would urge that in the new treaties the economic side should come first. The Austrian working man has some of the finest qualities in Europe, but he was betrayed many times, largely by certain sections of his own people. I have always believed that the Austrian working man—I am not speaking politically of the working class—would have defended his country against Hitler to the last, if he had had support from the League of Nations—from this country and other countries. But they were always met by platitudes. They were told that 'His Majesty's Government have Austrian interests very much at heart,' 'His Majesty's Government view the Austrian situation with great gravity.' I therefore urge the Foreign Secretary to realise that Austria is one of the great questions of Europe. Austria is the gate to the East; geographically, Austria is of vital importance. I know that the Austrian people look to this country and that, in particular, they read every word spoken by the Foreign Secretary."

In his speech the Foreign Secretary, Mr. Bevin said:

"I am one of those who believe that the Austro-Hungarian Empire was economically right but politically wrong. It was an economic unit, and the cut-up that took place, from the point of view of the standard of life of the country, was impossible. I do not know, it is too early yet, but I can say both we and the United States of America are ready to re-create the position by a new peace treaty as the only means by which we can get a legal clarification of the position of Austria in the new creation. All I can hope is that all these States, although they are politically separated from the point of view of government, will not go on creating tariffs and all the other restrictions against one another. Let trade flow freely between them so that the standard of life may be raised."

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### "LINZER TAGBLATT" SUSPENDED

A commission of the U.S. Military Government issued an order closing down the editorial offices of *Linzer Tagblatt*, organ of the Socialist Party, for an indefinite period. The reason for this measure is the leader published on 7th February, "Good Austrians, good cultural Germans," written by Editor-in-Chief Dr. Alois Oberhummer. The leader violates directly an Order of the U.S. Military Government, according to which newspapers are prohibited from spreading nationalist and Pan-German ideas.

Whatever might have been the reasons for writing and publishing this article, the commission pointed out, that its effects were in contrast to the aims of the Occupation Powers and the interests of the Austrian State. For that reason the publishing licence has been revoked with effect from 18th February.

"*Arbeiterzeitung*" says this article did not reflect the policy of the Socialist Party.

## THE TWO WORST MONTHS AHEAD

Minister for Food Dr. Hans Frenzel told the *Sozialistische Korrespondenz*: "The Allied Council has not notified the Austrian authorities of any reduction in the food rations which also depends on home-produced supplies. Such a measure needs careful preparation. Should it be necessary, the rations of the various consumer groups would on no account be reduced uniformly. The rations of workers on reconstruction work would be cut least, but in the case of those shirking work we shall apply the principle of 'rest is as good as food.'"

"An Austrian representative of the Trade Department of UNRRA has gone to Italy to prepare the taking over of the first UNRRA deliveries by the Austrian Government. The supplies will be carried to Austria by 400 specially trained Austrian drivers."

**"The two worst months, March and April are still ahead, and our stocks of grain are exceedingly small. A very serious situation would arise if we failed to find a solution in time.** But in March we should receive cauliflowers and carrots from Italy against cellulose. In April and May, fresh vegetables, in particular spinach, from the Burgenland should reach Vienna. The Government has power to dispose freely of the surplus goods in the different zones of occupation and has done all it can to direct food from the Western provinces to Vienna and Lower Austria. Moreover, as from 10th February, calories in the Lower Austrian distressed areas are being raised from 900 to 1,500. From 28th February, we hope to be able to issue throughout Lower Austria a daily ration of 1,500 calories."

### Seeds And Machinery

"We hope that seeds will be among the first UNRRA deliveries; their early arrival is a vital necessity. We are also short of agricultural machinery. We hope the Allies will let us have tractors, now used for transport, for tillage. The

question of agricultural labour is closely connected with the speedy return of Austrian prisoners-of-war. We shall see to it that every bit of ground is tilled next spring. The people are willing to work, but one must not forget that labour is also a question of food."

### Austria Classified As "Defeated Country"

The *Arbeiter Zeitung* commenting on the American announcement that food rations in most of the European countries, including Austria, will have to be cut, says:

"The working people of our country must continue their work of reconstruction on *empty stomachs*. It sounds like scorn, but it is the bitter truth that the world must be glad of UNRRA's help in distributing available food stocks so as to save the people's existence. While fully appreciating this, we must be allowed to point to one fact which we regard as unjust. The list of countries to be supplied clearly shows that rations over 1,500 calories are reserved for liberated countries, while defeated countries will receive under 1,500 calories. Austria, however, seems to have been classified among the latter."

### RESTITUTION OF SOCIALIST PARTY'S PROPERTY

Chancellor Figl declared that it was intended to return to the Party all the property of which it, and its affiliated organisations, were deprived in 1934, subject to legislation on compensation and the consent of the Allied Council. Under these provisions some properties have already been put at the Party's disposal.

### Pre-Fab Wooden Houses

A company has been formed in Linz for the mass production of wooden houses for one or more families. The company plans to build 10,000 houses priced at 40,000, 25,000, 12,000 and 5,000 schillings. The various types will take



LOW... GREAT BRITAIN PAID - MCF  
into consideration local scenery. Production of the pre-fabricated parts is to start this month in the company's workshops and it is expected that assembly of the first 150 houses can begin in May.

### **THE DE-NAZIFICATION OF AUSTRIA**

The Cabinet Purge Committee set up some time ago with the task of purging thoroughly public and economic life from Nazi influence is holding regular meetings under the chairmanship of Chancellor Figl. More than 120 professors and officials\* have been dismissed from the various Universities and Colleges, about 250 persons have been sacked from the Administration for Education, and scores from the Postal, Telegraphic and Railway Services all over the country. The Committee deals only with officials of the higher posts.

### **A People's Court In Linz**

Since the Law Banning the Nazi Party and the War Criminals Law are now also valid on Austrian territory not under Russian occupation, a People's Court to try Nazi war criminals will be established with the Regional Courts of Linz, Graz and Innsbruck. The Linz People's court will have jurisdiction in Upper Austria, excluding the Muehlviertel (which belongs to the Russian zone).

### **Nazi Gauleiter To Be Tried In Vienna**

The former Gauleiter of Upper Austria *Eigruber* has been handed over to the Austrian authorities by the U.S. Military Police. The charges against *Eigruber* are so extensive that some time will pass before this war criminal will stand his trial before the People's Court in Vienna.

### **Hapsburgs To Be Arrested If They Enter Austria**

The Austrian Ministry of the Interior has instructed the Security Authorities to arrest all members of the Hapsburg family who set foot on Austrian soil. The instruction, which has been issued in agreement with the French Occupation Authorities, also states that the arrests

are to be made even if members of Hapsburg family wear foreign uniforms.

### **THE REPATRIATION OF PRISONERS OF WAR**

Minister of the Interior *Helmer* spoke at a meeting in Vienna on the repatriation of Austrian prisoners-of-war. Of 35,000 prisoners, whose repatriation has already been approved by the French Government the homes of 15,000 are in the Soviet zone, of 7,000 each in the British and U.S., and of 6,000 in the French zone. The Austrian Government is now negotiating with the competent Allied authorities to discuss the necessary repatriation and reception measures for these prisoners. All Austrian prisoners-of-war held by the Americans will now also be released. The Allies have improved the treatment of the prisoners-of-war who are returning home. Recently prisoners from the British zone arrived in passenger trains instead of goods wagons, and their uniforms had been replaced by civilian suits.

### **Floods Delay Return**

The repatriation of Austrian prisoners-of-war from the British zone in Germany is being delayed. So far three transports, carrying about 2,000, all in excellent health, have arrived. The delay is due to transport difficulties resulting from floods.

### **Vienna's Welfare Work For Prisoners Of War**

The Vienna Municipal Administration has decided that the municipality should undertake the welfare of returning prisoners-of-war as soon as they arrive. Members of the Welfare Section are to give the men a certain sum as pocket money.

### **AUSTRIAN LABOUR CLUB**

SUNDAY, March 3rd, 7 p.m.: *Dr. Paul Bondy*: "Impressions from a Journey through Germany." (In German).

SUNDAY, March 10th, 7 p.m.: Group of Austrian Socialists in Great Britain. (Members only).

SUNDAY, March 17th, 7 p.m.: *D. Healy*, International Secretary, Labour Party: "International Labour and Foreign Policy."