A hideously complicated problem:  
Anglo-American relations with Austria,  
1945-1955

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Chapter 2

'St. George and the Dragon': to whose tune will Austria dance next?

Anglo-American disagreement over post-war control of Austria

The period between the proclaimed intention to re-establish an independent Austria and the Allies' recognition of a freely elected Austrian government in January 1946 witnessed an amazing struggle between Britain and the United States over the extent of their respective involvement in Austria's occupation. The question arises why, after having agreed on the need for an occupation, did the Americans not want to participate in that occupation, and, conversely, why were the British so adamant that the United States contribute more than a token force?

Apart from its 'Declaration on Austria', the Moscow Conference of October 1943 had also established the European Advisory Commission (EAC). The Commission had its seat in London and consisted of William Strang, Assistant Under-Secretary in the British Foreign Office, John Winant, US Ambassador in Britain, and Fedor Gusev, Soviet Ambassador in Britain. From January 1944 the EAC met 'to study European questions arising as the war develops and to make joint recommendations to the three Governments'. Even before its first session, differences of opinion had developed between the British and the Americans as to the scope of activity of the Commission, and throughout the year the EAC would become the forum of feverish British activity designed to bulldoze the US Government into accepting HMG's ideas about post-war control of Germany and Austria. Despite the occasional exasperated protest by Roosevelt - both to his ambassador and to Churchill himself - the British would first convert Winant and then the US Government to their views.

From the outset the British expected the Commission not only to consider the treatment of enemy countries after their defeat, but also that of liberated territories, to which latter category, according to the Moscow Declaration, Austria belonged. Whereas the British wanted agreement on policy 'with a minimum of delay', US

1 John Winant to Hull, 14 January 1944, FRUS 1944 I: General (Washington, 1966) p.18
Secretary of State Hull was alarmed lest the Commission should restrict future American political and military action. Winant thought the divergence of views between the two governments so serious that he feared it would be evident to the Russians once the Commission convened. Pressed by both the British and the Russians to call the Commission's first meeting, Winant urged his government repeatedly to accept British ideas as to what the Commission should or should not discuss. After all, he reminded the Secretary of State, the Commission was merely an advisory body and there was no reason why the US Government should accept any undesirable proposals. But Hull angrily berated Winant for his apparent sympathy with British views. Pointing out that the US Joint Chiefs of Staff had been 'immediately apprehensive' about the Commission and that the President himself was anxious lest the EAC 'arrogate to itself the general field of post-war organisation', he reminded Winant that nothing agreed upon at Moscow justified the British conception of the EAC and warned him of the long-term repercussions should the American public gain the impression that the EAC was 'secretly building the new world'. Notwithstanding Hull's diatribe, which included the British press, the British Government and Winant himself, the British from the very beginning busily drafted one directive after another and submitted it to the EAC for discussion.

One issue which brought Britain immediately into conflict with the Americans was the question of occupation zones. In one of the first papers to the EAC Strang blithely suggested that the US Government 'might conveniently be invited to undertake the main responsibility for the occupation of Austria'. Despite agreement that Austria would have to be occupied for the purpose of separating her from Germany, establishing a central government, and her demilitarisation and denazification, the US Government strongly resented Strang's invitation. Churchill's forceful argument in favour of US occupation of southern Germany, France and Austria merely drew this response from Roosevelt:

2 Winant to Hull, 4 January 1944, ibid., p.2
3 For a spirited account of the US Government's obstructionism see G.F.Kennan, Memoirs 1925-1950 (Boston, 1967) Chapter 7
4 Hull to Winant, 9 January 1944, FRUS 1944 I, pp.11-14
5 William Strang to EAC, 14 January 1944, ibid., p.153
6 Churchill to Roosevelt, 23 February 1944, ibid., pp.180-182
You really ought to bring up and discipline your own children. In view of the fact that they may be your bulwark in future days, you should at least pay for their schooling now!7

The dispute over occupation zones was fundamentally motivated by the thought of the expense involved. Having declared Austria a victim of Nazi aggression, neither the British nor the American military wanted to waste precious resources on the occupation of that country. As far as the British were concerned what mattered first and foremost was the naval disarmament of Germany. To that end they had allocated to themselves north-western Germany, to the Russians eastern Germany and to the United States southern Germany. By offering Washington the contiguous territory of Austria, London hoped to make the acceptance of the southern German zone more palatable. This choice of zones reflected not only military considerations but also London's political and economic policy.8 If Britain could persuade the United States to police most of Europe immediately after the cessation of hostilities, it would give her the breathing space she needed to attend to her own needs first. The United States Government was equally clear on its objectives: '... to be committed as little as possible in Europe after the defeat of Germany in order that our full attention can be devoted to the war with Japan'.9

The wrangle was still not resolved in May. In a directive to Winant the State Department insisted that American forces occupy the north-western zone of Germany and that the southern zone, including Austria, be occupied by British forces.10 While the US and Britain argued over which of them would occupy Austria, Moscow registered its claim to a share of Austria by suggesting an extension of the proposed tripartite occupation of Germany to Austria.11 To overcome British and American reluctance, Moscow resorted to a little blackmail. With the Anglo-American invasion of Normandy in progress and the Russian offensive on the central front smashing the German Wehrmacht, Gusev simply refused to clarify surrender terms and the German occupation question unless Britain and the United States

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7 Roosevelt to Churchill, 29 February 1944, ibid., p.189
8 Undated paper prepared by George Elsey for Quebec Conference, FRUS 1944 The Conference of Quebec (Washington, 1972) p.148
9 Ibid., p.158
10 Hull to Winant, 1 May 1944, FRUS 1944 I, p.211
11 Memorandum by Fedor Gusev, 18 February 1944, ibid., p.178
agreed to the Soviet proposal. The fact that Gusev persisted in this demand despite American reluctance to participate in the occupation at all was seen by the Foreign Office as a move designed to make Austria an overwhelmingly Soviet-occupied zone. If British interests in Europe were to be safeguarded, it was imperative that British forces matched those of any other participant in the occupation. Given the constraints of British manpower, however, either Moscow would have to be persuaded to keep its occupation force small or more pressure would have to be exerted on the Americans to do their share.

Although the US Government reluctantly agreed in July to provide a token force for the occupation of Austria, Britain and the United States did not resolve their disagreement over occupation zones until December. The process of Washington's conversion was probably started by a cry of panic from the British Government. In October the realisation struck that with the Red Army's advance into Hungary Soviet troops would most likely occupy Austria while the Anglo-American forces were held up in Italy. Concerned, in case the Western Powers would miss out on control of Austria, the British Government urged Washington to leave the Soviets in no doubt that Anglo-American forces expected to be invited to establish tripartite control in Vienna as soon as Soviet troops took over that city. Moscow's answer was to refer the matter back to the EAC to be examined simultaneously with the question of zoning and control mechanism for Austria - precisely the issue on which the US and Britain had been deadlocked for so long. Even then, the State Department's instructions to Winant mirrored the divergent needs of the State Department and the US Joint Chiefs of Staff. Although stating that the United States intended to participate fully in the tripartite control of Austria, the JCS authorisation was for one US division only, this division not to be used for occupation outside Vienna.

12 Winant to Hull, 1 July 1944, *ibid.*, p.450
13 Minute by John Ward, 31 May 1944, FO 371/40734, U4885; COS(44)151, 15 August 1944, FO 371/40735, U7024
14 State Dept to British Embassy, 18 July 1944, *FRUS 1944 I.*, p.452
15 FO Aide Memoire to State Dept, 14 October 1944, FO 371/38851, C14448
16 George Kennan to Hull, 3 November 1944, *FRUS 1944 I.*, p.467
17 Edward Stettinius to W.J.Gallman, 22 November 1944; JCS to Hull, 23 November 1944, *ibid.*, p.469
London decided to overcome the effects of Washington's intrinsigence by offering the French a share in Austria's occupation. Charles De Gaulle had argued since 1943 that the French should participate in post-war arrangements for Germany and, indeed, Europe, a notion which by the latter part of 1944 accorded well with London's anxiety over post-war European security. When France was invited in November 1944 to become a permanent and equal member of the EAC, nothing stood in the way of her sharing the burden and — as it would prove later — the benefits of Austria's occupation.

Winant was alarmed by his government's evident blindness to the situation, and pleaded for a more pragmatic approach to the occupation question. He warned of the inherent danger in his government's stance. In essence, Winant argued, there would be no effective sharing of political authority unless American administrators were backed by an adequate physical presence of American troops. That the US Government must share in the political control of Austria was beyond question. Twice America had been drawn into a world war because of its lack of control over affairs in Europe. Leaving an 'angry Russia and a weak Britain' to their own devices in Austria would simply be too dangerous. On 9 December Roosevelt finally agreed to accept an American occupation zone in Austria as prescribed by the British.

Even in 1944, in the dispute over the proposed occupation of Europe, the difficulties of reconciling the State Department's political interests in Europe with the security interests of the US military in the Far East were already apparent. That these political interests often appeared to be identical with British interests and seemed, indeed, to be manipulated by them, would do nothing to make them more acceptable to the US military establishment. Only the events of the Cold War, in particular the Communist victory in China and the Korean conflict, would reconcile the military to the occupation of Austria and would, in fact, make them insist on it despite State Department policy.

18 Record of meeting of the UK Delegation to the EAC, 27 November 1944, FO 371/40735, U8438
19 Winant to Hull, 24 November, 4 December, 8 December 1944, FRUS 1944 I, pp.470-477
20 Stettinius to Winant, 9 December 1944, ibid., p.478
Anglo-American assessment of Soviet aims

Another major issue of this period concerned British perception of the post-war provisional government set up by Karl Renner. The Renner Government was acknowledged to be a competent Austrian administration, satisfying both the Americans and the Austrians themselves. Why, then, were the British so implacably hostile to it?

While the leaders of Nazi Germany exulted over the death of Roosevelt, seeing it as a 'divine judgement ... a gift from God' which would save the Third Reich from destruction, the Russians captured Vienna. Just as the British had feared in October, the Soviet Army were in possession of eastern Austria while the Western armies still battled the remnants of the German Wehrmacht in the remainder of the country. On 27 April 1945 an Austrian Provisional Government, led by Karl Renner, was formed and the re-establishment of the Austrian Republic proclaimed. The formation of this government, barely two weeks after the liberation of Vienna, stunned the Western Allies and reinforced growing anxieties about Soviet aims.

The reason for this anxiety had its origins in 1944. When the problem of the establishment of an Austrian representative government was first considered in the Foreign Office in July 1944, doubts immediately arose as to the wisdom of thinking so far ahead on what was thought to be a difficult matter. There were too many unknown factors and caution was counselled:

*We must not make the mistake of supposing that the Austrians will be so patient and predictable that they will dance symmetrically to our tune. For one thing, we shan't be the only ones with a tune to play.*

Soviet policy in Austria was clearly one of the most important issues in the establishment of an Austrian government. British unease over Soviet aims was fuelled by Soviet behaviour in southeastern Europe. There were increasing signs in the spring of 1944 that the Soviet Government intended to ignore British interests in the Balkans and that they were using Communist-led movements to

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22 Minute by Con O'Neill, 31 July 1944, FO 371/38840, C9694
achieve predominance there.\textsuperscript{24} At the end of May Eden told the House of Commons that suspicion between the British and Soviet governments was 'quite impossible to exaggerate'.\textsuperscript{25} Events in Rumania after August confirmed British suspicions. Despite a tripartite control commission set up for that country, the Soviets ignored the British and American Elements of the Commission and encouraged the tiny Communist clique to seize control of the Government, with the result that Communist strength in the new government was out of all proportion to their strength in the country as a whole. Furthermore, the Soviets were seen to be 'conniving' with the Communists to interfere in Rumanian affairs and to remove assets of the Anglo-American-owned oil companies.\textsuperscript{26} When the Russians advanced into Hungary in September and it appeared possible that Austria would be occupied by the Red Army while the Western forces were still held up in Italy, the British Government feared a repetition of these events.

As early as August 1944 the Foreign Office had asserted the political necessity of fully matching the Soviet forces in Austria if Austria was not to fall entirely under Soviet domination.\textsuperscript{27} It became increasingly certain, however, that the Soviet Army would indeed get to Austria first, and when they crossed the Austrian border in March 1945 the British had even more reason to be apprehensive about Western control of Austria. Reports concerning Bulgaria indicated that there, too, the Soviet-backed Communist bid for power would eventually succeed.\textsuperscript{28} As the Russian Army advanced towards the Austrian capital, British anxiety concerning Soviet designs became acute. No agreement on control machinery had as yet been reached in the European Advisory Commission, and Henry Mack, Political Adviser to the British Element of the Allied Commission for Austria, warned about the lessons learned in Sofia and Bucharest. There was grave danger that the Russians would seriously jeopardise British policy in Austria if left to their own devices. Any Austrian suspected of favouring a Western orientation might easily be removed as a 'Fascist' or 'war criminal' and economic

\textsuperscript{24} A.Eden, \textit{The Reckoning} (London, 1965) p.459
\textsuperscript{25} House of Commons Debate on Foreign Policy, 25-26 May 1944, Keesing's, 27 May - 3 June 1944, p.6469
\textsuperscript{26} FORD WPIS, 8 November 1944
\textsuperscript{27} APW(44)13th Meeting, 17 August 1944, FO 371/40735, U7021
\textsuperscript{28} FORD WPIS, 14 February 1945, 18 April 1945
havoc would result from removal of industrial plant or redistribution of land to the peasants. Moreover, Vienna was undeniably the crucial factor in Austria's future political development. It was essential that HMG be adequately represented in the formulation and execution of Allied policy, even if this meant antagonising the Russians. It was against this background that the Western Allies were greeted with the establishment of the Renner Government.

On 26 April 1945 the Soviet Foreign Minister informed the British Embassy in Moscow that Karl Renner had approached the Soviet authorities in Austria, offering his services in the re-creation of an independent Austrian state, and that the Soviet Government had decided to 'refrain from hindering' the establishment of a provisional government by Renner. The Foreign Office flinched, this was the sort of Soviet ploy they had feared all along. It was in the worst recently-established tradition of Soviet action in Rumania, Hungary and Bulgaria. Urgent telegrams were despatched to Moscow - to stop the Soviet Government from going ahead with this unilateral establishment of an Austrian Government - and to Washington and Paris to enlist American and French help. The setting-up of the Renner Government, coupled with the refusal by the Soviet Government to let a Western mission proceed to Vienna for purposes of arranging occupation zones and control machinery in that city, prompted Churchill to sound the tocsin:

... the Russians are deliberately exploiting their arrival first into Austria to 'organise' the country before we get there. It seems to me that unless we both take a strong stand now we shall find it very difficult to exercise any influence in Austria.

George Kennan, the State Department's expert on the Soviet Union, fully agreed. The fact that the Ministry of the Interior in the Renner Government was in the hands of the Communist Franz Honner, a recent commander of a Yugoslav partisan battalion, pointed significantly towards the future complexion of the Renner Government:

29 Memorandum by John Troutbeck, 5 April 1945, FO 371/46626, C1427
30 Troutbeck to Eden, 27 February 1945, FO 371/46626, C1226
31 Frank Roberts to FO, 26 April 1945, FO 371/46614, C1744
32 Orme Sargent to Churchill, 29 April 1945, PREM 4/33/6
33 Churchill to Truman, 30 April 1945, ibid.
It is now established Russian practice to seek as a first and major objective, in all areas where they wish to exercise dominant influence, control of the internal administrative and police apparatus, particularly the secret police. The Russian mind is partial to the belief, founded in the political experience of this country, that control of the police establishment, both open and secret, is half the battle won in the struggle for power, and that all other manifestations of public life including elections can eventually be shaped by this authority.34

The fact that another Communist - Ernst Fischer, freshly returned from Moscow - was in charge of education and information, and a third, Johann Koplenig, was one of three members of the Cabinet Council created by Renner did not ease Western fears.

But neither Renner nor the Russians would be stopped. Renner, primed with a sense of mission to emulate his role in the creation of the First Republic, had initially approached the local Soviet authorities merely to plead for protection of the population from the Russian soldiers. As it happened, Stalin had already issued orders to search for Renner to take over the administration of Austria.35 In the subsequent negotiations Renner trod a very fine line. Refusing to act as a tool of the Soviet Army, he nevertheless realised that his undertaking was dependent on Soviet goodwill. In a letter to Stalin he thanked the Red Army on behalf of the 'Second Republic' (which was not declared until twelve days later) for having enabled him to begin the process of reconstituting the independent Austrian state and asked him to ensure Austria's integrity by protecting her against territorial demands by her neighbours.36 Stalin, addressing his reply to 'His Excellency, the Chancellor of Austria', assured Renner that he fully shared his concern for the 'independence, integrity and welfare of Austria' and that he was prepared to render any necessary assistance.37

Had the British known about these interchanges they could not have been more distressed than they already were by the announcement

34 Kennan to Stettinius, 30 April 1945, FRUS 1945 III: European Advisory Commission; Germany & Austria (Washington, 1968) pp.105-106
35 M.Rauchensteiner, Der Sonderfall: Die Besatzungszeit in Oesterreich 1945-1955 (Graz, 1985) pp.66-68
36 Karl Renner to Stalin, 15 April 1945, E.M.Csaky, Der Weg zu Freiheit und Neutralitaet (Vienna, 1980) Doc.No.3
37 Stalin to Renner, 12 May 1945, ibid.
on 29 April by Radio Moscow that a provisional government under Renner had indeed been established a scant two days after the first warning. Their objections centred both on the refusal by the Russians to act on a quadripartite basis, as the agreement on participating occupation powers in the EAC demanded, and on the personalities in Renner's Government. Renner himself was viewed with undisguised hostility by the Foreign Office. Not only had he accepted the Anschluss in 1938, showing thereby a deplorable 'lack of moral courage', but he was also a Socialdemocrat which, according to Mack, was bound to play into the Soviets' hands. If the views of the Austrian Socialists in Britain were any indication, Renner and his colleagues would not rest until all vestiges of fascism in Austria had been removed, leaving the British with no other Austrians to deal with but Socialists and Communists. The other members of the Provisional Government inspired no more confidence than Renner himself. Although there were five Socialists, four Christiansocials, three Communists and two non-party members, the Foreign Office complained that they all seemed to be Viennese - leaving the conservative Provinces under-represented - and that the Government seemed 'true to type': 'It has representatives of all "democratic" parties, but Communists hold the ministries of the Interior and Education, no doubt a polite name for propaganda and public enlightenment'.

Further information coming to light about the new Government only added to London's discomfiture. Renner's explicit repudiation of the Anschluss in a message to the British Foreign Secretary was seen merely as another 'unfavourable indication' about his character; the system of under-secretaryships in the Provisional Government seemed designed to promote a 'Communist stranglehold' on the whole governmental machine; and the Proclamation of the new Government reeked of Russian influence. All in all, there was an uncanny resemblance to the puppet regimes of Poland and the Balkan countries. For two weeks London lamented the misfortune that had befallen British policy concerning Austria. Not once did anyone suggest that Renner might, in fact, be playing a very shrewd game. He

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38 Minute by Michael Cullis, 2 May 1945, FO 371/46616, C2295
39 W.H.B.Mack to Harvey, 20 February 1945, FO 371/46644, C643
40 Minutes by Cullis and Troutbeck, 30 April 1945, FO 371/46614, C1808
41 Minute by Cullis, 3 May 1945, FO 371/46615; C1882
was seen as a decrepit, garrulous old man, putty in Soviet hands, and incapable of doing good for Austria. When reports from Austrian emigre groups of all political persuasions indicated support for the Renner Government, the British evinced surprise but did not weaken in their condemnation. For London, concerned with the scramble for post-war Europe, fascists already appeared the lesser evil.

Four-power occupation of Vienna

The Western Allies were now even more anxious to establish quadripartite occupation and control of Vienna. Whereas the dispute over occupation zones in Austria had been mostly between Britain and the United States, the division of Vienna turned into a Russia-versus-the Western Allies match. That is not to say that London and Washington agreed on what each should get in Vienna. On the contrary, they neither agreed on the areas they should respectively occupy nor on the methods to be employed to force the Russians into shared control of Vienna. The British were eager to make Schoenbrunn Palace - the former seat of the Habsburgs - their headquarters in Vienna, a notion which elicited an outraged protest by one officer of the British forces, who thought it a gratuitous insult to the Austrian people - something he could imagine the Germans would do - and hoped that this attempt at enhancing British prestige would not be 'mistaken for vulgarity and vandalism'. While the British officer's long and eloquent protest caused a minor storm at the Foreign Office over whether or not Schoenbrunn Palace warranted so much 'solicitude', the French, for different reasons, were dumb-founded at the extent of British effrontery. When General de Lattre de Tassigny heard that the British High Commissioner defiantly occupied Napoleon's former workroom at the palace, he was 'rendered speechless with indignation'.

The Americans, in their practical way, were more concerned with the availability of airfields. Having so very reluctantly consented to occupation of Austria in the first place, the US military

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42 FO Minute, 11 July 1945, FO 371/46618, C3867
43 Mack to Troutbeck, and various FO minutes, 5-22 August 1945, FO 371/46619, C4873
44 The French High Commissioner, General Bethouart, quoted in E.Trost, Figl von Oesterreich (Vienna, 1972) p.163
had since discovered that Vienna could be an important intermediate stop on the route to the Far East and that the British proposal of subdivision of Vienna was inadequate for US military purposes. Until mid-May, however, this wrangle between the British and the Americans was close to irrelevant because the Soviet Representative on the EAC was under strict instructions by his government to settle the zoning and control questions in London before allowing a Western mission to enter Vienna. Washington responded by informing the Soviet Government that they had no intention of either recognising the Renner Government or being associated with and taking responsibility for any measures adopted in Vienna. Each occupying power would go on administering its own area until such time as agreement could be reached in the EAC, and this was not likely to happen before a Western mission had inspected Vienna.

The State Department had played its card well. Perhaps it knew of the tons of maggoty legumes, supplied by the Russians to the starving population of Vienna, which later would become the ludicrous 'pea-debt' issue of treaty negotiations. The Western missions arriving in Vienna on 3 June found conditions appalling:

It is evident ... that the Russians are extremely eager to have the Allies into Vienna at the earliest possible date. The situation in the city is deteriorating and Russian prestige is lowered every day we remain away.

The inspection of Vienna also settled the argument with Britain over proposed allocation of zones and airfields. To their pleasant surprise the Americans found that the area allocated to them by the British, the north-western districts of Vienna, was the least damaged and that Schwechat airfield, to the south-east of Vienna, upon which they had so adamantly insisted before the inspection, was not as good as Tulln, which had been allocated to them by the Russians but which they had hitherto refused to accept. Although the subsequent negotiations were by no means easy, the overriding need for Western food supplies for Vienna made the Soviets more amenable to agreement and on 4 July 1945 the first control agreement was signed,
establishing the Allied Commission for Austria (ACA). The ACA con­sisted of an Allied Council, an Executive Committee and staffs deal­ing with every aspect of Austrian life. The Allied Council consisted of the military commissioners of the four occupying powers who each were in supreme command of their governments' forces of occupation as well as exercising supreme authority in their zones. For mat­ters affecting Austria as a whole, supreme authority rested jointly with the four Military Commissioners who would be assisted by polit­ical advisers. For the administration of Vienna an inter-allied governing authority (IAGA) of four commandants was created, each of them to serve in turn as head of the IAGA. The control agreement was to operate until the establishment of a freely-elected Austrian Gov­ernment recognised by the four powers.

Austrian reaction to Anglo-American occupation forces

For London, seemingly convinced of the irretrievable loss of at least eastern Austria to the Russians, the report of the first British mission to Vienna in June 1945 came as somewhat of a sur­prise. The very first impression which struck the British on their arrival was the 'embarrassing warmth' with which they were greeted by the Austrians. It soon became clear that the Austrians regarded Great Britain and Russia respectively as 'St. George and the Dragon'. There appeared to be an immense reservoir of Austrian goodwill towards the Western Allies. There was danger, though, of jeopardising this goodwill by aloof behaviour such as practised by Major-General John Winterton, head of the British Mission and design­ated Deputy High Commissioner in Vienna. When the British, French and American Generals of the Western missions first met the head of the Vienna City Administration, General Theodor Koerner, a renowned Socialdemocrat and future President of occupied Austria, Winterton

49 These were: UK - W.H.B.Mack; US - John G.Erhardt; USSR - E.D.Kiselev; France - Louis de Monicault.
51 Report on British Mission to Vienna, 20 June 1945, FO 371/46617, C3242
discourteously refused Koerner's proffered hand. Similar conduct was observed by all other British officers in their dealings with Ministers of the Renner Government. Churchill, told of Austrian bewilderment at the British attitude, was horrified:

Is it possible that we are pursuing a policy of treating the Austrians the same as the Germans? ... this requires grave and urgent attention. We are dignified and insulting, and the Russians are boon companions and enslavers. I never realised such follies were being committed.

The British were not alone in disconcerting the Austrians. The first few weeks of American occupation must have seemed in some ways indistinguishable from the Soviet variety. US troops, too, plundered and raped, while the officers emphasised their role as victors and showed a singular lack of perception when dealing with civilians. The most infuriating aspect of American administration was their - albeit unwitting - employment of former Nazis as interpreters. The resentment engendered on both sides by this ineptitude appalled even the Foreign Office: 'It is a characteristic example of how the Americans dissipate the great potential goodwill that awaits them'.

The case of Adolf Eigl provides an instructive instance of American bungling. At their arrival in Upper Austria the Americans had refused to accept the newly-constituted provisional Socialist–Christian coalition government and had instead appointed Eigl, a high-ranking member of the former Nazi provincial administration, head of the new provincial government. Not until three months later, when their inept denazification measures finally picked up Eigl's name, did the Americans arrest him, without, incidentally, bothering to replace him. The Foreign Office could not help but gloat: 'This is really a remarkable confession of failure by the Americans, their

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52 Minute by Josef Schoener, 11 June 1945, AdR, BMAA, K2, 211-211
53 Churchill to Alexander Cadogan, 29 June 1945, FO 371/46618, C3658
54 Report by Kiesewetter, 3 July 1945, AdR, BMAA, K1, 357-357; Report dated 8 July 1945, AdR, BMAA, K3, 429-429; Robert Habsburg to Harrison, 10 July 1945, FO 371/46610, C3946; Minute by Ludwig Kleinwaechter, 27 July 1945, AdR, BMAA, K3, 457-706; see also K.Gruber, Zwischen Befreiung und Freiheit (Vienna, 1953) Chapter 1
55 Cullis to Mack, 24 July 1945, FO 371/46610, C3946
56 G.Hindinger, Das Kriegsende und der Wiederaufbau demokratischer Verhaeltnisse in Oberoesterreich im Jahre 1945 (Vienna, 1968) pp.73-75, 82-83
announcement being no less clumsy and revelatory than the episode itself... Somehow one always anticipated that it would work out like this!'

No doubt, part of the explanation for the behaviour of both troops and officers of the American forces is to be found in the opinion apparently held by the average US military officer. A journalist, returning from other US-occupied territories, had glimpsed some disturbing beliefs among the American soldiers: Austria's 'overnight hyper-democratic' transformation was seen as a 'reflex action to the military and political catastrophe' and could not be trusted; the 'overwhelming majority' of Austrians were thought to have welcomed National Socialism and had behaved even worse than the Germans in their treatment of the Jews; Austrians of the alpine regions had fought with a 'special doggedness' and had been 'inspired with an exceptional fanaticism'; and the Renner Government was a Soviet puppet and would 'never' be recognised by the Western Allies.

The British Mission, meanwhile, reached some significant conclusions about the Renner Government. Although Russian permission had been obtained, it was clear that the Government had been set up as a purely Austrian initiative in an attempt to commence immediately what Renner called the 're-austrofication' of administrative institutions to ensure a solid foundation for the time when an elected government would take over Austria's affairs. Moreover, evidence showed that the Communist members of the Renner Government were prepared to put their country before any ideology. That the Communist bogey was perhaps not as formidable as the British had feared was also borne out by reports from Carinthia and Styria, the future British occupation zones. Communism was found to be virtually non-existent even before the Soviet withdrawal, and the population seemed unified in their fear of the Russians and Tito's territorial demands. The Russians were nightly raping women and girls, making 'extremely rough and ready' decisions about deporting able-bodied Austrians to the Soviet Union, stripping the country of industrial plant - 'as if a swarm of locusts had passed over!' - and had

57 Minute by Cullis, 30 August 1945, FO 371/46619, C5163
58 Minute dated 8 July 1945, AdR, BMAA, K3, 429-429
59 Memorandum to all Ministries, 13 July 1945, AdR, BMAA, K3, 474-474
60 Mack to FO, 13 June 1945, FO 371/46610, C3102
generally engaged in extensive looting of personal property, leaving the population, as the future Minister of the Interior, Oskar Helmer, noted, 'truly liberated' from its meagre possessions. No wonder, then, that when the British occupation forces made their official entry into their zone on 24 July, the pleasure and relief felt by the Austrians, as one officer observed, manifested itself by the population 'appearing to have been waving continuously since I first passed along the road on the 22nd'. That this was not merely the perfunctory show of welcome for an occupying power was clearly shown by the flowers, enthusiasm and admiration showered on 'every accessible British officer, soldier and vehicle' once the official ceremonies were over.

First contact with the local Austrian authorities also looked promising. The Provincial Provisional Government, which consisted of nine members, three each of the Communist Party (KPO), the Socialist Party (SPO) and the People's Party (OVP, the party of the Christiansocials), immediately agreed to the British suggestion to resign and reconstitute itself with a reduced Communist representation. Although forced not to enter into relations of any sort with the Renner Government, Reinhard Machold, the Provincial Governor, made it clear that he knew and admired Renner. Nevertheless, with none of the Allied Powers being able to make up their mind whether Austria was vanquished or liberated, the British as much as the Russians assumed the right to 'advise' on government composition in their zones.

If the Austrians entertained great expectations about their British occupiers, there was a pause in their jubilation when the British election results became known. In an analysis conducted by the Austrian Ministry for Foreign Affairs two factors stood out. The Austrian Government, as then constituted, could expect to meet with greater understanding from a Labour Government, but this was offset by the far more serious weakening of the Western position vis-a-vis Soviet Russia. With Roosevelt dead and Churchill deposed, there was no limiting Stalin's power. Neither Attlee nor Truman was thought to

62 Major P.Nicholls to Political Adviser, Eighth Army, 24 July 1945, FO 371/46618, C4578
be a match for Stalin's ruthlessness and there was a danger that an Anglo-Russian front would crystallise against the Americans. Although a considerable change in Britain's foreign policy was not expected, in practice serious repercussions could result from the habit of Labour men of 'subjecting decisions of the moment to theoretical, ideological considerations'. After all, had they not in the past committed such follies as driving Mussolini into Hitler's arms for the sake of an Abyssinian emperor, instead of grooming him for the post-war fight against bolshevism? But the real tragedy for Central Europe was that the Labour Government would concentrate on domestic political issues, directing their endeavours away from the Continent.63

**Foreign Office assessment of British role in Europe**

In 1943 Britain's decision to work for an independent Austria had to a great extent been motivated by a wish to weaken the German war effort. The intervening years had seen the emphasis shift from weakening Germany to containing Soviet Russia. In a Foreign Office paper of July 1945 Britain was seen to face two major problems: the military occupation of a large part of eastern Europe by Soviet troops, and the economic rehabilitation of Europe. The United States, by reason of the Anglo-American alliance during the war, would seem to be the obvious counter to Soviet attempts to 'pocket' the occupied European states, yet there was no guarantee that they would want, or even know how, to play that role. There were disturbing signs that Britain was regarded as a mere secondary Power and that America saw itself in the role of mediator in European affairs generally and in Anglo-Soviet disputes particularly. While Soviet policy was most likely driven by an overriding search for security, the problem with US policy was that it was 'fluctuating, uncertain and emotional'.

An estimate of the quality of the US leaders gave no reason for complacency. Truman, still in the 'honeymoon' period as far as Congress was concerned, would not enjoy Congressional goodwill once the war with Japan was ended, and was in any event too much at the

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63 Memorandum by Wilhelm Engerth, 27 July 1945, AdR, BMAA, K4, 741-741
mercy of his Chiefs of Staff. The Secretary of State, James Byrnes, had no support at home, was 'entirely ignorant of foreign affairs' and too parochial in his assessment of American interests. The task facing Britain was to rid the Americans of their naivete over being able to deal with the Russians, and to halt the appeasement of the Russians - so necessary during the war - in order to prevent them from destroying the last vestiges of bourgeois rule and sovereign independence in the countries they occupied. A supreme effort was required:

We shall have to take risks, even live beyond our political means at times. We must not hesitate to intervene diplomatically in the internal affairs of other countries if they are in danger of losing their liberal institutions or their political independence. ... We must take the offensive in challenging Communist penetration in as many of the Eastern countries of Europe as possible, and we must be ready to counteract every attempt by the Soviet Government to communise or obtain political control over Germany, Italy, Greece or Turkey. We must not desist from this course or be discouraged even if the United States give us no help and even if they adopt a policy of appeasement towards Russian domination, as well they may.64

What makes this assessment so illuminating is the glimpse it affords of British impatience at American slowness to attach sufficient importance to the shifting balance of power in Europe. American preoccupation with eradicating Nazism seemed already a misdirection of effort in a Europe threatened by Soviet expansionism.

The question of recognition of the Renner Government

Once occupation zones and control machinery were agreed upon, the issue of recognising the Renner Government became paramount. It is important to understand what the Renner Government was doing while the British and the Americans argued over whether it was a suitable government for Austria. While the Allied Powers arrogated to themselves supreme authority, the Provisional Government quietly went ahead and tackled those tasks which, apart from the prime objective of separating Austria from Germany, constituted the official justification for Allied occupation, namely, the denazification of Austria and the re-establishment of an independent, democratic, sovereign state.

64 Memorandum by Orme Sargent, 'Stocktaking After VE-Day', 11 July 1945, PREM 4/31/5
economically viable state. To London's disappointment, John Erhardt, political adviser to the US High Commissioner, paid tribute to the Provisional Government:

The Renner Government has produced legislation remarkable both in quantity and quality, and its administrative record, given enormously difficult conditions of operation, has been excellent.65

The British were not impressed. As far as London was concerned, Renner was a Soviet creature and, notwithstanding the favourable impression gained by the British Mission to Vienna in June and at the takeover by the British occupation forces of their zone in southern Austria, the British Government remained adamant in their refusal to recognise the Renner Government. French queries in July were countered by the Foreign Office with 'certainly not',66 interzonal travel permits to Austrian officials were refused if they were requested in the name of the Provisional Government,67 and the Foreign Office were outraged that The Times dared to publish a letter by Renner, referring to him as Chancellor of the Austrian Government without so much as using quotation marks or indicating in any way that HMG did not recognise him as such.68

In the face of this singular obstinacy the Russians insisted that the Potsdam decisions contained the de facto recognition of the Renner Government and that it was high time the Austrians started to think about preparing independent foreign and economic policy planning.69 But the Americans warned the Austrians not to get too friendly with the Russians because in Washington's estimate the British attitude towards Austria and the Renner Government was wholly dictated by their perception of Austro-Soviet relations. If British suspicions in that regard were confirmed, they would never recognise the Provisional Government.70 At the same time, John

65 Erhardt to Byrnes, 12 November 1945, FRUS 1945 III, p.651
66 Minute by O'Neill, 16 July 1945, FO 371/46618, C4009
67 Minute by Schoener, 11 August 1945, AdR, BMAA, K4, 819-943
68 Minute by Cullis, 12 September 1945, FO 371/46620, C5900
69 Conversation between M.E.Koptelov and Norbert Bischoff, 2 September 1945, AdR, BMAA, K5, 959-1027
70 Conversation between Erhardt and Ludwig Kleinwaechter, 13 September 1945, A.Schilcher (ed), Oesterreich und die Grossmaechte: Dokumente zur oesterreichischen Aussenpolitik 1945-1955 (Vienna, 1980), Doc.No.23
Erhardt also warned that the Soviet Union were not the only ones with sinister designs on Austria: the British, too, wished to lay their hands on Austria, and it was America's aim to save Austria from both these evils and ensure that Austria would truly be free and independent.\(^{71}\)

London insisted on nothing less than a radical reconstitution of the Provisional Government in favour of conservative forces. They coupled their demands with their refusal to go to Vienna and implement the control agreement. The practical result of the British stance was that the population of Vienna continued to be deprived of Western food supplies. Fortunately for the Viennese, the Americans felt increasingly uncomfortable with the British attitude and finally succeeded in persuading the British to come to Vienna despite the Renner Government's existence. Thus the Allied Council held its first meeting on 11 September 1945. One factor in this sudden acquiescence was the British Political Adviser's scheme for getting rid of the Renner Government. With Foreign Office approval he intended to enlist Austria's provincial leaders in forming a new provisional government.\(^{72}\) It is reasonable to assume that Mack, who had served as a member of the British Mission in Vienna in the mid-1930s,\(^{73}\) remembered the dangerous antagonism of that period between provincial Austria and Vienna and the civil war it caused. It is equally reasonable to question his willingness to play with what might well still have been a smouldering fire. It is more than likely that Mack drew encouragement for his plan from Karl Gruber, the Governor of Tyrol and future Austrian Foreign Minister. Gruber, a member of the OVP, admitted later that the initial reaction in Western Austria to the Renner Government had been one of consternation and that some suggestions were made to form a counter-government. This idea, however, was immediately abandoned because no Austrian wanted to be responsible for the partition of the country. Instead, they chose to

\(^{71}\) Conversation between Erhardt and Kleinwaechter, 20 September 1945, AdR, BMAA, K6, 1244-1244

\(^{72}\) Erhardt to Matthews, 13 July 1945, FRUS 1945 III, p.566

support the Renner Government in its fight against the 'shackles of Communism'.

The conservative provincial leaders were not the only Austrians with doubts about the Renner Government. Adolf Schaerf, the Socialist member of Renner's Cabinet Council, believed the composition of the Provisional Government to be the result of a Communist plot. Although the Communists held only two ministries out of ten, a system of under-secretaries—requiring countersigning of ministerial decisions and thus providing effective intra-party checks—meant in effect that the three political parties, Socialists, Conservatives and Communists, were almost equally represented. Schaerf did not believe that this had been Renner's intention, merely that he had under Russian pressure given the Communists far more power than any previous election result warranted. The whole tenor of Schaerf's complaint suggests, however, that he was far more concerned about the OVP members of the Government than the Communists. The reason for this was that hardly any of the old Christiansocials had failed to benefit during the Fascist period and that almost all of them had come to accept the authoritarian system of 1934-1938. Remembering that Renner, Oskar Helmer, the Socialist under-secretary in the Ministry of the Interior, and he himself had been imprisoned during the Dollfuss-Schuschnigg era, Schaerf thought it a profound emotional sacrifice for the Socialists to have to share government now with the Fascists of old.

The Western Allies need not have worried about the Renner Government. Neither the Socialists nor the Conservatives intended to let the Communists in the Austrian Government have lasting power. What mattered at the moment and, though they could not know it then, would matter through ten long years of Allied occupation was to present a united front to convince the Allies that Austria's past twelve years had been but an aberration—imposed by outside forces—in her chosen status as a democratic republic. At this early stage, the Americans had a clearer understanding than the British of the nature of the Renner Government. As early as July Erhardt commented on the considerable popular support enjoyed by the Renner,

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74 K. Gruber, Zwischen Befreiung und Freiheit (Vienna, 1953) p. 28
75 A. Schaerf, Oesterreichs Erneuerung (Vienna, 1955) p. 36
76 Ibid., pp. 39-40
Government, something which - in view of the outrages suffered by the population in eastern Austria at the hands of the Soviet occupation troops - would not have been likely had the Government been seen as a Soviet puppet. As far as the Communists in the Government were concerned, they appeared to be more interested in the reconstruction of the Austrian nation than in international Communism.\(^{77}\) That this was an accurate assessment General Clark later found when he discussed the KPO leader and Minister of Education, Ernst Fischer, with the Soviet Military Commissioner:

Clark: 'Well, I don't like him because he is a Communist.'

Koniev: 'I don't like him either because he is an Austrian Communist.'\(^ {78}\)

Renner, meanwhile, planned for a conference of all Provincial leaders, so that the Provisional Government's authority could be recognised by the Provinces and extended throughout Austria and preparations made for an early election. The Americans fully approved of Renner's plans and agreed that elections should be held no later than December. The British, who did not approve of early elections and felt that American ideas on the reconstruction of the Renner Government went not nearly far enough, had an additional problem. Although reasonably certain that Renner was willing to take into consideration the Western demands, they would not talk to him to convey their wishes because that might mean accepting him as head of the reconstituted government.\(^ {79}\)

Foreign Office consternation increased when Renner took the bull by the horns and presented the British with his ideas about the national conference, stating that the conference had been called for 24 September and that each Provincial delegation would consist of the leaders of all three parties. British demands would effectively be circumvented if Renner were to get away with this.\(^ {80}\) But Renner would not be bullied. Perhaps recalling seemingly interminable lectures on democracy by both the British and the Americans, he told Mack blandly that he felt sure HMG 'would regard as representative whatever government emerged as a result of a provincial

\(^{77}\) Erhardt to Matthews, 13 July 1945, *FRUS 1945 III*, p.567

\(^{78}\) M.Clark, *Calculated Risk* (London, 1951) p.447

\(^{79}\) Minute by Cullis, 14 September 1945, FO 371/46619, C5745

\(^{80}\) Minute by Cullis, 17 September 1945, FO 371/46619, C5775
conference'.\(^\text{81}\) The British became even more hostile when they realised that Renner would not be diverted from his plans. A pamphlet published by Renner, called 'Three Months' Work of Reconstruction by the Provisional Government for Austria', was merely seen as 'some really first class casuistry' by a treacherous, cunning old man, and London consoled itself with the hope that the old man might get 'quite a shaking' from the delegates to the national conference. Perhaps the British High Commissioner's 'very forceful' putting of British views on the composition of a reconstituted government might yet have the desired effect.\(^\text{82}\)

Renner's opening speech to the conference gave no evidence that he took heed of British pressure. The most striking feature of the speech was its tone of authority. Renner seemed to be taking his own position for granted and spoke as if he were sovereign. As the Foreign Office sourly observed: 'One would hardly guess that supreme power lies in fact with the Allied Council or indeed that the latter were in Austria at all otherwise than on sufferance'.\(^\text{83}\) At the end of the three-day conference the Renner Government emerged intact with only minor changes, its authority recognised and applauded by the Provinces. The Americans, mindful of British dissatisfaction with these results, made one last attempt to force more significant changes in the composition by threatening Renner with non-recognition by the Allies. Renner simply ignored these threats.\(^\text{84}\) After all, his government had been approved by what the Americans themselves called 'as nearly an expression of people's will as could be had without the holding of an election'. As a result, the American High Commissioner recommended to his government that the Renner Government be recognised.\(^\text{85}\)

When the British Political Adviser reported that both Provincial Governors in the British zone were very pleased with the results of the national conference, London peevishly commented that it should not be forgotten that both these leaders belonged to Renner's

\(^{81}\) John Nicholls to FO, 17 September 1945, FO 371/46619, C5843
\(^{82}\) Nicholls to Troutbeck, Comment by Cullis, 19 September 1945, FO 371/46619, C5700
\(^{83}\) Minute by Cullis, 27 September 1945, FO 371/46620, C6190
\(^{84}\) Minute by Kleinwaechter, 26 September 1945, AdR, BMAA, K6, 1163-1362
\(^{85}\) General Mark Clark to JCS, 29 September 1945, FRUS 1945 III, pp.611-613
own party, the Socialists.86 Trying to salvage what they could, the British pressed the Americans to agree to the appointment of a Scotland Yard officer to be placed in charge of Austrian police and the holding of a second election a mere twelve months after the first.87 The British also tried hard to dissuade the Americans from extending recognition to the Renner Government. They accused the Americans of being too eager to please the Russians and having altogether too favourable a view of the Renner Government's activity to date. They also railed at the shortsightedness of the US High Commissioner, General Mark Clark, who seemed to be pursuing a short-term policy of ridding Austria of military control as soon as possible and failing to consider the necessity of rebuilding Austria on sound foundations for the future.88

It proved all to no avail. The United States was not yet infected with a passion for containing the Soviet Union. Byrnes pointed out that the Renner Government was only a provisional government, that elections were due to be held within two months and that the Allied Council badly needed an Austrian government to administer the country.89 Even Mack paid tribute to Renner's obstinate refusal to be bullied by the Allies, finally admitting that the Renner Government had after all been a responsible Austrian government for the past five months.90 The US, Soviet and French Governments having long been ready to extend recognition to the Renner Government, the British at last relented under their combined pressure and on 20 October the Renner Government was unanimously recognised by the Allied Commission.

What is especially interesting in this episode of Anglo-Austrian relations is that in the period under review the British Government changed from a Conservative-Labour Coalition to a purely Labour Government. While the Austrians saw Churchill's defeat as a weakening of the forces against Stalin, they nevertheless expected more understanding from fellow Socialists. Their greatest fear, after the election results became known, had been that the British Labour Government would concentrate on domestic matters, perhaps

86 Minute by Cullis, 29 September 1945, FO 371/46621, C6244
87 Clark to JCS, 30 September 1945, FRUS 1945 III, p.618
88 Mack to FO, 29 September 1945, FO 371/46621, C6317
89 Byrnes to Ernest Bevin, 29 September 1945, FO 371/46621, C6355
90 Mack to Bevin, 2 October 1945, FO 371/46621, C6723
abandoning Europe to the Soviets, and that an Anglo-Russian front might even emerge against the Americans. Instead, British apprehension over Soviet interference with HMG's policy in Europe was well in advance of American suspicion of the Kremlin, and the Austrians were staggered at the vehemence with which their own actions were denounced as pro-Soviet by the British.

The Austrian elections

The decision to hold elections on 25 November was followed by a second two-day conference at the beginning of October to prepare for the forthcoming elections. The most important decision to emerge was the total disenfranchisement of the Nazis. Renner had pushed this policy - against some reluctance by the People's Party - because he felt that the first Austrian Parliament after the war must be seen to have effected a clean break with Nazism. Although Mack was concerned that this decision presented a victory for the Communists and that the OVP would undoubtedly lose by it, he nevertheless felt that it was an important solution of a question of principle because it removed a potentially divisive issue from the election campaign.\footnote{Mack to Bevin, 16 October 1945, FO 371/46621, C7245} The Foreign Office were divided over the issue. It was agreed that disenfranchising the Nazis was probably not such a bad move. At least it stopped the OVP - 'even if they smell' - from being vulnerable to attacks on grounds of Nazi support; on the other hand, the Nazis would at least have voted anti-Communist.\footnote{Minutes by B.A.B.Burrows and Cullis, 16 October 1945, FO 371/46621, C6969}

Renner saw the matter as more complex. In a memorandum written at the beginning of 1947 he exposed the dilemma inherent in legislation designed to bring about denazification as understood by the Allies. The disenfranchisement of the Nazis in 1945 was a measure taken to placate the Allies. This is not to say that Renner was in any sense less condemnatory than other victims of National socialism. Renner argued, however, that history had taught that ostracism of a creed rarely brings about its eradication. Rather, such measures tended to strengthen the resolve of its adherents and help its dissemination. Ostracism, in fact, was capable of 'poisoning a whole
people' by encouraging a sort of thought police which, in turn, led to 'self-interested speculation and denunciation'. Had the Government not been constrained by an occupation, the matter would have been dealt with much more sensibly: revolutionary tribunals would have taken care of the principal offenders and collaborators, and the lesser Nazis would have been amnestied. A national poll soon after liberation, which would have allowed all Austrians to vote, would have seen the Nazis emerge as a 'hopeless minority'. Any appeal this minority might still have had would soon have been neutralised by the education policies of the democratic government. Renner acknowledged the bitter experiences of Austria's neighbours and Austria's need to regain other nations' trust, but he warned that to sweep the problem under the carpet by depriving people of their citizen's rights was not the answer. The sooner Austria returned to normal democratic processes, the sooner her people would be able to deal effectively with any lingering undemocratic elements.93

About this time, Mack had his first encounter with Karl Gruber, the future Foreign Minister. Gruber had lived in Germany during the war but had returned to Austria in early 1945 to organise the anti-Nazi resistance in Tyrol. He then became Provincial Governor of Tyrol until his appointment as Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs in the Renner Government. Gruber had been a Socialdemocrat for many years but had recently changed over to the OVP. The Foreign Office hailed his appointment as a great victory for conservatism, but they would soon find that he was not always amenable to their pressure and that he would often cause them a great deal of embarrassment. At this first meeting with Gruber, however, Mack found himself quite impressed with the young lawyer and thought that he would not easily be overwhelmed by the Chancellor. Quizzing him on the likelihood of fair elections, Gruber amiably replied that he did not think that Vienna's Central Cemetery would provide more voters than was customary in Austrian elections. All in all, Mack's description of his meeting with Gruber made London think that 'the admission of Dr

93 Renner to Gruber, 22 January 1947, AdR, BMAA, K11, 105.578-105.578
Gruber to the Provisional Government was improvement worth all the other changes put together'.

As the election campaign got under way, London grew concerned at utterances by the Austrian Communists which suggested that they were aiming at 'single list' tactics, much as had happened recently in the Hungarian elections. Ernest Bevin, the new British Foreign Secretary, had had long personal experience with Moscow-directed Communist methods and his assessment of Stalin's regime as merely another form of dictatorship made him especially sensitive to such claims.

John Hynd, in charge of the newly-created Control Office for Germany and Austria, suggested that it was high time the Austrian Socialists received some encouragement. Foreign Office hostility to Renner was not conducive to getting HMG's view across, a positive attitude was needed to quash Communist manoeuvres and 'put some backbone into Dr Renner'. But the SPO needed no encouragement from the British Government. They had already made it publicly clear that the Party had no intention of surrendering its autonomy by making common cause with the Communists either before or after the elections. The SPO's election campaign emphasised the Party's history of fighting against all forms of dictatorship and likened the Party to the British Labour Party, the choice being 'between authoritarian socialism and democratic socialism - between Moscow and London'.

London breathed a sigh of relief when the election results became known. In October Mack had thought that the Austrian people, stifled by the occupation, would be too apathetic to bother much about the elections. He now reported an amazing turn-out at the polls. Austrians had come out in full force to deal the Communists a shattering defeat. The KPO had received a mere 5% of the votes, proving Austria's intense dislike of Communism, her hatred - 'word is not too strong' - of the Soviet Army and, most important of all, Austria's determination to look to the West. The OVP were thought to

94 Mack to FO, 16 October 1945; Comment by Cullis, 22 October 1945, FO 371/46621, C7189
95 A. Bullock, Ernest Bevin: Foreign Secretary, 1945-51 (Oxford, 1985) pp.105-107
96 Minutes by Burrows and Troutbeck, 29 October 1945, FO 371/46622, C7499
97 Arbeiter-Zeitung, 7 November 1945
98 Mack to Bevin, 19 November 1945, FO 371/46623, C8926
have lost a considerable number of votes owing to the disenfran-
chisement of the Nazis, but as they received 50% of the votes, that
hardly mattered. The cleavage between Socialist Vienna and the con-
servative Provinces appeared largely the same as it had been in the
First Republic, but the tragedy of 1934 was not likely to be
repeated for two reasons: the Socialists and Conservatives had
fruitfully worked together for the past six months and the political
hazards of guiding Austria through the coming period of reconstruc-
tion made a sharing of power imperative.\footnote{Mack to FO, 28 November 1945, FO 371/46623, C8926}

It would take some time before London would come to realise
that the Austrians much preferred to dance to their own tune, but
that - treated with more dignity and understanding - they might well
be happy to take the British lead. Meanwhile, with the US High Com-
missioner and State Department elatedly issuing public announcements
of their satisfaction with the outcome of the elections, Oliver
Harvey laconically ordered: 'NO CROWING!'\footnote{Comment and emphasis by Harvey, 28 November 1945, FO 371/46623, C8856}