I AM DEEPLY appreciative of the privilege of writing a foreword to this outstanding book. The more so because in former times I was rather well known in Central Europe as a specialist in politics and economics, but since my arrival in the United States I have rarely had the opportunity of publishing anything over my own signature. I had the pleasure of meeting Professor Charles A. Gulick in Vienna in 1936 and of reading his manuscript chapter by chapter here in the United States. Having lived in Austria during the fateful years covered by this book, I can appreciate the wise judgments and the rare thoroughness displayed in Professor Gulick’s work.

The author first became interested in the Austrian working-class movement during a short stay in Vienna in 1930. Soon after the defeat of that movement in the brief but bloody civil war of 1934 he began to study its origins, growth, and temporary eclipse. For a year, beginning in June, 1936, he was in Austria investigating the movement in its own setting. He spent the subsequent ten years in writing this comprehensive work which he calls Austria from Habsburg to Hitler because it is a detailed history of the first Austrian republic.

The early chapters tell of the growth of the working-class movement and the scanty beginnings of social legislation and reforms carried out during the Habsburg rule. Indeed, Professor Gulick finds little to tell about social legislation at that time. In this connection I recall the well-known statement of a Habsburg minister, “The social problem ends at Bodenbach”—an Austrian town on the old German-Austrian border. Under the monarchy the young working-class movement expended most of its energy in attaining the franchise and other civic rights for the masses. The workers’ party stood in the forefront of this struggle and in the last two decades of Habsburg rule was able to boast of some success. Labor was almost helpless in striving to obtain better housing in Vienna and in other cities ruled by reactionaries who themselves were backed by landlords. The franchise was a prerequisite to further social achievements.

Succeeding chapters in this book give the story of the republic in astonishing minuteness of detail. The reader is told of the diffi-
cultures which the republic encountered in the dismemberment of the centuries-old economic unit of the empire. The pygmy state suffered from a lack of markets and of materials, of fuel and food which the neighbor states that had emerged from the collapse of the empire were unwilling to supply, transferring their age-old hatred of the Habsburgs to the republic. Austria, with a population half starved by the privations of war, had to rebuild her economy from the foundation. The young republic was confronted with increasing unemployment, with crumbling industries, with a huge deficit in the national budget, with inflation of the currency, and with failing banks which formerly had their main assets and business dealings in areas of the empire now separated from Austria. The complete collapse of the Austrian currency was eventually avoided with the help of the League of Nations—help which came four years after the end of the war.

The emphasis in these early chapters is placed on the astounding performances of the workers' party which, from a small minority with limited rights and influence, emerged in February, 1919, with more seats in the Constituent Assembly than any other party. This party dominated the capital city of Vienna and the other industrial centers of the republic.

The party, backed by the trade unions, worked for higher wages, for the eight-hour working day, for social insurance, and for a long overdue school reform which would enable the children of the proletariat to attend high schools and even universities.

The Socialist administration of Vienna fostered health-improvement programs, combated the high infant-mortality rate, and worked to curb tuberculosis. The city built hospitals, maternity homes, kindergartens, day homes for children, public baths, playgrounds, and parks. The party promoted all kinds of sports—swimming, mountain climbing, hiking, and skiing—to acquaint the workers with the beauties which nature had bestowed so prodigally on their homeland. Intellectual and artistic activities were not neglected, for the people were provided with low-priced tickets for theaters, concerts, and museums.

In the forefront of Socialist endeavors to assist the workers was the housing and tenants protection program in cities where the dwellings of the poor classes had always been wretched. Limitations
on rents and protection against eviction as temporary measures had been initiated from sheer necessity during the war. The Social Democratic party made them permanent. Conscious that protection alone could not help the masses of its citizens during a period of a scarcity of dwellings when economic misery prevented any private building, the city of Vienna soon set in motion a great building program which, within a few years, provided thousands of homes for the proletariat. These dwellings, available at very moderate rents, were far more hygienic in design and better equipped than anything the Viennese workers had known before. Many of the housing complexes were, in addition, architecturally beautiful.

All these intricate performances were linked together to form a unitary plan conceived and carried out by men of superior capacities and tireless zeal whose first motivation was a true love for the people. These achievements were most outstanding in a city whose finances in the beginning were as moribund as those of the republic. By means of a strong and honest administration and a rigid system of sharply progressive taxes, the financial administrator of Vienna, Hugo Breitner, succeeded in providing huge sums for this work without endangering the financial stability of the city. In contrast to almost all of the cities of Germany which suffered extreme financial difficulties in the crisis, particularly in 1931, the finances of Vienna remained stable until the moment when the reactionary government, after eliminating the parliament on a pretext, deprived the city of a large part of its revenues.

From the beginning, the Social Democratic party had to restrain a small, but, especially during the short period of Bolshevistic rule in Hungary and Bavaria, potentially dangerous Communist group. It had to struggle too against the ever-growing opposition of the reactionary bourgeois parties, representing the big businessmen, the landowners, the Church, the army, and the Monarchists, who longed for the days when they had been all-powerful under the Habsburgs.

I do not want to say that everything in the party's social, economic, and political programs was good. In some instances they may have gone too far, for example, in overtaxing business then in the midst of its own difficulties. However, in general, the Socialists were moderate in their demands and showed an understanding of the problems which beset business and other fields of endeavor. I share
Foreword

Professor Gulick's high appraisal of the Socialists' achievements in Austria.

Members of the Social Democratic party certainly merited a better answer from the bourgeoisie than they found in the abusive words bestowed on them—"Welfare inflationists" and "Austro-Marxists"—expressions which depict them as wild radicals lacking any sense of responsibility. In one of his most brilliant chapters Professor Gulick shows that these Austro-Marxists, though clinging to some orthodox Marxist doctrines, grew more Revisionist with their understanding of the needs of certain groups, for example, of the peasantry, and even restrained the expression of their traditional antireligious attitude.

It is true that very early they had formed an armed force, in agreement with the other Austrian parties, for the purpose of defending the country's borders against potentially aggressive neighboring states. The workers' party felt strongly that the Republikanische Schutz Bund should never be used for any purpose except the defense of the democratic republic. Its members abjured any revolution by force. Perhaps the party relied too much on its supporters at the polls and expected, possibly too trustingly, to attain a majority of votes. Nevertheless the mere existence of the Schutz Bund was used by the reactionary parties as a pretext for expanding their own armed forces. With the spread of Fascism in neighboring states, the reactionaries built up the Heimwehr and other armed groups to the status of private armies designed to destroy not only the hated workers' party and its social reforms but also democracy itself.

The story of the workers' party's achievements and its struggle against the reactionaries, whether in parliament or on the streets, is related by Professor Gulick in great detail. With the facts, he gives us too, by quotations of speeches and writings, by a recital of their deeds, sharply etched portraits of the leading personalities on the stage or in the wings during this, first rather peaceful and later turbulent, period in the history of Austria.

On the "left" are Viktor Adler, Otto Bauer, Karl Renner, Ferdinand Hanusch, Hugo Breitner, Robert Danneberg, Professor Julius Tandler, Otto Glöckel, and many others. On the other side stand Prince Ernst Rüdiger von Starhemberg, Emil Fey, Ernst von Streeruwitz, Johannes Schober, and the more democratic Leopold Kun-
More important than these figures is the shrewd and truly ingenious Monsignor Ignaz Seipel who, precisely because of these characteristics, was the evil genius of the republic. It was Seipel who did more than any other man to bring the Heimwehr to surpassing power. He may have thought he could always control its quarrelsome leaders and perhaps he might have done so, but he officially withdrew and died. His successors, Chancellors Dollfuss and Schuschnigg, became increasingly the prisoners of the Heimwehr leaders.

Professor Gulick's history of the first republic is crammed with facts. Every fact is amply documented. The author's investigation of printed materials—books, documents, periodicals, and newspapers—was supplemented by interviews and conversations with government officials, party leaders, scholars, and plain people of all political orientations. This painstaking comprehensiveness makes special monographs of several of the chapters: those on trade unions, cooperatives, education, welfare work, and finance. The fullness of detail has added value for readers especially interested in social problems. Those chapters of more general interest on the political, social, and economic history of the republic are truly dramatic. The author's thoroughness in the exposition of facts and conflicting arguments, whether economic or political, provides the reader with all the evidence necessary to judge for himself whether the author is correct in his appraisal of the performances of the Socialists and of the aims and practices of their enemies.

The second volume of this study concerns the last fights between the enemies of democracy and the workers' party, the elimination of parliament, the rule by emergency decrees, the replacing of the republican constitution by a Fascist authoritarian one, the canceling of many of the social and educational achievements of the Social Democrats, and finally, Austria's temporary extinction by Hitler's Germany.

As a native-born Austrian, an economist and publisher, a believer in democracy, a politically minded man yet unattached to any political party, I give my thanks to Professor Gulick for his thorough history of the first republic. Only his deep love for Austria and her people could have induced him to give so many years to the research and writing that produced this unique and excellent book.

I, too, love Austria, her countryside, and her artistic and charming
people, but I am not unaware of the flaws in the character of her people. As a Jew, compelled to leave my homeland, I have no reason to be predisposed toward Austrians in recent years. I have no desire to condemn or praise a people as distinct from a government, but I do want to understand the motives for their behavior. For that reason I take this opportunity to say a few words on the much discussed position of Austria in relation to Nazism.

There is no doubt that only too many Austrians, I am sure not the majority, went willingly into Hitler's camp. There are several reasons why they did so. It is clear that most of the guilt falls on Chancellors Dollfuss and Schuschnigg, who do not merit the halo bestowed on them in the United States because of their fate at the hands of the Nazis. They were the victims of their own deeds, of their own politics. I do not doubt that Dollfuss and Schuschnigg were sincere in striving to preserve their country from being engulfed in Hitler's plan for world conquest. I can also acknowledge that their position was very difficult, placed as they were in the midst of totalitarian governments and faced with growing adherence to Nazism in Austria herself. But their position need not have been half so hopeless had they not seen their first enemies in the Social Democratic party and had they not done their utmost, unwillingly to be sure, to press great numbers of Austrians into Hitler's ranks. By their own unprovoked bloody fight with the workers, by continued persecution of Socialists, leaders and rank and file, by destroying democracy and introducing a totalitarian constitution—far from the encyclical Quadragesimo Anno which they contended was their model, instead formed on Mussolini's corporate-estate Fascism—they had alienated almost half of the population of Austria, that half which was precisely the most reliable and the bitterest enemy of Nazism.

The longer Austrian totalitarianism lasted the more it grew to resemble the German model—though it was never half so brutal. It is an axiom that a doctrine can be combated by imposing a strictly contrary one, but it can never be defeated by emulation, even though it be in milder form. Chancellor Schuschnigg was ignorant of this elementary fact. Even the Jew-baiting in Austria followed the Nazi example. Anti-Semitism was always widespread, particularly among Austrian university youths, lower clergy, and peasantry. The Austro-Fascists, however, were the first to foster anti-Semitism from above.
Of course, those individuals who felt similarly inclined asked themselves, “Since Jew-baiting is all right, why don’t I go all the way?” They flew to join the Nazi colors.

Others felt that Austro-Fascism was a failure. It had received no support from the masses, and its leaders, always quarreling among themselves, were united only in destroying democracy and labor. Austro-Fascism had succeeded in having a new constitution drafted, yet it lacked the capacity to put it to work. Up to the final hour the Corporate Estates existed only on paper. Therefore, Fascism’s adherents and adversaries alike felt that if totalitarianism had to be, it would be better to choose a working instead of an impotent form.

For these and many other reasons—not the least of which was anchluss with Germany—great sections of the people were prepared to join the Nazis. Anschluss was always favored by a large part, if not most of Austria’s population. They should not be blamed for this desire, for Austrians and Germans have the same language, the same culture, and the same centuries-long history as one people. What was wanted was a free union with a free Germany, not submergence under a brutal dictator. But at the decisive hour there was no choice.

The Austro-Fascists had managed so well that there was hardly a chance to fight. There was no help from outside. Mussolini had betrayed Austria. The Western powers too, showed a complacency toward Hitler—as G. E. R. Gedye has clearly demonstrated in his Betrayal in Central Europe. It is not too much to ask that the Allied victors consider the prewar position of Austria in making their decision whether she should be dealt with as one of Hitler’s satellites or as a Nazi conquest. Austria was conquered by Hitler, though had it not been for the disastrous politics of Dollfuss and Schuschnigg, the outcome might not have been such an ignominious surrender as actually took place.

With the help of the United Nations Austria can rise again, as she did after the First World War. She has shown her capacity to form a modern democracy. If that democracy was destroyed, it was largely because of the influence of Fascist regimes in the neighboring states on which Austria depended. Let us hope that there is no danger of a repetition of Fascism in Central Europe.

Professor Gulick’s book will find eager readers in Austria, but principally in the United States where the interest in the social prob-
lems with which it deals grows increasingly keener. Similar social
problems, I need mention only tenants protection and housing dif-
ficulties, are becoming more acute in the United States. There is
much to learn from Professor Gulick's investigations of these prob-
lems as they arose and were solved in republican Austria. But, above
all, the democratically minded must be interested in the vivid story
of the tragic struggle between progressive democrats and reactionary
totalitarians in Austria.

WALther FEdern
Founder and Publisher of the Oesterreichische
Volkswirt, 1908-1934.

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