

# Politics and Society - Austria

Michal Pink

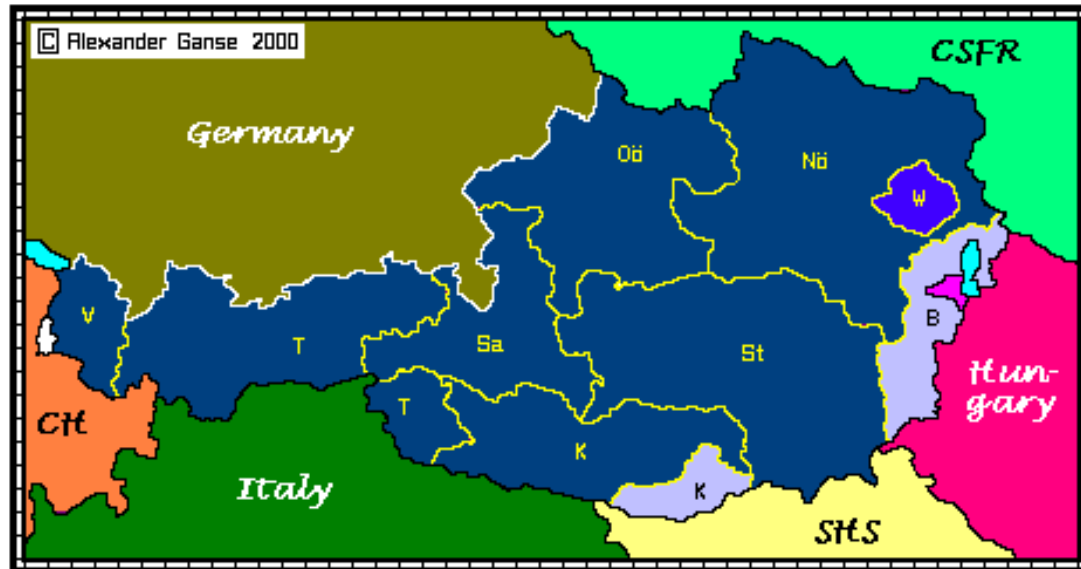
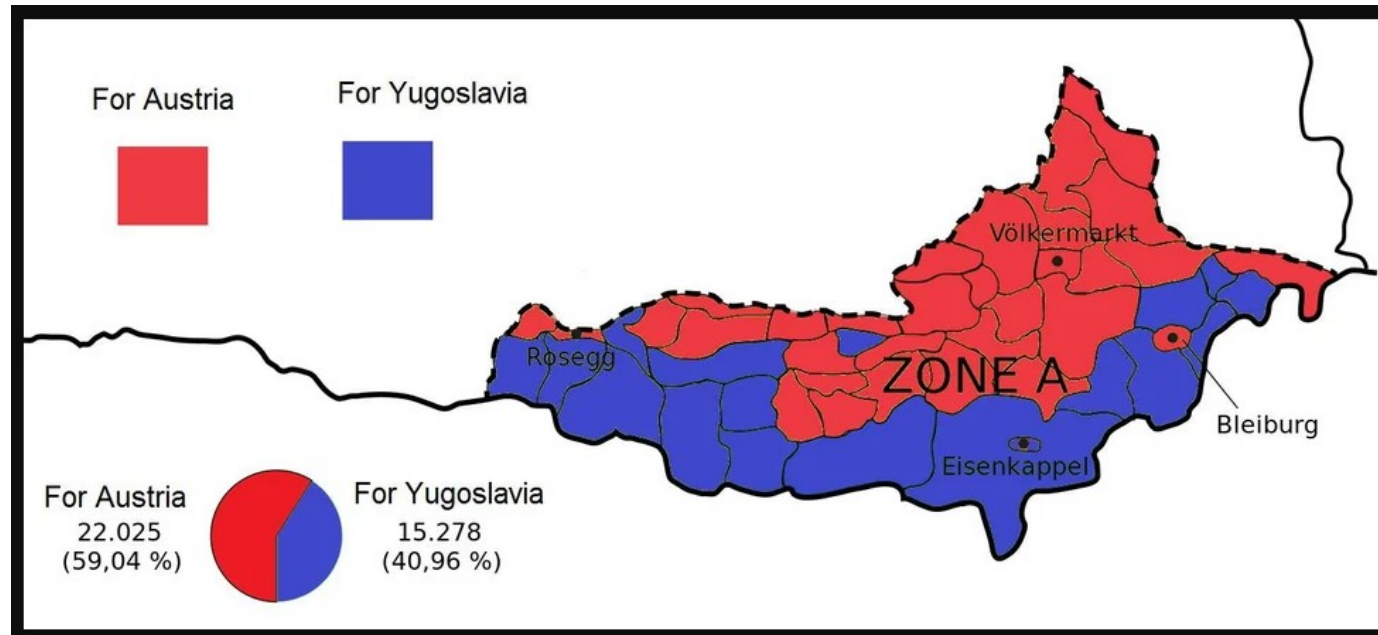
**GLCb1003** Central Europe: Politics and Society

# Habsburg Austria – Imperial Austria

- Dualisation – confederation Austria – Hungary since 1866
- Step by step democratization – mainly through ownership structure
- 1907 and 1911 – first general elections in Austria FPTP



# Austria 1920 – borders



*Austria 1918-1922  
Federal States*

Nö	Niederösterreich	Lower Austria
Oö	Oberösterreich	Upper Austria
Sa	Salzburg	
St	Steiermark	Styria
T	Tirol	Tyrol
V	Vorarlberg	
W	Wien Statehood 1922	Vienna
K	Kärnten 1920 to Austria	Carinthia
B	Burgenland	Lajtabanszag
	1921 to Austria	
	1921 to Hungary	

# Modern Austria – 1918

- Karl Renner (Socialist) – prime minister 1918 – 1920
- Negotiation led by France – but without Austrian delegation
- Treaty of Saint-Germain-en-Laye – Republic of German Austria (1919)
- Enlarging of voting rights and incorporation of proporz
- No political or economic union with Germany
- Important role of social democracy – symbol of modernity
- The republican period was increasingly marked by violent strife
- Left and right wing views include paramilitar units of political parties
- Capital city - population of almost 2 million, was left as an imperial capital without an empire to feed it – no agrarian society (6.5 million people )

# 1918 – 1932 I. Republic and authoritarianism

- A new state, reduced by a number of key regions
- Economic ties, border discussions - Burgenland,
- Injustice - connection with Germany 99% YES
- Economic problems, global crisis, minimum ties to the surrounding states
- Austrofascism - Engelbert Dolfus 1932
- Austria wants to get rid of the crisis by introducing a corporative state
- The barrier of Nazism, communism and social democracy
- Succeeded by Kurt Alois Josef Johann von Schuschnigg

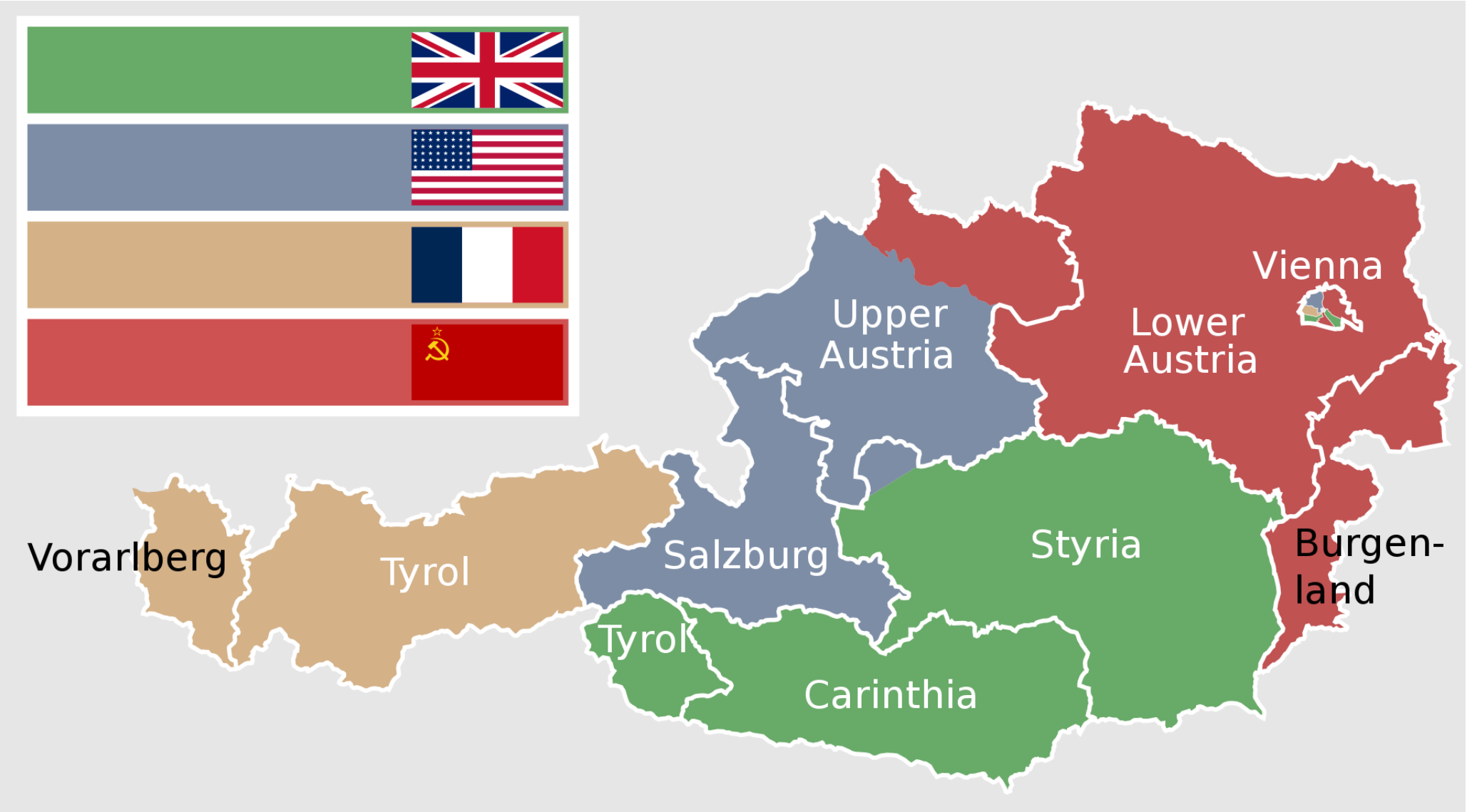


# The Rise of Nazism – spring 1938

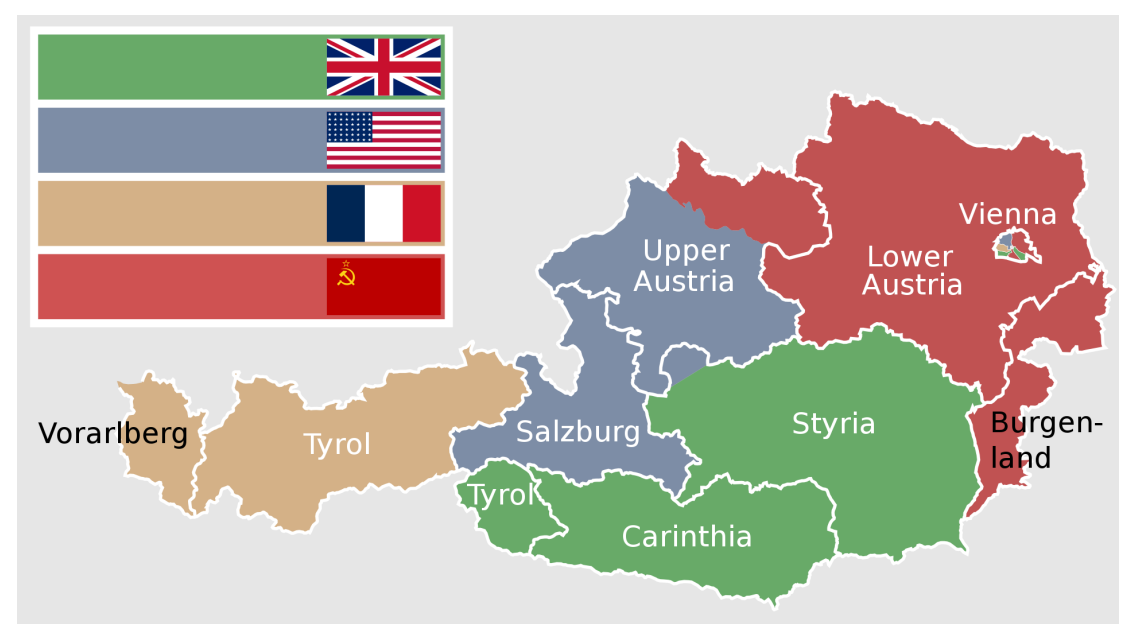
- **Arthur Seyss-Inquart** – Pangermanism, from Stonařov
- He spend many years in Olomouc and Jihlava
- Proponent of the Anschluss, the union of Austria and Germany
- March 11, 1938 - Prime Minister of Austria
- he called the troops of the Third Reich to help and annexed Austria
- Nürnberg – accusation of war crimes and against humanity
- Court decision – guilty



# Austria 1945 - 1955



# Austria 1945 – 1955



- Divided into four occupation zones and looking for a common identity
- Formation of the party system (People's Party, Social Democrats, Free People), marginal Communists, around 5%
- Negotiating the future of the country - Restoring the parliamentarism
- former NSDAP members were – no voting right in 1945 – 49
- public debate in Austria did not focus on Austria's responsibility and its contribution to the Holocaust and the war - role of the Austrians as victims

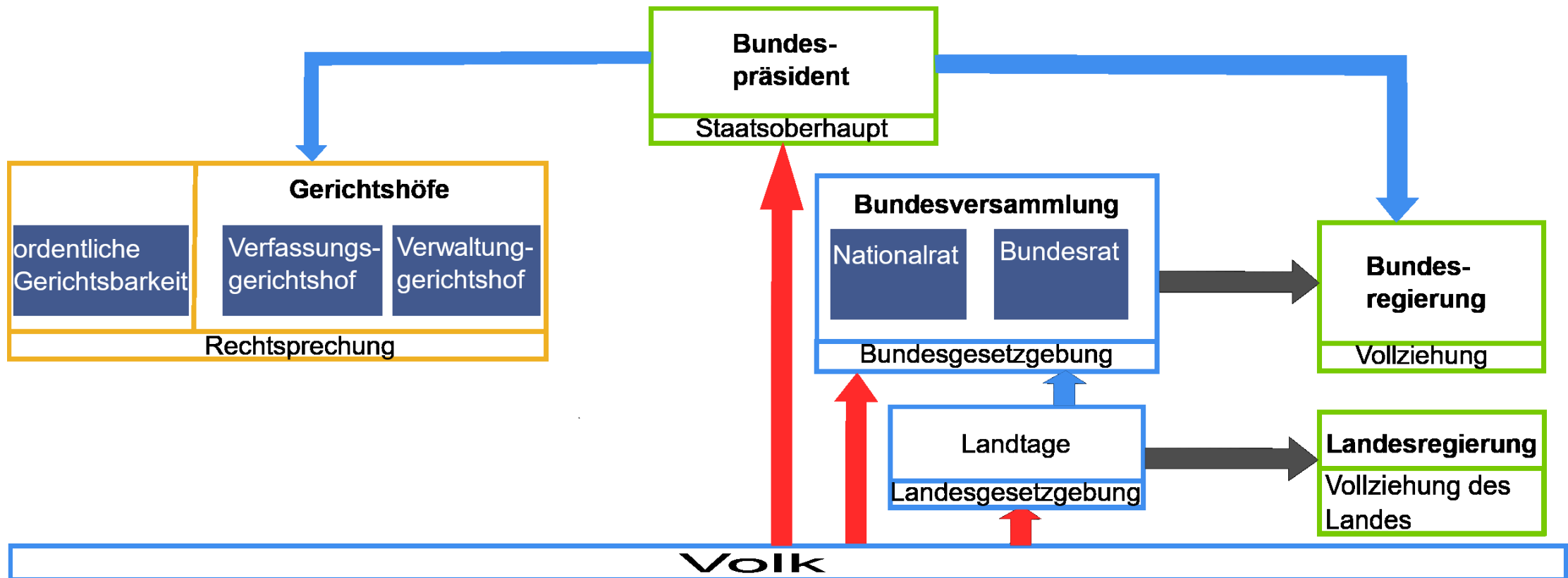


# Austria – „proporz and pillarization“

- Proporz functioned as a kind of buffer system for the aggressive “pillars”
- “**Proporz**” meant the continuation of a practice through which the coalition parties secured their share of power in the state for themselves
- posts, subsidies, government and civil service delegations who were sent abroad had to be split between the parties strictly on a one-to-one basis.”
- **Pillarization** – division into several separate groups that live their own lives: professional orientation, sports organisation, education, work, etc.
- Not easy to change the pillar – or political „camp“ for example marriage, work, etc.?
- Most visible among the political parties and every day life









# 1955 – Austrian State Treaty

- Austria is an independent and sovereign state - Parliamentary republic Federation
- It is not and will not be a member of NATO or other Western organisations - 1995 EU
- Despite the unfavorable circumstances, it will not fall under Soviet sphere



**Federal President:** Alexander Van der Bellen (GRÜNE) • **Federal Chancellor:** Karl Nehammer (ÖVP) • **Governing parties:** ÖVP, GRÜNE

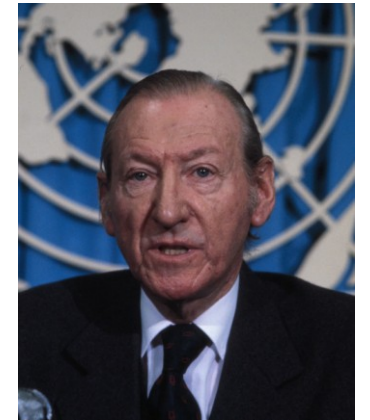
● **Legislative elections:** National Council, 5-year term, 183 seats, 4% threshold, party-list PR:

			2024	ARCHIVE	2019	ARCHIVE	2017	ARCHIVE	2013
Party	Ideology	%	Seats	%	Seats	%	Seats	%	Seats
 <b>Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs (FPÖ)</b> <a href="#">↗</a> Freedom Party of Austria	National conservatism Right-wing populism	28,8	57	16,2	31	26,0	51	20,5	40
 <b>Österreichische Volkspartei (ÖVP)</b> <a href="#">↗</a> Austrian People's Party	Christian democracy Conservatism	26,3	51	37,5	71	31,5	62	24,0	47
 <b>Sozialdemokratische Partei Österreichs (SPÖ)</b> <a href="#">↗</a> Social Democratic Party of Austria	Social democracy	21,1	41	21,2	40	26,9	52	26,8	52
 <b>Das Neue Österreich und Liberales Forum (NEOS)</b> <a href="#">↗</a> The New Austria and Liberal Forum	Liberalism	9,1	18	8,1	15	5,3	10	5,0	9
 <b>Die Grünen-Die Grüne Alternative (GRÜNE)</b> <a href="#">↗</a> The Greens-The Green Alternative	Green politics	8,2	16	13,9	26	3,8	-	12,4	24
 <b>Kommunistische Partei Österreichs-KPÖ Plus (KPÖ)</b> <a href="#">↗</a> Communist Party of Austria-KPÖ Plus (a)	Democratic socialism Communism	2,4	-	0,7	-	0,8	-	1,0	-
 <b>Jetzt-Liste Pilz (JETZT)</b> Now-List Pilz	Green politics Left-wing populism	-	-	1,9	-	4,4	8	-	-
 <b>Team Stronach für Österreich (TS)</b> Team Stronach for Austria	Conservative liberalism Euroscepticism	-	-	-	-	-	-	5,7	11
Others		4,1	-	0,5	-	1,3	-	4,6	-
Total		-	183	-	183	-	183	-	183
Turnout			74,9		75,6		79,5		74,9

# Austrian People's Party - ÖVP



- Josef Klaus, Alois Mock, Wolfgang Schussel, Sebastian Kurz, **Karl Nehammer**,
- Catholic and anti-anarchist, anti-communist, anti-socialist and anti-liberal, subsidiarity and decentralisation - Quadragesimo anno
- Rudolf Kirchschräger – independent, non - partisan
- **Kurt Waldheim** – problematic person, own past in WWII
- Until 1990 – social market economy, EU cooperation
- The new People's Party – symbol of Sebastian Kurz
- 2017 promised crackdown on illegal immigration, fight against political Islam
- No Turkey in EU, similar to the program of the FPÖ
- *Salzburger Nachrichten* – newspaper



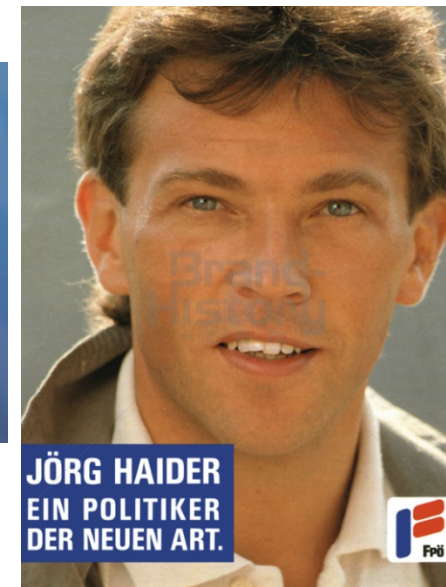
# Social Democratic Party of Austria - SPÖ

- the oldest political party in Austria, since 1889
- The party has close ties to the Trade Union Federation (ÖGB) and the Austrian Chamber of Labour (AK).
- Bruno Kreisky, **Franz Vranitzky**, Heinz Fischer
- Vranitzky - the first Austrian prime minister who admitted Austria's cooperation in war crimes during the WWII.
- Der Standard – newspaper
- Today social liberal center left political party



# Liberals – today FPÖ

- VdU – Federation of Independents, Pan-Germanism
- Actual leader Herbert Kickl
- Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs – since 1956
- FPÖ was the smaller party and had modest support before (86)
- **Jörg Haider** – change of the spirit of the party - right-wing populism
- 1999 – 26.9% and governmental role under ÖVP prime minister
- supporting tax reduction, less state intervention and more privatization
- **anti-establishment positions** were one of the top reasons for voters to vote for the FPÖ – not only before 1999
- Austria is not a country of immigration, eurosceptic and Austrian nationalism
- Austrians belong to the German ethnic and cultural community.



# The Greens



- 1986 – postmaterialistic „revolution“ in society (R. Inglehart )
- Ecological issues, environmental protection,
- Rights of minorities and advocate a socio-ecological (ökosozial) tax reform,
- Direct democracy, ecology, solidarity, feminism and self-determination,
- Pacifism, nonviolence, nuclear power plant Zwentendorf 1978 and protest in Hainburg in 1984 – sit-in protest
- Quality of life, reduce speed limit, today governmental party
- University environment, young generation

# NEOS - The New Austria and Liberal Forum

- 2016 - classic party, program and electorate - between ÖVP and Greens
- overlap ÖVP in economic and tax policy, Greens - social and education
- the party can be seen as representing a modern, liberal urban voters
- Pro-European, and supports the **creation of a federal Europe**
- **Sustainability (Nachhaltigkeit)**, development of the green economy, reform to pensions,
- **Relief (Entlastung)**, lowering the tax rate below 40%, introducing flat tax, reducing public expenditure,
- **Openness (Offenheit)**: reducing public funding for political parties, strengthening party auditing, protecting privacy, encouraging skilled immigration.
- **Education (Schule)**: improving standards and funding for kindergarten, giving schools greater autonomy



# Hugo Portisch



- was born in Bratislava, grew up also Prague, lived and worked mostly in Vienna
- most famous journalist, spokesman for Austrian prime ministers 1955
- Since 1967, worked as ORF's main commentator
- For several decades, he brought balanced view of international political events on Austrian television.
- His programs also affected citizens in the territory Czechoslovakia, where they could be „received“.
- Conversely, in 1968, ORF was the world's main source of information on the situation in the Czechoslovakia.
- he received an offer of candidacy for president from the representatives of the main political parties, but did not accept it in 1992

# Conclusion



- Key topic – „proporz and pilarisation“
- German speaking, but not Germany – more CEE countries (no communist)
- Political parties – relatively stable system (ÖVP, SPÖ, FPÖ, Greens and NEOS)
- No marketing and populism party (for example Czech or Slovak case)
- Important names: Kurt Waldheim, Franz Vranitzky, Alexander Van der Bellen, Karl Nehammer, Herbert Kickl,
- Neutrality – keep distance of NATO, political culture
- Not far, very nice country, not only for sports activities