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THE FIRST ZERO HOUR

The founding years of the Austrian Republic 1918-1920

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Turbulent times: the invention of a new state

The war had come to an end, the monarchy was in ruins, the Kaiser abdicated. New states were hurriedly formed: one of them called itself the Republic of German-Austria. As yet, no borders had been defined for the new state, there was no constitution to govern the political structure. German-Austria wanted to attach itself to the German Reich, Vorarlberg to Switzerland and a few territories flirted with free-state ideas. At the same time, the founding years of the First Republic were also a great awakening towards modernity. They laid the basis for a social democracy, included women in the political process and brought a new zest for life. The authors provide a panoramic view of the experimental laboratory of a nation's self-discovery – leading to the birth of the Austrian Republic.

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Andreas Weigl, born 1961 in Vienna, is an associate professor at the Department of Economic and Social History at Vienna University and Chairman of the Austrian "Arbeitskreis für Stadtgeschichtsforschung". He has published a wide range of works on population, municipal and consumer history. His current book, co-authored with Alfred Pfoser and published by Residenz Verlag: "Die erste Stunde Null".

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Alfred Pfoser, born 1952 in Wels, studied literature, history and journalism in Salzburg. From 1998 to 2007 he was Director of Vienna Public Libraries, from 2007 to 2016 Director of the printed materials collection and Assistant Director of the Vienna City Library. He has published numerous works on Austrian cultural and literary history. His most recently published book at Residenz Verlag: "Im Epizentrum des Zusammenbruchs. Wien im Ersten Weltkrieg" (2013). His current book, co-authored with Andreas Weigl and published by Residenz Verlag: "Die erste Stunde Null".