

Austria: Victory Celebration

Young Shik An
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FFWPU Austria, Victory Celebration on Monday, May 11, 2015: By 6:30 a.m. the room of the Hilton hotel in which the Hoon Dok reading was scheduled for 7 a.m. was already full to the brim. True Mother entered the room on time together with her entourage to a warm welcoming applause. Flowers were presented by the second generation couple Bogdan and Yoshiko Pammer, followed by a prayer by the FFWPU National Director of Albania Gani Rroshi. The Hoon Dok reading from the Chambumo Gyeong was delivered by Jack Corley.



After the Hoon Dok reading the Continental Director of FFWPU Europe, Rev. Yong-shik An, reflected on the past 50 years of the European movement by concisely listing the most important milestones in the European providence. He started with explaining about True Father's first world tour in 1965 that also

marked his first visit to Europe, where he arrived in Lisbon, Portugal. During the European leg of the tour True Father dedicated 19 Holy Grounds. At that time the continent was suffering from the threat of communism and Christianity was weakened to its division into various factions. Thus, True Father offered a special prayer in the Vatican for God to bless and unite Europe. Since Christianity was able to blossom centered on Rome, Europe became a central region in God's providence and from here God's word could spread to the world. In 1978 True Father initiated the Home Church providence during his stay in England. Starting from 1981 True Father invested into the heavy machine industry in Germany and shared technology with Korea.



Vienna was the gate to Eastern Europe. From here Paul Werner sent the first missionary to Czechoslovakia [Emilie Steberl], who learnt the Czech language and witnessed to twelve people. By 1973 there were 30 pioneer centers in Czechoslovakia and about 100 members. However, the movement soon became a target of the police and almost 30 brothers and sisters were imprisoned. Rev. An shared about the tragic fate of Marie Zivna, who died at the age of twenty-four years under tragic circumstances in prison on April 16, 1974. True Father declared Marie as the "first martyr of the Unification Movement". Peter Koch initiated the underground operation "Mission Butterfly" in 1980 and secretly sent young brothers and sisters to the Communist countries of Eastern Europe, most of whom had never even met True Parents before. Those missionaries sowed the seed of democracy and freedom in the Communist bloc and shall never be forgotten.



During the Cold War the providence moved tremendously in Europe. During the PWPA conference held in Geneva in 1985, the "end of Soviet Communism" was declared. This event was followed in 1987 by an

international CARP-rally in Berlin led by Hyo-jin Nim's passionate spirit. Its motto "Die Mauer muss weg!" (The wall must go!) was realized two years later. At the celebration following True Mother's speech in the UK in November 1992, she sang the famous song Santa Lucia with authentic Italian pronunciation to the great amazement of brothers and sisters. On July 1995 the Schengen Convention was fully implemented by twelve European countries. Unfortunately, True Parents' names were put on the so-called "Schengen List" and as persona non grata were prevented from freely traveling into and between Schengen countries. During 2006 True Parents were touring the world and met high-level political leaders in Albania. In 2007 the Schengen ban was finally lifted after 12 years. In 2009 True Father held the Peace Cup in Spain, an international high profile football tournament. After the proclamation of Foundation Day on February 22, 2013 (13th day of the 1st month of the 1st year of Cheon Il Guk), True Mother offered devotions in Switzerland and ascended 12 different peaks.



Following Rev. An's summary, Caroline Handschin, Vice-President of FFWPU Europe, shared her reflections on the 50 year anniversary. She expressed her gratitude that the early missionaries and pioneers to Eastern Europe could be publicly recognized. "I felt that healing could happen for all the sacrifices they have been through," she said. Mrs. Handschin further thanked True Mother for setting a real example of woman leadership that gives more attention to details, strategy and the logic of love.



Peter Zoehrer, National Director of FFWPU Austria, testified about the grace of receiving True Mother to his country. He explained that Dr. Werner Fasslabend, who gave a congratulatory address at the main

event, has been one of the most popular and longest serving Ministers of Defense. Mr. Zoehrer thanked the many brothers and sisters who worked in the background to prepare five successful events, especially Peter Haider, President of the Austrian branch of UPF, and the sisters that are engaged in the Women's Federation. Their many years of constant investment laid the foundation for connecting many VIP's to our movement. Among those was the head of Austria's Islamic Faith Community, Fuat Sanac, who also attended True Mother's speech. A few years ago he was blessed together with his wife at an interfaith event of UPF. Mr. Zoehrer said that this year he was able to achieve two important goals: First, to invite True Mother to Austria and second, to receive a legal status for the FFWPU as a "registered confessional community" by the government. In 1966, the Unification Church was first registered as an association, only to be dissolved by the Interior Ministry in 1974. After 40 years the name of our movement can finally be rehabilitated: A few days before True Mother's visit a high-ranking government representative has verbally confirmed our status as a confessional community. Moreover, a meticulous academic study on the history of the Unification Movement in Austria has been conducted by Dr. Lukas Pokorny, an Austrian scholar of religion. Thus, the public image of our movement is gradually shifting.



Before True Mother gave her address, five beautiful songs were presented by Nora Waldmann (Louis Armstrong's What a Wonderful World, Van Morrison's Crazy (Holy) Love, backed by Simon Cook on the guitar and Hans Campman on the keyboards) and another sister (Alright), as well as Sun-jin Nim with In-sup Nim (Part of Your World from the Disney movie The Little Mermaid) and Yeon-ah Nim with Hoon-sook Nim (Top of the World, accompanied by a jazzy Hans Campman).

True Mother then shared about how God created nature in order to sustain and bring joy to humankind. However, because fallen people do not know the true value of nature, we are to become the true owners, who will save and protect the environment and its resources for the survival and well-being of humankind, by following True Parents' example of living for the sake of others. True Mother concluded her brief talk with two songs: Santa Lucia and Saranghae.

We wish to express our deepest gratitude to True Mother, Sun-jin Nim, In-sup Nim, Yeon-ah Nim and Hoon-sook Nim for their visit to Vienna and for the blessings they have bestowed upon us during these short and intensive days. We will continue to invest ourselves so that we can fulfill the hope that True Parents see in us.