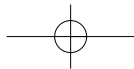
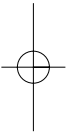


Austria, Germany, and the Cold War



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From the *Anschluss* to the
State Treaty 1938–1955

Rolf Steininger



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15 May 1955 – after signing the Austrian State Treaty: the Foreign Ministers on the balcony of Belvedere Palace in Vienna (left to right): Antoine Pinay (France), Vyacheslav Molotov (Soviet Union), Leopold Figl (Austria), John Foster Dulles (U.S.A.), Harold Macmillan (U.K.).

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Introduction to the English Edition

In Austria, the 15th of May 2005, was a day of celebrating and remembering the signing of the State Treaty (Staatsvertrag) in Vienna 50 years earlier. With this treaty the country was at last free after ten years of Allied occupation. The year 2005 was the “Year of Thought” (Gedankenjahr), as Austria’s Chancellor Wolfgang Schüssel referred to it at the time, Austria should be “newly discovered.” The State Treaty occupied center stage. Countless events, exhibitions, television documentaries, “teaching aids”, and publications commemorated the occasion. The reader may wonder why we needed yet another book on this topic. There were already several publications devoted to it, first and foremost the monumental account by Gerald Stourzh, expanded several times¹ – to name only one. Was there anything left to be “newly discovered?” My answer was yes. Most of the publications considered the developments leading up to the State Treaty primarily from the Austrian perspective. The story of the State Treaty is not, however, only about Austria. It is about Germany and the Cold War as well. The task at hand was to fashion this new, broadened perspective.

When we look beyond Austria we can see connections that are not visible at first glance and have so far gone largely unexamined.² Few of the relevant decisions made at the time concerned exclusively Austria: the German question and the Cold War always played a role. And what an important one! The question of Austria was from the very beginning inextricably linked with the more important German question. Considering developments in Germany and, in that context, the Cold War opens up entirely new perspectives – for example, the fact that Austria became hostage to Soviet policies, a “trump card” for Moscow in its “game” over Germany. In some respects, the same also applied to the Western Allies. With the Cold War heating up and Germany divided, Austria turned out to be of strategic value, and the State Treaty became a weapon in the Cold War. There was another point to consider: the *Anschluss* of 1938. Like the sword of Damocles, that event with all its consequences hung constantly over Austria and the post-war planning of the Allies. The challenge was to connect those issues: the *Anschluss*, the German question, the Cold War, and the Austrian State Treaty. Only then do we get a better understanding of some of the decisions made with respect to Austria and can also answer the question why it took ten years before Austria got the State Treaty.

Rolf Steininger
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Innsbruck, February 2007

Notes

1. Stourzh, Gerald, *Um Einheit und Freiheit. Staatsvertrag, Neutralität und das Ende der Ost-West-Besetzung Österreichs 1945–1955* (Vienna–Cologne–Graz: Böhlau, 1998). The fifth edition with a bibliographical epilogue and select bibliography for the years 1999–2005 was published in 2005.
2. There have been noteworthy exceptions: Günter Bischof stresses the context of the Cold War throughout his numerous works, as do Erwin A. Schmidl, Audrey Kurth Cronin and James Jay Carafano, while Michael Gehler emphasizes the importance of the German question. But the connection of these issues – the Cold War and the German question, not to mention the *Anschluss* – with Austria is not always made.

This perspective is in part now taken up in an impressive collection of 33 essays – which came out of a conference organized in May 2005 by the Austrian Academy of Science in Vienna. Ten of these essays (five in English: T. Angerer, G. Bischof, S. Dockrill, A. Filitov, V. Mastny) deal with the political context, the Soviet Union and the West. Cf. Suppan, Arnold, Gerald Stourzh and Wolfgang Mueller, eds., *Der österreichische Staatsvertrag 1955. Internationale Strategie, rechtliche Relevanz, nationale Identität. The Austrian State Treaty 1955. International Strategy, Legal Relevance, National Identity* (Vienna: Verlag der österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2005).

Epilogue to the English Edition

This translation is an unabridged text of the original German-language edition *Der Staatsvertrag. Österreich im Schatten von deutscher Frage und Kaltem Krieg 1938–1955* (Innsbruck–Vienna–Bozen: Studienverlag, 2005). A few new sources have been added and a few alterations made in keeping with the latest research.

The author would like to thank all who have been involved in the English edition and who made it possible to get it into print: Ministerialrat Alois Söhn and Gottfried Prinz from the Austrian Ministry of Science and Research; Vice-Rector Professor Tilman Märk of the University of Innsbruck and the Provincial Government of South Tyrol; they have provided funds for the translation.

I am grateful to Dr. James Davidson, Professor emeritus in Political Science from Tulane University; he gave the text a close read from the perspective of an interested American audience, Eva Plankensteiner, Ingrid Voggenberger and Ulrike Scherpereel of the Institute of Contemporary History at the University of Innsbruck for their dedication and engagement; and Axel Steininger for the technical work on the photos and facsimiles.

I am grateful to Publisher Markus Hatzer from the Studienverlag in Innsbruck for charging a modest license fee. My thanks go also to Publisher Marion Berghahn of Berghahn Books, Oxford and New York, who almost immediately after the German version was published made the decision for an English version. This was long before Timothy C. Dowling from the Department of History at the Virginia Military Institute in Lexington, Virginia, praised the book as an

“exceptionally useful work ... well thought out and provocative. It is short enough for undergraduate students, and broad enough to apply to a variety of courses dealing with Austria, Germany, Central Europe, and the Cold War.”

And he added with regret: “It is a shame that the book is not available in English.” (H-Net Book Review, 17 May 2006. For the full text of this review see www.rolfsteininger.at). Now I am grateful that it is.

Rolf Steininger