

In 2005, John Lewis Gaddis, one of the deans of Cold War historians, published his summa on that subject, *The Cold War: A New History*. In this measured yet magisterial work, Gaddis presents his sweeping and seasoned analysis of the 45-year struggle between the United States and the Soviet Union – in the first instance – and their respective blocs – in the second, a struggle which mercifully never turned hot. It begins with the meeting of the US and Soviet armies in Torgau in April 1945, and it ends with German Unification in October 1990, and the demise of the Soviet Union in December 1991. The country of Austria appears but twice in passing references.

Not so in *Austria, Germany and the Cold War: From the Anschluss to the State Treaty, 1938-1955*, a book written by Rolf Steininger, the head of the Institute of Contemporary History at the University of Innsbruck and European Union Jean-Monnet Professor. Thanks to Steininger, a scholar with numerous publications on these and other related subjects, we have a volume that gives Austria its due, at least for the first decade of this struggle. Using German and English sources, many of them primary documents, he has given us an erudite, comprehensive analysis that illuminates the important role Austria played in that initial decade of the Cold War.

His discussion is consistently well-focused, and his main themes are reliably well developed. In fact if there is any weakness, some of his minor points are too well-developed as he dutifully explains all the permutations in the evolution of policy positions of the major players. Although fastidious at times, this attention to detail also inspires confidence in the author. While he incorporates most of the key events of the Cold War during its first decade, he rightfully does not become side-tracked by the narrative of the Cold War, one that can become quite seductive to a writer. Unswervingly he remains fixed on his purpose and successfully demonstrates how the question of Austria was deeply related to the German Question, that is, would Germany be once again united, sovereign and would it be neutral or, as Konrad Adenauer – the first chancellor of West Germany – desired, clearly rooted in the West?

The climax of the diplomatic chess game played by the Western powers and the Soviet Union comes in 1955 when the Soviets surprised the West and Austria by agreeing to sign the Austrian State Treaty, ending the occupation. In his conclusion, Steininger explains the switch: „From the beginning, the Soviets used the „pawn“ of Austria for their own purposes in playing their „game“ for Germany. For Moscow, Austria became a key

piece that it would use at the decisive moment, in order to influence policy in Germany.“ (p.140)

A number of features enhance the quality of the book. The most notable is his integration of selected official documents – along with photos, maps, and even a postcard – in the actual body of the text, not as appendices. Second, he shines a flashlight on areas only dimly lit, if at all, by scholars, areas such as the myth of Austria as a „victim“ in World War II, Austrian Nazis, and the issue of South Tyrol as the war was ending. On this last issue, Steininger relates that in May 1946, the Council of Foreign Ministers reaffirmed its earlier decision that South Tyrol would not be returned to Austria, but remain with Italy. „South Tyrol became the first victim of the Cold War.“ (p. 64) Third, he delights us with some quotes that are genuine gems, such as one from President Eisenhower likening Russia to a whore (p. 101) and one from Chancellor Adenauer calling the Austrian State Treaty „the whole Austrian scandal“ (*Schweinerei*) (p. 131).

This book should be read by scholars, undergraduates, and graduate students who are interested in 20th century diplomatic history of Austria and Germany and the four major powers of the Grand Alliance. It is also excellent for those interested in the Soviet mind and in Soviet diplomatic maneuverings of the first decade of the Cold War.

Frederick Zilian, Jr. in: *Journal of Slavic Military Studies*, 22, 2009, p. 327 f.