

**Sir Stafford**  
**CRIPPS**

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Independence and  
Democracy of Small  
Nations

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**BRITAIN**  
and  
**AUSTRIA**

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Price 6d.

# BRITAIN AND AUSTRIA

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ADDRESS

by the

Rt. Hon. SIR STAFFORD CRIPPS

at the Anglo-Austrian Democratic Society

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Introduction

by

T. L. HORABIN, M.P.

Chairman of the Anglo-Austrian Democratic Society

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*The Moscow Three Power Declaration  
on Austria and Statements on Austria  
by Winston Churchill, Anthony Eden,  
President Roosevelt and Cordell Hull.*

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Chairman - - T. L. HORABIN, M.P.  
Hon. Secretary - - G. R. STRAUSS, M.P.

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## OBJECTS :

**1. To spread understanding of the importance of Austrian democracy for peace and progress.**

**2. To promote closer contact between British and Austrian democrats; to further cultural relations between Britain and Austria; and to promote in the liberated Austrian Republic knowledge and understanding of British democratic ideas and institutions.**

## INTRODUCTION

by

T. L. HORABIN, M.P.

It is generally recognised that Austria occupies an important position in the future Europe. This is due to several causes:

(1). Historically, strategically and culturally, Austria is a meeting point between East and West. Its fate is the concern not of a single group of powers, but of all nations interested in the future of Europe.

(2). Austria was the first of Hitler's victims. Though there was a strong Nazi organisation in Austria in 1938 it should not be forgotten that the Anschluss was put into effect under the threat of a large German Army concentrated at the frontier with orders to march in.

(3). Austria is a potential rallying point for democracy because of its strong democratic tradition dating from the period of the first Austrian Republic (1918-1934).

For these reasons the Moscow Declaration of 1943 made Austria the joint concern of the major Powers and reaffirmed its independence. This independence has been accepted and welcomed by the responsible leaders of all Austrian organisations abroad, and in particular by those democratic organisations which have combined to form the Austrian Representative Committee in London. There is good reason to believe that it is equally welcomed by all politically thinking people within Austria with, of course, the exception of the Nazis.

Our joint efforts will however be needed to make Austrian democracy an effective force. We must give active encouragement to those Austrians who are willing and able to undertake the democratic reconstruction of their country. We must help them to overcome the difficulties which for some time to come will beset Austria as much as the other countries which have lived under Nazi tyranny.

When Austria is liberated we must help the Austrian democrats to eliminate every trace of Nazi domination. They will have to re-organise the administrative machinery, eliminating compromised agents of Fascism from all posts of control. Their task will be to replace them by trustworthy democrats. For our part we must give the democratic forces in Austria a chance by allowing them to rebuild their country themselves. No long period of Allied control should be necessary. Self-government should quickly be restored to the Austrian people.

We must facilitate economic reconstruction. Austria like other small countries is able to live. But like other small countries it is able to live only if economic conditions throughout Europe make life possible, if its industries find markets, if mass unemployment is prevented, if tariffs and restrictionist policies are prevented from gaining a hold on Europe once more. If we achieve a reasonable economic policy for Europe, we shall also safeguard the future of Austria.

Finally, we must be cultural internationalists. The presence of distinguished exiles from many countries in Britain during the war has made for better contacts between progressives in this country and people of like mind from the European Continent. We must not allow these links to be broken. By mutual visits, by the exchange of students and teachers, by continual exchange of views in print and by radio we must ensure an atmosphere of close intellectual co-operation throughout the whole European community.

British foreign policy has a great opportunity in the post-war world. Britain's stand against the Nazi oppressor has won the admiration of the peoples of the occupied countries. If we side with the progressive and democratic forces on the Continent, Britain will maintain the place it has won in the hearts of the European nations. We must guard against trying to impose on the smaller countries régimes which have failed in the past and which are likely to create dissension and distrust among neighbouring countries because of the nationalistic ambitions and feuds with which these régimes are associated. It is for this reason we must particularly guard against attempts to impose on Austria any reactionary régime, which would be equally distasteful to democratic Austrians and to those neighbouring countries with which Austria, if it is to prosper, must live in peace and freedom.

For all these reasons I agree with the words spoken by Sir Stafford Cripps at the meeting of the Anglo-Austrian Democratic Society in London on November 15th, 1944. Austrian democracy is no party matter. It is a matter of concern for all progressives in Britain and elsewhere. As a Liberal, who believes that democracy is indivisible, I want to associate myself with the cause, vital to us all, of democracy for Austria.

## ADDRESS

by the

### RT. HON. SIR STAFFORD CRIPPS

At the Anglo-Austrian Democratic Society, Caxton Hall, London.

This meeting of the Anglo-Austrian Democratic Society is for the purpose of remembering the anniversary of the Austrian Republic which came into being on November 12th, 1918.

#### The Austrian Republic

That Republic was born of the almost unanimous wish of the Austrian people. The Social-Democrats had been asked through Victor Adler, their leader, to form a Government to make peace in the Emperor's name but had replied that "those who started the war must also conclude it." The Imperial Government was thus forced itself to accept an armistice on November 9th, 1918.

Two days later Victor Adler died and on the next day the members of Parliament of all the Austrian parties met and proclaimed the Republic.

This was probably the most bloodless revolution that ever took place, because it was so unanimously approved by the people.

The Social-Democrats under their newly elected leader, Karl Seitz, the democratic middle classes and the Catholic peasants were all determined, as a result of their war experiences, to collaborate in the launching of the new Republic.

But that Republic had a prospect before it of the greatest difficulty.

#### New Economic Basis

The whole economy of South Eastern Europa had been completely overturned by the war. The Austrians had to find a new economic basis for their country; it was no longer to be the centre of an Imperial régime. Austria became a small country with an immensely large capital, and the new Republic had to face the reorientation of its whole economic life.

This economic weakness made Austria particularly dependent upon the general political trends in Europe, and upon the balance of power. In the early stages of the post-war epoch—the period between the two wars—the League of Nations had a paramount influence upon Austrian affairs.

It was during this period that the Republican Government of Austria and the Municipal Government of Vienna so boldly tackled their own internal problems. Great political reforms were carried through including the enfranchisement of women so as to provide a truly democratic basis for government. Widespread educational reforms were enacted and the courageous work in social reform and welfare for the people earned the admiration of democrats throughout the world. It was this latter aspect of Austrian reforms that particularly influenced the Social-Democrats of other countries.

### Vienna's Example

The housing improvements of Vienna especially became a sign of progress throughout Europe.

Despite all the economic difficulties and apparent poverty of the country—the result of defeat in the first world war—Vienna became known as the city with the best social services in the world. Viennese municipal housing was unsurpassed both in quality and quantity and there was an unexampled development of children's welfare, hospitals, public baths and municipal enterprise of every kind.

Vienna which had, under the Imperial régime been known as the centre of gay life—*Wein, Weib und Gesang*—became instead the example of wise and courageous municipal enterprise. The old idea that only the very wealthy communities could afford to indulge in improvements of this kind was proved to be false and Vienna provided a magnificent example of how by faith and determination men and women can overcome every kind of obstacle and difficulty.

### London Took The Cue

We Londoners have particular reason to be grateful for this example which Vienna provided, because it undoubtedly inspired the London Labour Movement to fight all the more keenly to win power in London. During the London County Council elections the tale of Vienna's successes was told from hundreds of platforms and was contrasted with the grave deficiencies of the municipal services in London. It is therefore no exaggeration to say that the Austrian Social-Democratic and Trade Union movements played a part in bringing about the improvements in the municipal services of London which have been a marked feature of the last ten or fifteen years.

It was this period—throughout the 1920's—that was the great formative time for the policies of Austrian Social-Democracy. Such policies were possible because during that time under the benevolent and helpful aegis of the League of Nations Austria was guarded from external pressure and complications.

In the early 1930's conditions began to alter. The influence of the League of Nations declined and the aggressive powers of Fascism and Nazism started slowly to assert themselves in Europe.

### Mussolini's Interference—Austrian Democracy Overwhelmed

Mussolini's influence first exerted its power against the Austrian people. An Austrian Fascist movement was built up from outside which led to the overthrow of the power of Social-Democracy and Trade Unionism by Dollfuss in 1934. It was with Mussolini's help that this first Fascist Government of Austria was set up, and the great democratic powers of Europe did little or nothing to prevent this breakdown of democracy in Austria—a breakdown which later had disastrous results for Europe.

The natural economic tendency for Austria after the war had been to ally herself with the German economy and it was fairly clear that once a strong and aggressive Germany came into being, the Germans would not tolerate Austria remaining within the Italian sphere of influence. It was not long before the Nazis started their own internal movement of penetration in Austria and as the strength of Nazism grew in Germany so the fate of Austria became more certain.

The strong Social-Democratic and Trade Union movements which alone could have helped to sustain Austrian independence had been undermined and destroyed by the Dollfuss régime and when the final moment of danger came it was too late, and the people of Austria were overwhelmed by Nazism.

### Looking To The Future

But now we must look to the future and see how we can recreate the opportunity for the Austrian people to establish their democracy and—this time—to maintain it.

The great powers have announced their wish to see re-established a free and independent Austria after the war. This is the first step. But it will be of no use to re-establish democracy in Austria if it is to be allowed to perish within a few years, as it did after the last war.

Austrian democracy perished and Austrian independence disappeared because the aggressive Fascist powers were allowed to interfere in Austrian affairs and so to bring about the destruction of Austria from within. Once the power of the League of Nations so diminished that it could give Austria no effective protection from its aggressive neighbours, Austrian democracy was doomed. The same can be said of most of the other peoples of Europe.

After this war it will be essential for whatever international organisation is set up to see to it that the independence of the smaller states is not tampered with by the insidious infiltration of their aggressive neighbours.

### International Democracy—The Rôle Of Small Powers

That is one of the reasons why we must have an international organisation such as has been foreshadowed at the Dumbarton Oaks Conference, with the effective power to act quickly and firmly, by forceful means if necessary.

But such an organisation must not be merely an international dictatorship of the few great powers. We aim at international democracy, just as much as we aim at national democracy.

The small powers must play their full part, since they too have an essential and vital share in the whole scheme. They must be consenting powers to whatever plan is worked out, and their consent must be based not merely upon an agreed acceptance of the dictates of others, but upon their willing participation in the decisions that are arrived at.

The sort of protection that Austria required in the 1930's cannot be forced upon a country against its will. If indeed such an attempt were made it is only too likely that a resistance to help would be built up in the country itself—to the great disadvantage of the whole world situation.

Such help must be willingly sought and willingly given to be effective, and it must both be sought and given in good time before matters have gone too far to make it effective.

With modern methods of propaganda and infiltration it is much more difficult to preserve the independence of the smaller countries than formerly when the only weapon was open attack.

### **Protect Democracy Everywhere**

One thing at any rate would seem quite clear from the inter-war history of Austria and that is that those countries who care for the peace of the world and who realise that peace can only be based upon democracy, must in future take far more trouble about protecting democracy wherever and whenever it is threatened than they have done in the past. We must all of us realise that the overthrow of democracy even in the most remote areas is an attack upon our own democratic institutions and upon our own safety.

Between the wars we allowed democracy to be overthrown in parts of Europe and we apparently thought that we could permit the consequent growth of totalitarianism with impunity and without effect upon our own safety. History has now taught us how wrong we were and we must therefore do all that is in our power to prevent any such occurrences in the future. We must, too, see that we, the United Nations, have and maintain a sufficiency of power, ready and effective for immediate action at any moment.

If the tragedy of Austria teaches the world this lesson, the Austrian patriots will be able to feel that their sufferings have not been in vain.

### **Britain And Austria**

We in Great Britain—seeing how close we are to the European scene—are particularly concerned and interested in the future of Austria. So, too, is the Soviet Union and it will be our job in this country to work closely with the Soviet Union in accordance with our 20 years pact to ensure the future safety of Europe. With both of us we shall hope that Austria will have the closest and most friendly relations.

One of the ways in which these close and friendly relations can be encouraged and developed is through the cultural association of the peoples. International friendship based merely upon the political intercourse of politicians is very liable to break down. It needs a much firmer foundation in the hearts and understanding of the peoples if it is to persist and ever grow stronger.

The fact that so many Austrians—democratic Austrians—have spent the period of the war in this country should help very much in our relationships, but in addition to that there has for a long time—for centuries been a cultural exchange between our two countries.

### **Cultural Exchange**

I well remember that on my first visit to Vienna—now some forty years ago—I there saw my first Bernard Shaw play acted, and it is largely to his Austrian translator, Siegfried Trebitsch—now living in this country—that Bernard Shaw owes his wide popularity in the German speaking world.

But much earlier than that an English playwright was popularly known and performed in Austria. During Shakespeare's life-time his plays were performed in Austria and they have retained their popularity over the three centuries that have followed their first performances.

A number of other authors, British and Austrian, have been mutually appreciated in the two countries and we in Britain have always given a warm welcome to Austrian music and musicians.

In medicine and in science too we have exchanged our experiences and our experiments to the great benefit of both countries.

I have already spoken of the great effect the Vienna housing schemes have had in this country and we can, I think, say that the early work in Great Britain upon garden cities was not without its influence upon the Austrian development.

In all these ways we had cultural associations with Austria, and in the political field we like to think that our Austrian friends have derived some benefit from our British experiments in democracy, in Trade Unionism and in the Co-operative movement.

### **Democratic Austria Essential To World Safety**

It is upon this foundation of common interest and understanding that we must build our future friendship, and it is for this purpose that the Anglo-Austrian Democratic Society has been brought into being. I hope that it will not be long before one of the headquarters of this movement can be set up in Vienna. In the meantime we can do much to get ready for the future—to make people in this country realise that a free and independent democratic Austria is an essential part of the future safety of the world. That we must never again neglect democracy wherever it may be found, that we must support it and cherish it, make it strong to resist aggression and infiltration.

Certainly the Austrian people played their part after the last war in the most difficult circumstances to prove the value and effectiveness of democratic government in their own country.

They accomplished marvels of progress but what they could not do of themselves was to protect that vigorous growth of their democracy from the storms and winds of international politics and economics. Those who might have done so failed and I hope that those others will have learned from the tragedies of these last five years what folly that neglect was and how imperative it is for our future that we should not only say "never again will we allow such things to happen" but that we should also act so as to prevent them.

### **When They Go Back To Austria**

I am sure that our Austrian friends who have spent the war years as emigrés in this country will be eagerly looking forward to the chance of getting back to their own beloved Austria.

They will find a country more full of difficulties and tragedy than even after the last war.

The German and Austrian Nazis have stamped their mark of bestial cruelty upon Austria as they have upon the rest of Europe. Many of the best democrats who remained in Austria will, alas, have met their death at the hands of the Nazis. Suspicion and hostility will be rife amongst the peoples who have been divided among themselves; false propaganda and lying education will have perverted some of the young people especially. From an economic point of view conditions will be even more difficult than after the last war and it may be that the Nazis will create wholesale devastation before they are finally driven out.

The picture is not a bright one and were it not for the memory of the Austrian democrats and Trade Unionists who have so long had a great tradition of struggle and endeavour the prospect would indeed be gloomy.

### **Faith And Determination**

But we have always before us that example what faith and determination accomplished after the last war. That must be the inspiration for those who will have to tackle this new task, and they can be assured of the sympathy and the ardent desire to help of all true democrats throughout the world. They will return to a country which distinguished itself and its people in the period of reconstruction after the last war, and it will be for them to follow and to surpass the great example of the heroes and martyrs of their movement.

## **THE MOSCOW DECLARATION ON AUSTRIA**

Published on November 1st, 1943

*The Governments of the United Kingdom, the Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics and the United States have agreed that Austria, the first free country to fall a victim to Nazi aggression, shall be liberated from German domination.*

*They regard the annexation imposed upon Austria by Germany's penetration of March 15th, 1938, as null and void.*

*They consider themselves as in no way bound by any changes effected in Austria since that date. They declare that they wish to see re-established a free and independent Austria and thereby to open the way for the Austrian people themselves as well as those neighbouring States which will be faced with similar problems, to find that political and economic security which is the only basis for lasting peace.*

*Austria is reminded, however, that she has a responsibility which she cannot evade for participation in the war on the side of Hitlerite Germany and that in the final settlement account will inevitably be taken of her own contribution to her liberation.*

# **A U S T R I A**

## **THE FIRST VICTIM OF NAZI AGGRESSION**

Statements on Austria by Winston Churchill, Anthony Eden, President Roosevelt and Cordell Hull.

### **WINSTON CHURCHILL**

"... Let me remind you that, in spite of all the blows we have endured and under all the burdens we bear and amid so many deadly threats, we have not abandoned one jot of any of our obligations or undertakings towards the captive or enslaved countries of Europe, or towards any of those countries which still act with us.

On the contrary, since we have been left alone in this world struggle we have reaffirmed or defined more precisely all the causes of all the countries with whom or for whom we drew the sword—AUSTRIA, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Norway . . . For all of these we will toil and strive, and our victory will supply the liberation of them all . . ."

*(Speech at Mansion House, November 9th, 1940).*



"... We can never forget here in this island that Austria was the first victim of Nazi aggression. We know that happy life which might have been led by scores of millions in Central Europe. We remember the charm, beauty and historic splendour of Vienna, the grace of life, the dignity of the individual; all the links of past generations are associated in our minds with Austria and Vienna."

"... We shall struggle on and fight on. The people of Britain will never desert the cause of the freedom of Austria from the Prussian yoke. We shall go forward."

"Many long miles have to be marched and many leagues at sea to be covered by ships; many millions of miles of aeroplane flights will be accomplished; great heart effort from large masses of human beings—but we have three-quarters of the human race upon our side. Only our own follies can deprive us of victory; and in the victory of the Allies, Free Austria, held Austria shall find her honoured place."

*(Speech on February 18th, 1942).*



### **ANTHONY EDEN**

The policy of His Majesty's Government towards Austria was stated by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister at the Mansion House on 9th November, 1940, when he said that Austria is one of the countries for whom we have drawn the sword and for whom our victory will supply

liberation. While His Majesty's Government cannot, of course, commit themselves at this stage to recognise or support the establishment in the future of any particular frontiers in Central Europe, I must make it plain that His Majesty's Government equally do not regard themselves as being bound by any change effected in Austria in and since 1938.

*(House of Commons, September 9th, 1942).*



#### PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT

"We do not forget the silenced peoples . . . But those people, spiritually unconquered: AUSTRIANS, Czechs, Norwegians, Dutch, Belgians, Frenchmen, Greeks, Southern Slavs—yes, even those Italians and Germans who themselves have been enslaved—will prove to be a powerful force in disrupting the Nazi system."

*(Radio Address on May 27th, 1941).*

"In 1938, Hitler occupied Austria—without warning.  
In 1939, Hitler invaded Czechoslovakia—without warning.  
Later in 1939, Hitler invaded Poland—without warning.  
In 1940, Hitler invaded Norway, Denmark, Holland, Belgium and Luxemburg—without warning.  
In 1940, Italy attacked France and later Greece—without warning.  
In 1941, the Axis Powers attacked Yugoslavia and Greece and they dominated the Balkans—without warning.  
In 1941, Hitler invaded Russia—without warning.  
It is all of one pattern."

*(Radio Broadcast on December 9th, 1941).*



#### CORDELL HULL

"This Government very clearly made known its opinions as to the manner in which the seizure of AUSTRIA took place and the relation of that seizure to this Government's well-known policy toward the taking of territory by force. This Government has never taken the position that Austria was legally absorbed into the German Reich."

*(Statement at a Press Conference on July 27th, 1942).*

## *Help to Re-build* **A DEMOCRATIC AUSTRIA**

**H**ISTORY would have taken a different course if Austria, the "bastion" of European democracy, had found full support among the democratic peoples of the West. The time is now approaching when Austrian democracy can be built up again. More than ever, Vienna will be a key city of Europe.

We have learnt from the events of the war that the progressives in all countries must work together. This particularly applies to Britain and Austria, countries with many links in history, with common sympathies, affinities in culture and closely related ideals. The Anglo-Austrian Democratic Society aims at strengthening the contacts between progressives in Britain and Austria. After the war it will function both in London and Vienna. Wherever possible, local branches will be founded in other cities of Britain and Austria.

It will organise meetings, lectures, social gatherings, exhibitions, and arrange for publications, exchange of teachers and students and for summer schools, all of which will have the aim of bringing the progressive people in the two countries closer together.

We ask you to become a member of this Society which may play an important part in helping to ensure peace and progress. The minimum membership fee is 5s. per year; but if you can, we hope you will pay more. A payment of £5 makes you a life member. Membership is open to British and Austrian citizens and to organisations and societies in both countries.

*For membership apply to the Hon. Secretary:*  
ANGLO-AUSTRIAN DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY  
65 KNIGHTSBRIDGE, LONDON, S.W.1  
*Telephone: SLOane 3694*