

# AUSTRIAN DEMOCRATIC UNION

President: JULIUS H. MEINL. Vice-President: Prof. Dr. F. HERTZ. Hon. Gen. Sec.: Dr. E. MULLER-STURMHEIM

29, DORSET SQUARE, LONDON, N.W.1.

Telephone: PADDington 7646

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## ACCOMPLICE OR VICTIM?

(A few considerations for our Allied friends.)

**A**T the Moscow Conference Great Britain, Russia, and the U.S.A., unanimously agreed that Austria was the first free country to fall a victim to Nazi aggression.

In spite of this unambiguous statement by the three Great Powers the question of "Austria an accomplice or a victim of Germany?" emerged recently in some British papers.

Why this doubt, which contains both an accusation of, and a danger for, Austria?

Because—so it is said—the Austrians did not rise against their German overlords.

Is this true?

As far as an *armed* rising is concerned, none has taken place yet.

**But fighting, although without arms, has been going on for years in Austria.**

Here are some facts, and our Allied friends are invited to form their own judgment:

1. The number of executions of Austrians is appalling. The reasons given are sabotage, treason etc. The number of Austrian patriots executed is so great that hangmen from Germany had to be transferred to Austria.

2. The highest and most important positions of the Administration are occupied by Germans but not by Austrians.

3. The factory managers are Germans; the factory foremen are Germans.

4. Thousands of Austrian workers have been brought to Germany.

5. Millions of German citizens have been brought to Austria and are in one way or another helping the Gestapo.

6. The Austrian Youth is conscripted and serving in German regiments under German officers.

**In Judging Austria the following Facts also should be taken into Account**

(a) From 1933 until 1938—*i.e.* during five years—Austria fought bravely against the ever-growing effrontery and arrogance of Germany;

(b) The German Nazi agents had been trying—long before the forcible annexation—to intimidate the Austrians by terror and murder, but in vain.

(c) Chancellor Schuschnigg, refusing to obey the dictate of Berlin, has been imprisoned and is still a prisoner of the Gestapo.

(d) Schuschnigg ordered a plebiscite for March 13th, 1938; the Germans fearing the result of this plebiscite would be against Germany marched into Austria in great military strength and prevented the Schuschnigg plebiscite.



(e) The plebiscite, arranged by the Nazis themselves on April 10th, 1933, took place under the threat of guns, tanks, and bombers and under the terror of the Gestapo. *In fact*, the Nazi plebiscite was a colossal fraud.

### **THE REAL PICTURE OF AUSTRIA IS AS FOLLOWS:**

Although unarmed, although completely controlled by the Germans, although terrorized by the Gestapo, although without any help from the world outside, the Austrians did not and do not refrain from showing their dislike and even hatred of the Germans, they resist and sabotage wherever and whenever possible. The reaction of the German overlords to this hostile attitude is shown by the appalling number of executions of Austrian patriots.

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We have always been of the opinion that the Austrians should contribute to their own liberation, because liberty achieved by sacrifices of their own would be more precious and bound to be more respected by others. The fight of Austria on the side of the United Nations is imperative also for the reason that it will shorten the war and save thousands of lives of Allied soldiers.

But we were also of opinion that a premature rising would mean senseless mass sacrifice of human lives and that the signal for the rising can be given only by the Allied military leaders.

The first official appeal to Austrians was made on October 1st, 1944. In this appeal the Austrians have been asked to form clandestine committees, to prepare all possible help for the Allies. They will do so. They have been preparing this help for years. The official appeal will inspire them to do their utmost.

It is important to note that, as yet no open rising has been asked for by the Allied commanders.

In this connection it is worth while to remember that when the Allied air-borne forces landed in Holland, a special message from the Allied Supreme Commander, General Eisenhower, to the people of Holland expressly advised the population of the regions north of the Rhine *not* to engage in any general rising. This was while the Allied troops were *already landing a few miles away* in the Southern part of the country.

By their attitude the Austrians have been showing all the time that they dissociate themselves from their German masters—that they are Austrians, not Germans.

### **THE STATEMENT OF THE MOSCOW CONFERENCE IS RIGHT**

Austria is a victim. She should be treated as such! Justice and fairness as well as the maintenance of peace in future make it absolutely necessary that Austria's being a victim should be recognized.

An independent and democratic Austria will develop into a bulwark of peace and civilization.

But the Austrians will *have to be told* that they will be regarded as victims—both now and after their liberation.

To be able to fight with determination the Austrians ought to be free from any doubts—*i.e.* from doubts as to how they will be treated.

They should not be hampered or confused by the fear of becoming victims *once more*.