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Warren Williams. "Flashpoint Austria: The Communist Inspired Strikes of 1950," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 9.3 (Summer 2007): 115-136. Doi: 10.1162/jcws.2007.9.3.115. <http://dx.doi.org/doi:10.1162/jcws.2007.9.3.115> .

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Reviewed by **William Stearman**, Counselor, U.S. Foreign Service (Ret.)

One could not possibly improve upon or reasonably augment Dr. Warren Williams' detailed description and analysis of the alarming Soviet-supported 1950 Communist attempt to force a general strike directed against the legitimate Austrian political and economic order. Indeed I can think of nothing I could usefully add. I experienced these highly disturbing 1950 events from the perspective of a U.S. representative on the Four Power Political Directorate of the Allied Commission for Austria, and can confirm that Dr. Williams has captured the essence of how we on the spot viewed and experienced this episode.

The Austrian officials and people demonstrated exemplary courage in facing down this Communist threat. It most especially took real nerve for the top Austrians leaders to actively resist what was clearly a Soviet instigated threat. Bear in mind that the Soviets had overwhelming military strength in Europe in general and in Austria specifically. Moreover, the Soviets had not hesitated to browbeat these courageous officials and had even arrested and sent to Siberian prison camps fairly high ranking Austrian officials. One must also bear in mind the pall of uncertainty that hung over Western Europe in the wake of the Soviet-supported, if not instigated, North Korean attack on South Korea in June 1950 followed by disheartening defeats suffered by American and South Korean forces. There was, at the time, a real fear that the Korea attack was only the gambit in a broader Soviet offensive that would soon envelope Western Europe. In fact, number of US officials in Vienna sent their families off to safe havens in westernmost Europe. As Dr, Williams makes clear, this Soviet/Communist Party offensive failed miserably and further discredited both the Communists and their Soviet mentors in the eyes of the Austrian people.

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