

# THE CHRISTIAN SOCIAL PARTY

By FRIEDRICH FUNDER

**D**URING 1922 the world beheld the spectacle of Austria plunging into ruin. Then it was socialistic opposition which called most loudly for the Catholic prelate, Dr. Ignatz Seipel, leader of the Christian Social party, to prove himself the man destined to control the government. There was bitter irony in this summons, of course, but also an open confession that the hour had come when the party which represented Catholic thought in Austria could prove its worth. This party had defeated the Socialists in the elections for the National Assembly, held on October 17, 1920. It had received 1,245,531 votes out of a total of 2,980,328; the Socialists, who had formed the strongest group at the elections for the Constitutional Assembly the year before, now garnered only 1,072,709 votes; the Pan-German party, third strongest political body in Austria, polled 514,172 votes.

But it was not merely its control of the parliament or the personal significance of its leader, Dr. Seipel, which made the hour a critical one for the Christian Social party. There were other reasons, deeply rooted in the past. Under the old régime, the Catholics had already been the leading supporters of the Austrian national idea. It has often been said that Austria would not have sunk into ruin if it had possessed, during the war, the leadership of Dr. Lueger, the great mayor of Vienna and founder of the Christian Social party. His personality was the most brilliant embodiment of the popular Austrian spirit manifested since the adoption of the Constitution in 1867. The victorious advance of this statesman, and of the party he founded, began at Vienna in the last decade of the nineteenth century.

Prior to this time liberalism had been practically omnipotent in Austria. It had been protected by a reactionary suffrage law which excluded the lower classes of the population from sharing in the government; and it had united in its ranks both free-thinkers and the capitalists who controlled industry and banking. This liberalism gave its color to parliament, the bureaucracy, the press, the universities—even to certain groups at Court and among the clergy. Of course there was a Catholic Conservative party, but though it was represented in parliament, it had no voice in municipal government. Into this atmosphere of pride, selfish lust for power and thoughtlessness, Dr. Lueger and his followers burst like a storm-wind. He gathered round him the small merchants and the workers of the metropolis, raised a voice of fearless opposition to the corrupt wielders of power, and preached to Austria a gospel which it never heard before—the gospel of Christian Democracy and of

the social truths proclaimed by Leo XIII in his encyclical *Rerum Novarum*. In doing these things, Dr. Lueger ran brusquely against the hotly defended barricades of an antiquated political and social order. But as early as 1895 he took from the liberals the control of the Vienna city council; in 1896 he was elected mayor of the city, amidst shrieks of horror sent up by the entire free-thinking press of Europe; and in 1897 he gained all the Vienna mandates for the so-called fifth legislative assembly, in the election of delegates for which universal suffrage was employed for the first time in Austria.

The victories of Dr. Lueger brought about a complete renovation of the Austrian national spirit. With the renewal of faith in the saving social power of Christianity and with the restoration of honor to the Christian name, there came a profound spiritual quickening. The empty churches were filled once again, Vienna became the scene of glorious manifestations of Catholic faith, great Catholic organizations came into being, and the Catholic press rose to a position of importance. Thousands of enthusiastic men who strode like triarii in the van of the Christian Social movement, gathered around Vienna's illustrious preacher, P. Heinrich Abel, S. J. The surge of happy triumph swept over Austria as the Catholic spirit proved victorious. I still remember how, after the first news of Dr. Lueger's success at the polls had spread, men totally unacquainted with one another embraced on the streets, while ovations to the great leader rumbled down the Viennese highways with a majesty surpassing even the acclaim which used to greet the old Emperor, so beloved by his folk.

When universal suffrage, legalized as a result of the Christian Social party's vigorous campaign, figured for the first time in the general elections for the Austrian parliament held during 1907, all the ninety-six German Catholic deputies of Austria united under the leadership of Vienna's mayor and so formed the strongest single bloc among the 516 representatives chosen to the parliament. This example was widely emulated by the non-German nations within the empire, with the result that Catholic representatives from Italian, Slovak, Czech, Polish and Ruthenian districts were united in close and friendly relations.

The party headed by Dr. Lueger was not blind to the defects of their empire of many races and tongues. With the same firm resolution which had made him the champion of a frank and loyal Austrian patriotism and had led him to declare, pointing to the black and yellow colors of the imperial flag—"I am black and yellow to my very bones," the great Catholic leader pledged his party to a thorough reform of Austro-

Hungarian government. He demanded justice for each separate people and a disposition of legal control which would unite all into a family of nations round about the honored sign of the Hapsburgs, who during so many centuries had stood for social harmony. The imperial state, which had once been the bulwark of Christendom in the conflict with the Crescent, and which had later counteracted the Religious Revolution with a counter-reformation led by active Austrian princes, possessed in the common religious bond of its peoples and their Catholic culture and tradition, its most abiding sources of strength. These things were recalled by the Christian Social party's program, while the national chauvinism which threatened to destroy mutual understanding between the different races was repudiated by it.

In all this effort the party won the support of no less a personage than the Archduke Francis Ferdinand. Everything seemed to look hopeful, and Austria prepared to advance towards a brighter future. But on March 10, 1910, Dr. Lueger died; and the age of the Emperor Francis Joseph, who was now feeble and lacking the courage to undertake vast reforms, postponed the realization of the reform idea. The matter was definitely brought to a halt by the fateful murder of the Archduke Francis Ferdinand. When the victors sat in judgment over Austria at St. Germain, in 1919, everyone had already forgotten that great efforts had been made by the German Catholics of Austria to settle the imperial problem in a way similar to the plan suggested by President Wilson, and that it had not been the fault of these Catholics if the attempt had failed.

The great inheritor of Dr. Lueger's principles was Dr. Ignatz Seipel. Elected to the National Constitutional Assembly in February, 1919, and chosen foreman of the Christian Social group in the National Assembly proper, on June 9, 1921, Dr. Seipel held the foremost position of leadership among Austrian Catholics. Differences of temperament distinguished him, of course, from his illustrious predecessor. Dr. Lueger had been born with the Viennese crimp in his tongue, and was both humorous and impulsive; Dr. Seipel, though also a native of the city, is revealed in his character and his oratory as a thoughtful, realistic scholar, whose wit is delicately sarcastic, and whose power of appeal rests on the sequence and aptness of his logical expression. But the late Chancellor is none the less the heir of Dr. Lueger. His Austrian patriotism is based on profound conviction, and he draws his moral strength and the firmness of his political convictions from his abiding religious faith.

During the war, Dr. Seipel made no secret of his pacifist opinions; he wrote widely-read studies on the reform of the existing Austro-Hungarian state according to the principles of national autonomy; and he is today the statesman of Central Europe who stands most earnestly for international conciliation. His

gift for statesmanship was first discovered by the Emperor Charles, the unfortunate ruler who died in exile at Madeira. He often sought the advice of the middle-aged professor of moral theology, who at that time had never been the representative of any public group and who had been transferred from Salzburg to the University of Vienna during 1917. Thus two sympathetic natures met: the scholarly priest and the young monarch on the Hapsburg throne, both lovers of peace and both hopeful of constructing a new and equitable government for all the peoples grouped under Austro-Hungarian rule. But the stream of events was furious and swift. The young Emperor was unable to prevail against the policy of war championed by Ludendorff in the Council of the German confederates. The approaching collapse announced itself in a thousand uncanny ways. On October 2, 1918, Dr. Seipel paid me a visit and declared that the Emperor had already been requested to abdicate; that there was talk of viceregents for Austria and Hungary; but that a final attempt to save the old order would be made by calling the pacifist Dr. Lammasch to head a new ministry, which was to draw up a program whereby every nationality was to form its own government and then to aid in the establishment of a union, at the head of which a Hapsburg regent would be chosen as a democratic ruler. In this ministry Dr. Seipel was entrusted with social affairs. A few days later, however, the knell of Hapsburg dominion was sounded.

The break-up of the old monarchy did not fail to bring deep consternation into Catholic ranks. A republic of "German-Austria" had been formed almost over night. Few Catholics had desired this republic; many regarded its establishment as a necessary evil; and many others opposed the unscrupulous law-breaking with which the new government proceeded to enter upon its career. A dangerous split threatened to separate Austrian Catholics into republican and monarchistic camps. Then, too, there followed that series of unfortunate economic and political developments which seemed to predict that the republic could not possibly last beyond the first few years of its existence.

Almost immediately after the dissolution of Austria-Hungary, the Social Democratic leader, Dr. Bauer, announced union with Germany as the political goal of Austria. Although the treaty of St. Germain had voiced a strict inhibition against such union, public sentiment in favor of it grew stronger by leaps and bounds. The Socialists wanted union because they felt that their position would be strengthened by affiliation with German Socialism, and because they hoped, as Dr. Bauer declared, that the dictatorship of the proletariat would follow. The German Nationalists wanted union because it soothed their ancient national sentiment. Many Catholics desired union because they could no longer believe that their little Austria,

stripped now of precious German territory, was capable of separate existence.

A hard task confronted Dr. Seipel. But devoid as he was of nationalistic chauvinism, he proved to his people that the man who controls his destiny is he and he only who takes up courageously the battle of existence and proves his right to the world's confidence, justice, and assistance. When he became Chancellor on May 31, 1922, it was almost because no one else dared to undertake the task of saving the country: the situation was, indeed, so dismal that maps distributed throughout Czecho-Slovakia predicted that Austria would be broken up into fragments and distributed among its neighbors. Many of the surrounding states

were actually on their haunches, ready to gobble their booty. But so deep and undismayed was Dr. Seipel's conviction that Austria could live and must live for the continued peace of Europe, that within four months after his assumption of power he had victoriously proved to the League of Nations that his country was a necessary factor in the reconstruction of Europe and that immediate aid was a necessity. By that victory the road to the rebuilding of Austria's nationhood was paved. The leader of the Social Democratic party had broken the ban which hitherto had rested so heavily on the shoulders of the new republic.

*(This is the second of three articles by the editor of the Vienna Reichpost on the reconstruction of Austria.)*

## TEMPTATION

By SHANE LESLIE

**U**NDER the great Dome that floated like a golden bubble on the sunset sea, lay the shadow of a crumbling city.

It was a city of many mansions, not like one that is made up of streets and parks, but of gates and courtyards. Each gate led into a palace and upon the time-eaten walls the shrouded panes hung between the light and the darkness. There was no sign of mart or amusement in that silent city, but only of a quiet business stirring through its corridors of marble. A business that might have begun centuries in the past, and yet not end till the ending of the world.

From time to time men in sable dress moved without noise through the rooms and across the stairways arched with alabaster. Some of them were slashed across the waist with scarlet or purple. They carried worm-eaten books and written parchments. Even so, they made little show beside the soldiers who guarded the outer gates. These were arrayed very magnificently in yellow and black and vermillion, as though to signify that their watch was not withdrawn by golden morn or at red evening or in the dark of night.

To watch and pray was the motto of that City which lay under the Dome.

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In a chamber set behind three gates of iron and behind three corridors that none might pass, an old man sat upon a chair of cedar-wood.

His face and his garments were as white as frayed ivory. A white cap covered his silver hair and his feet were shod with shoes as white as snow. Upon each was woven a cross of gold thread. At a little distance it looked like the print of a nail let into the cloth.

In the room were a few very precious presents. The old man's hand rested on a table sent by the then reigning Emperor of the Sun. It was exquisitely inset

with the solar radiations, which Celestial royalty affect on their notepaper. The old man could claim no such hereditary symbol, save that his father had been a peasant and he himself been sunburnt in his fields. There were other marvelous gifts beside. Underfoot lay a rich carpet of azure-blue dyed to that color which is known only in the Islands of Solomon. It had been presented by the Queen of Sheba, a very devout soul. There was a lion of gilded bronze in the corner with eyes of red carbuncle sent by the King of the Sahara, who was a god after his manner. Opposite stood a table of sea-green marble fringed with pale gold. The Lord of the Everlasting Snows had sent it in default of ancient allegiance. From the old man's hand hung a circlet of tawny beads, which his devoted liegeman, the Lord of the Isles, had robbed from the strange northern folk, who are of kindred blood to the seals. The floor of the chamber was paved with worn onyx-stone, given by a potentate who had died so long before that his name was forgotten by his own people. His people in turn had been forgotten by the historians. . . .

The old man was glancing through some parchments written out by his scribes in a clear lifeless script. To some he added his signature in trembling minuscules. To others he appended notes. From the contents of these it would appear his duties were manifold. The Calendar of the Saints was in his keeping. Likewise he was responsible for the souls of kings and of little children. He was the annointed Reader of Scripture to the nations. Upon the heading of one parchment was written his title—Servant of the Servants of God.

He was weary that evening and his hands moved as though clasped under invisible chains. The truth was that he had passed a very tiring day. Before dawn he had been called from slumber to say his prayers. A chamberlain had robed him and left him to medi-