Political Lives

Ignaz Seipel (1876-1932)

Founding Father of the Austrian Republic

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Biographies fall in and out of favor, both among publishers and in the halls of academe.[1] Historical consciousness has its own fashions and trends to be sure. Since Immanuel Kant's 1784 essay "Idee zu einer allgemeinen Geschichte in weltbürglicher Absicht," history has had pretensions of seeing through the widest lens. Kant's cosmopolitanism asked us to grapple with big pictures and movements in order to capture the long-term trajectories and sea changes. But, of course, the stories of individuals always seem to ask us to switch camera lenses from the panorama to the strongest zoom. For every major sea change, there is a biography that distills the story and makes it more accessible and more human. For every Renaissance, there is a Leonardo da Vinci and a Cosmo the Great; for every French Revolution we have our Napoleons, our Neckers, our Lafayettes. G. W. F. Hegel reminded us that these "great men," or heroes, embody the movement of the age, the spirit of the times and help us to understand how the world can change fundamentally and drastically. But Hegel gives us another conundrum with which we must deal: must prominent figures of the past embody or transcend their time? To what degree do they merely dimly reflect the light and darkness of our age? Are individuals worth studying in their own right?

For Austria's twentieth century, biography can be a ticklish subject. Biographies are all too often reminders of larger failures: the fall of the multinational Habsburg experiment; the failure of interwar democracy; the failure of international organizations; the failure of individuals to stop the slide down the slippery slope toward fascism, totalitarianism, and genocide. And while they teach us lessons about the fragility of democracy and civil society at large, twentieth-century biographies from central Europe can present us with inconvenient information. Biographies remind us all too well of what we would rather forget or re-write about the past. If the twentieth century teaches us anything in the twenty-first, it will be about the ambiguities inherent in humanity. In many ways, the fashion of historiography and Austrian studies has been to write about the Garden of Eden before the fall. The study of modernism and artistic discourses, of

1. For a recent introduction to biography and its relationship to history see the fine and readable study Barbara Caine, *Biography and history*, Theory and History (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

Ignaz Seipel as Priest and Federal Chancellor, March 1927,
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Vienna 1900 and the cultural flowering of the old empire, are where we find Austria as a place of cosmopolitan ideas. In a way, cultural and scientific ideas have become Austria's heroes. They are less ambiguous than the humanity that biographies inconveniently put before us.

The figure of Ignaz Seipel (1876-1932), Catholic priest, politician, and Chancellor of the Austrian First Republic, is one of those inconvenient Austrian lives. August Maria Knoll, the erstwhile secretary to Ignaz Seipel who later became prominent as a left leaning Catholic and historical sociologist, asked his readers in a 1934 essay "What is Seipel's political

legacy? His body of thought? His political ideas? His political journey?"[2] Knoll asked such questions as Engelbert Dollfuß's Austrofascist regime was purging institutions of the Austrian Republic in order to erect a new state. As biographers sought to answer Knoll's questions in the 1930s, they often praised Seipel as the forerunner of Dollfuß and Schuschnigg's Austro-Fascist state.[3] After the Second World War, the social democrats merely had to keep the same arguments and invert the logic of approbation into scorn. For them, Seipel was the great conniving priest who used his intellectual gifts to undermine democracy.

For all the love and hatred which Seipel evokes, we have not really come to a consensus answer on Knoll's basic questions. The last book-length biography of Seipel was published in 1972.[4] Its author, Klemens von Klemperer, is an Americanized central European who has roots in both Berlin and Vienna. Born in 1916, Klemperer found that the distance between the United States to the European continent both protected him from the slings and arrows in his work on contemporary history in Europe and provided him with historical distance to write a balanced, if conservative, biography of "one of the chief architects of the Austrian Republic."[5]

In many ways, von Klemperer's biography of Seipel is an exception. Seipel is one of those characters whose life is often seen in respect to someone else. Paired with his social democratic arch-nemesis, Otto Bauer,[6] or with the architect of Austro-fascism, Engelbert Dollfuß,[7] Seipel is defined either through his enemies and conflicts or as a precursor to the destroyers of Austrian democracy. Our stand-alone studies have likewise fallen into the extremes. "Saint Seipel" appears in hagiographic publications attesting to his superhuman qualities as a man and statesman, foiled by the

2. August M Knoll, *Von Seipel zu Dollfuß: Eine historisch-soziologische Studie* (Vienna: Manz, 1934), 8.

3. For instance, Knoll, *Von Seipel zu Dollfuß*; Eduard Ludwig, *Ignaz Seipel: Der Wegbereiter einer neuen Zeit* (Vienna: E. Ludwig, 1936); Franz Riedl, *Kanzler Seipel: Ein Vorkämpfer volksdeutschen Denkens* (Saarbrücken: Saarbrücker Druck und Verlag, 1935).

4. Klemens von Klemperer, *Ignaz Seipel: Christian Statesman in a Time of Crisis* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1972). To this I should add that the last book-length study was the "biographical documentation," Friedrich Rennhofer, *Ignaz Seipel: Mensch und Staatsmann. Eine biographische Dokumentation,* Böhlaus zeitgeschichtliche Bibliothek 2 (Vienna: Böhlau, 1978).

5. See Klemperer's revealing and fascinating memoir, Klemens von Klemperer, *Voyage through the Twentieth Century: A Historian's Recollections and Reflections* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2009), 84.

6. Viktor Reimann, *Zu Groß für Österreich: Seipel und Bauer im Kampf um die Erste Republik*, 1st ed. (Vienna: Molden, 1968).

7. Knoll, *Von Seipel zu Dollfuß.*

hatred and party-politics of the social democrats.[8] But, on the left, Seipel assumed many forms. Walther Federn, the founder of the liberal journal of economics and politics, *Der Österreichische Volkswirt,* called Seipel in the foreword to Charles Gulick's magnum opus on the First Republic, the "evil genius of the republic," who laid the groundwork for the fall of Austrian democracy.[9] Federn merely foreshadowed what lay between the pages of Charles Gulick's two-volume *Austria from Habsburg to Hitler.*

For Gulick, who was a heterodox economics professor at the University of California at Berkley for his entire professional career, Seipel's genialness lay in the fact that he was able, through his powerful wits, to undermine democratic practice in the Republic. As such, he was Dollfuß's (and fascism's) John the Baptist—laying the groundwork for authoritarianism and the clerical-fascist state. Nearly every mention of Seipel's name among the over 1800 pages of text refers to Seipel's attempts to "exclude parliament," "throttle parliamentary committees," "increase parliamentary difficulties," or his "campaign against the constitution."[10] For Gulick, as well as countless others on the left, Seipel provided the stubborn, evil, "*Prälat ohne Milde,"* who abandoned democracy, civil rights, and embraced authoritarianism and violence.

There hardly seems much of a middle ground to understanding Seipel, or his time. Distance may help us to transcend the party-political interpretations of hagiography and demonology now that we are removed by eighty years from Seipel's death and nearly seventy-five years since the end of Austro-Fascism and the Anschluss. Of course, the focus in this volume is on "Austrian lives" and thus the underlying question is what do these biographies (not hagiographies or demonologies) of prominent politicians and thinkers, as well as biographies of groups, tell us about twentieth-century Austria? In what ways do these lives reflect the times, successes and tribulations, of Austrians who have stood at the center of the world-shaping events of the twentieth century?

Ignaz Seipel's biography resists telling us one story. Indeed the many narratives one could make out of Seipel the priest, the scholar, and the politician offer many morality tales as well as reflections on the Austrian *Mensch* and his predicament in the last century. Therefore, the difficulty

8. Gottlieb Ladner, *Seipel als Überwinder der Staatskrise vom Sommer 1922: Zur Geschichte der Entstehung der Genfer Protokolle vom 4. Oktober 1922*, vol. 1 (Vienna: Stiasny Verlag, 1964); Bernhard Birk, *Dr. Ignaz Seipel: Ein österreichisches und europäisches Schicksal* (Regensburg: G.J. Manz, 1932).

9. See Walther Federn's foreword to Charles A. Gulick, *Austria from Habsburg to Hitler* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1948), i, xi.

10. Confer the index entries for Seipel in Ibid., ii, 1895–96.

of evaluating Seipel's importance, his contributions and his failings, are ultimately worth the effort. Moreover, Seipel warrants a sustained conversation, since he reflects so much of the ambiguities and pressures of a world transitioning between absolutism and democracy, between the locally-centered economic life to a modern industrial world. He can tell us much about the transition from monarchy to republic and the changing role of the Catholic Church in public life from the nineteenth to the twentieth century. More specifically, Seipel's life reflects the major problems of the times after the fall of the monarchy: the dilemmas of Austrian conservatism; the search for the proper post-imperial scope of Austrian politics and the resistance to and acceptance of a narrowing horizon of politics and statecraft; the ambivalence to parliamentary democracy and the problematic search for alternatives to it; the distrust of party politics while at the same time becoming enmeshed in the mire of it; last but not least, Seipel can remind us of the powerful claim of Catholicism in Austrian public life.

What Seipel's life reflects then are the ambiguities of the Austrian Republic and the simultaneous, yet incompatible, identities of Austria and its peoples after the First World War and the fall of the Habsburg Monarchy. Moreover, the questions—fundamental questions—as to how the Austrian republic would make its difficult transition from being the collection some of the core provinces of the old Habsburg Empire to a state and people in its own right, how parliamentary democracy would function in a state where the tendency was for public policy to be administered by state officials rather than by parties themselves, and how the Catholic Church would function in a new republic without the implicit and explicit protection of the Habsburg dynasty, all worked to shape the inconvenient biography of Ignaz Seipel. Finally, Seipel reflects the ways in which party politics have come to dominate not only Austrian parliamentary life, but the outlook and *habitus* of Austrian public life. Seipel's political career takes the course of a setting sun, shimmering on a wide horizon of European scale. By the end of his political career, he descended into a course of hatred, of violence, and irreconcilable opposition to the social democrats. In essence, as we are forced to make sense of Seipel's descent into Austrian politics, we are forced to confront the ambiguities and rough transitions of Austria's imperial heritage, its long transition to democratic practice, and the conflict-ridden struggle to be an independent, parliamentary republic.

The main argument in this article, beyond the recognition that Seipel was a figure who reflects the deep and unresolved political problems of his times, is that eighty years after Seipel's death, we must recognize him

as a founding father of both the Austrian Republic and the Austrofascist state. Even Seipel's hagiographers have recognized the ambiguities of Seipel's life and times. Such balanced criticism tends to come from the "liberal Catholic" school of thinkers who have written on Seipel. August Maria Knoll has categorized Seipel's political course into four phases or "stages" which encompass Seipel's engagement with constitutional reform in the monarchy; his engagement with the social democrats to establish a parliamentary democracy in the republic; a pragmatic capitalist period in the early 1920s when Seipel, as chancellor, worked to stabilize the Austrian economy through a major restructuring of the Austrian state; and finally, a rightist-stage, when Seipel searched for alternatives to parliamentary democracy.[11]

The criticism evident in Knoll's contemporary treatment of Seipel stems in fact from Seipel's political transitions between his taking up politics during First World War, to his death at the end of the democratic era of the Austrian First Republic. Seipel did not maintain one fixed political place—he was always engaging and moving with his political opponents and the events of the time. But Seipel's own movement from stages or positions, his weaving between two poles of a dialectic, began in the great transformations of Austrian politics long before he found himself head of the Austrian Republic.[12] In fact, his life was full of transitions and change that forced Seipel to continually reformulate his own ideas.

Early Life

Political participation expanded rapidly during the course of Seipel's early life while at the same time the city of Vienna was undergoing rapid change. The early part of Seipel's life would have seen the gradual incorporation of people like Seipel's father into the leagues of voters. At the same time, Catholicism in Austria became interwoven with the gradual opening of the political process.

Ignaz Seipel was born on 19 July 1876 in working class Rudolfsheim, Vienna, in what was then the fourteenth district. His father was a *Fiaker* coachman who got his nickname, "Deutschmeister-Karl" from his service in the 4th Infantry "Hoch-und Deutschmeister" Regiment, based in Vienna. Ignaz's mother was a farmer's daughter from Weitenegg, Lower Austria,

11. Knoll, *Von Seipel zu Dollfuß*, 8–10.

12. For a dialectical analysis of Seipel's phases, see the criticial intellectual biography: Ernst Karl Winter, *Ignaz Seipel als dialektisches Problem: Ein Beitrag zur Scholastikforschung*, Gesammelte Werke 7 (Vienna: Europa Verlag, 1966).

which lies on the banks of the Danube in the morning shadows of Melk's Baroque Benedictine Abbey. Ignaz's mother brought five children into the world, but Ignaz would be the only one who would survive infancy. She died of tuberculosis, three years after Ignaz's birth. Ignaz's father transferred the three-year-old boy to his mother's and sister's house in nearby Sechshaus, just south of the Westbahn train tracks. There Ignaz would spend his youth, in humble circumstances, on the border between the working and lower-middle classes, sheltered from the growing and busy city by his overbearing grandmother and aunt.[13]

Seipel was thus born into a petit bourgeois family in the Viennese suburbs but lived in the humble circumstances of the workers. As he would write to his long-time political friend and colleague Heinrich Mataja, "I come from far, far below."[14] Certainly Seipel meant this to refer to his economic situation, but one can read—as a larger take on his "Austrian life"—this language to refer to his political station as well. As such his birth and education occurred at the beginning of the constitutional era in Imperial Austria.

Seipel was born into a family that would not have the property nor the status to vote under the suffrage laws of the time. In the early years of the constitutional period in Imperial Austria, suffrage was awarded to a man of Seipel's class depending on whether he paid over ten Gulden in direct taxes. Because he was raised by his grandmother and aunt, Seipel did not likely belong to an active political household. Moreover, Seipel did not come from the legions of lower noble families or the high bourgeois. Thus, he did not benefit from educational institutions which had normally produced Austria's ministerial elite—and certainly not its Minister-Presidents.[15] In essence, Seipel's home life and his educational opportunities made him a political outsider. The young Seipel began his secondary education in 1887 at a municipal gymnasium in Meidling just as this typical worker's district underwent a municipal transformation with the regulation of the Vienna River and the connection to the streetcar network.[16] It was in this

13. Rennhofer, *Ignaz Seipel,* 3–4.
14. Quoted in Ibid., 1.
15. Gerno Stimmer, "Zur Herkunft der höchsten österreichischen Beamtenschaft: Die Bedeutung des Theresianums und der Konsularakademie," in *Student und Hochschule im 19. Jahrhundert: Studien und Materialien*, Studien zum Wandel von Gesellschaft und Bildung im Neunzehnten Jahrhundert 12 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1975), 303-345. For a more thorough treatment on the education and social milieux of Austrian governmental elites in the monarchy, see Gernot Stimmer, *Eliten in Österreich 1848-1970*, Studien zu Politik und Verwaltung 57 (Vienna: Böhlau, 1997), especially vol. i.
16. Rennhofer, *Ignaz Seipel*, 1–8.

atmosphere and at this point that politics spread to the far reaches of working-and-lower-middle-class Vienna. In 1882, Count Edward Taaffe's government produced a suffrage reform that extended the suffrage to "five-gulden men"—adult males who paid more than five Gulden in direct taxes.[17]

Seipel's gymnasium and university years were thus periods of immense political change, both for Austria's working citizenry and for Austrian Catholics. Pope Leo XIII's 1891 encyclical, *Rerum Novarum*, while it condemned socialism and communism, it at the same time challenged Catholics to find ways to overcome the excesses of industrial capitalism. As John W. Boyer writes, *Rerum Novarum* "fostered a common discourse that gave European Catholics a shared starting point in dealing with industrial modernity."[18] The encyclical, through its condemnation of the capitalist instrumentalization of human beings and the urging of active forms of citizenship and participation, encouraged Catholics to work through the state to ameliorate the deleterious effects of industrialization. It fueled the fires of Catholic political participation, participation that could advocate under and against the authority of the bishops.

In this atmosphere, Austrian political Catholicism set down its roots in the city of Vienna in the form of the Christian Social Party, a party which responded to the capitalist transformation of Vienna in the late nineteenth century with anti-Semitic rhetoric and middle-and-lower class economic protest.[19] At the same time the social democrats pushed even harder for the expansion of the suffrage; and radicals and democrats in parliament agreed. In 1896 the Austrian parliament passed a third major suffrage reform, adding a fifth curia, elected by all male citizens over the age of twenty-four. Ten years later, the curial system would be completely abolished for parliamentary elections with the promulgation of equal, universal male suffrage.[20] The first elections under universal male suffrage were held in 1907, vaulting the Christian Social and Social Democratic parties respectively

17. Gustav Kolmer, *Parlament und Verfassung in Österreich* (Vienna & Leipzig: C. Fromme, 1902), iii, 137–62; Karl Ucakar, *Demokratie und Wahlrecht in Österreich: Zur Entwicklung von politischer Partizipation und staatlicher Legitimationspolitik*, Österreichische Texte zur Gesellschaftskritik 24 (Vienna: Verlag für Gesellschaftskritik, 1985).

18. John W. Boyer, "Catholics, Christians and the Challenges of Democracy: The Heritage of the Nineteenth Century," in *Political Catholicism in Europe 1918-45,* ed. Wolfram Kaiser and Helmut Wohnout, vol. 1 (London: Routledge, 2004), 25.

19. Ibid., 17–20. See also John W. Boyer, *Political Radicalism in Late Imperial Vienna: Origins of the Christian Social Movement, 1848-1897* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981).

20. For an overview of the development of suffrage and the expansion of the curial system, see above all Stanisław Starzyński, "Reichsratswahlen," *Österreichisches Staatswörterbuch* (Vienna: Alfred Hölder, 1909), iv, 871–94.

into first and second place in the Imperial parliament.[21] So as Christian socialism emerged as a strong-massed based party in Vienna through the expanding suffrage in the old Austrian state, so too did its major ideological opponent, social democracy.

Ignaz Seipel saw these changes happen as he himself entered adulthood. As the working-class suburbs of Vienna where he lived and attended school were more firmly incorporated into the Habsburg metropolis, as political life opened up to the lower classes but also took on forms of occupational and anti-Semitic protest, Seipel dedicated himself to his studies. With his *Matura* in hand, as Karl Lueger's Christian Social Party won its first major victory in Vienna's municipal elections in 1895, Seipel joined the Vienna seminary while beginning the study of Theology at the University of Vienna. There Seipel was steeped in the subject of moral theology. In 1899 Seipel was ordained a priest and spent the next four years serving the Church in a pastoral role. His first assignment was to the parish church in Göllersdorf, Lower Austria, where he ministered to 1700 people. Four months later he was transferred to Staatz, a market town near the Moravian border. Seipel would spend the next two years in the Lower Austrian countryside before being transferred back to Vienna in 1902.

In Vienna, Seipel worked not only as a chaplain and a religion teacher in a girls' school, but on a doctorate in Theology. He would receive his doctorate in December 1903. Seipel continued his academic career with a *Habilitationsschrift* on the "economic teachings of the Church fathers," which was published in 1907.[22] Two years later, he received a full professorship of Theology in Salzburg, which at that time only possessed a small theological faculty. There he taught courses on moral theology, economics, and sociology, and became involved in the struggle to reestablish a full-fledged university in the baroque city on the Salzach. In Salzburg Seipel became a thinker who used his theological knowledge to take on, and resolve, conflicts in society. Salzburg provided Seipel with a group of intellectuals with which to discuss issues of the day. As he expressed himself in literary journals or in the group of intellectuals who included literati like Hermann Bahr and legal scholars like Heinrich Lammasch, the young Seipel used his liberal brand of Catholicism as an approach to questions of government and Church policy as well as the First World War.

Seipel brought his own thinking on moral theology to bear on the world around him. His conviction that Christianity offered a firm basis

21. Ucakar, *Demokratie und Wahlrecht in Österreich*, 362.

22. Ignaz Seipel, *Die wirtschaftsethischen Lehren der Kirchenväter* (Vienna: Mayer & co., 1907).

for understanding and living in the world brought Seipel to criticize nationalist attitudes during the Great War and subsequently to publish his "expression of dissent" from mainstream Austro-German thought in an impressive tract, *Nation und Staat*. In the book, Seipel asks his reader to reflect, in the midst of nationalist feeling in the First World War, "on what our patriotism is and where it has it roots."[23] In the work he laid out the basis for a Catholic approach to European politics that was at the same time a cosmopolitan and Austrian approach. The central point for Seipel is to distinguish, rather than conflate, nation and state. For Seipel, nationalism was an exaggeration, one which rested on the chimerical idea that "belonging to a nation represented the highest good of humanity."[24] Rather, for Seipel, nations were cultural institutions, the extension of the family where one could find his place to do God's work. As bases for political organizations, however, they were unsuitable. Rivers, mountains, valleys, the natural frontiers, hardly corresponded to linguistic frontiers at all—especially in the Dual Monarchy.[25] The supranational empire, however, and its own acceptance of its supranationality, provided for Seipel the real basis for a Christian commonwealth. In many ways the book looked to reject the nation-state and see the possibilities of alternatives to it. *Nation und Staat* reflected the wide horizon of Austrian politics and Seipel's own thought before the fall of the Habsburg Monarchy, when "Austria" could be used not to denote a nation, but rather to denote a special cosmopolitanism and supranationalism. From this intellective position, Seipel became involved in circles of reformers who wanted to save the Monarchy in the midst of the hunger and deprivations of the First World War. Lectures on the themes of *Nation und Staat* drew him to Vienna and in late 1917 he took on a professorship at the University of Vienna. He would remain in Vienna the rest of his life. Seipel's descent into politics had begun.

Seipel's Political Vocation

Vienna in 1917 was a shadow of its former self. Though intellectually it remained vital and vibrant, physically it began to grow malnourished and gaunt. The food situation grew steadily worse over the course of 1918 and continued into the early years of the Austrian Republic. The *Sektionschef* (and later *Staatssekretär*) in charge of food provisioning, Hans Loewenfeld-

23. Ignaz Seipel, *Nation und Staat* (Vienna: W. Braumüller, 1916). For a discussion of the work in the context of Seipel's life, see above all Klemperer, *Ignaz Seipel,* 54–65, 54.
24. Ignaz Seipel, *Nation und Staat*, 70.
25. Ibid., 14.

Russ, noted in his memoirs that "The year 1918 showed all the symptoms of the worst sort of crisis, and the office of food provisions found itself in a perpetual state of so-called alarm for the entire year, which challenged the nerves of all its officials and functionaries." In each and every meeting of the Office of Food Provisioning, it was clear that the state was unable to cover the daily needs of the populace. "The domestic harvest fell to 50% of peacetime production. But this fact was not as decisive for the food situation as the near total cessation of food deliveries from Romania and Hungary, which…normally covered over 70% of the need of the non-self-nourishing populace and had in the course of the year sunk to about 5%." Such statistics meant complete hunger and devastation for the urban population, which now had to nourish itself using 50% of a normal harvest, no grain imports, and anything that was available on the black market.[26]

It was in this atmosphere of cold and deprivation that the first major turning point in Seipel's professional career occurred. Firstly, Seipel moved into the inner circles of politics through his advocacy of administrative and constitutional reforms of the Monarchy. Seipel was admired by the young Emperor Karl and found himself drawn increasingly into the Christian Social Party. On 22 October 1918, Seipel became the Minister of Social Welfare in the government of Heinrich Lammasch—it was to be the last ministry of "Old Austria."

When the Monarchy constitutionally crumbled between the Kaiser's manifesto on 28 October and the proclamation of a republic on 12 November, Seipel showed his political dexterity. Without abandoning his allegiance to the emperor and his idea of a multinational Catholic polity, over the next two years Seipel steered the Christian Social party—the former self-styled *Reichspartei*—into a party for parliamentary democracy and republican government, without giving up a respect for the larger "old Austrian" roots of the party and the new state. "The total collapse of Austria could have been avoided," Seipel wrote in the *Reichspost* in November 1918, "if a true democratic spirit had infused our politics."[27] What was now the task of Austria's Germans, according to Seipel, was to make sure the new state enacted a democratic constitution—and did not attempt at all to limit suffrage (even to women). Such a democratic course would provide Austria with the peace and order that Austria would need in the new Europe and

26. Hans Loewenfeld-Russ, *Im Kampf gegen den Hunger: Aus den Erinnerungen des Staatssekretärs für Volksernährung; 1918-1920*, ed. Isabella Ackerl, Studien und Quellen zur österreichischen Zeitgeschichte 6 (München: Oldenbourg, 1986), 94–96.

27. Ignaz Seipel, "Die demokratische Verfassung," *Reichspost* (Vienna, 21 Nov. 1918), morning edition, 1.

prevent the dictatorship of one class.[28] In essence, Seipel's articles and his political activities in the first months after the fall of the monarchy served to chart a course between a conservative rejection of the republic and parliamentary democracy and a socialist attempt to establish a revolutionary state. As such, Seipel advocated for the democratic system as the path to law and order—to prevent a dictatorship of the proletariat. Through his articles and intra-party advocacy, Seipel was able to lead his fellow Christian socials into supporting the new state. In fact, one of Seipel's major biographers, Klemens von Klemperer, takes care to emphasize that Seipel's work within the Christian Social party and in his series of articles in the *Reichspost* presented a flexible stance on parliamentary democracy. Seipel thus opened "up the possibility of a constructive conservative function within the new Austrian Republic."[29]

Seipel accompanied the political transition from Monarchy to Republic in Austria with a transformation of his own. His transition from Professor of Moral Theology to Christian Social politician brought him a rise in prominence in his new-found political career. Allowed by cardinal Piffl to stand for elections in February 1919, Seipel began his parliamentary career working in good faith with the social democrats to settle the postwar peace treaties and to write a constitution for Austria. But his connections to the Church and the moral theology of its intellectual world still tugged at him and did not let go. Seipel was elevated into the prelature in August 1919. Seipel's early political career saw him climbing two ladders at once: one in Austria's political world, the other in Austria's ecclesiastical world. Though Seipel would be tempted at least two times to become a bishop in the Catholic Church and thus commit himself fully to climbing the Church ladder, he would continually choose the political ladder as his vocation. In his own mind, this choice was one of self-sacrifice—serving God through politics instead of doing what he would prefer. Politics in Austria would become dirty and hard; Seipel's role as compromiser and Christian-cosmopolite would fade into the background.

The early years of the Republic brought Seipel two opportunities to work with the social democrats, who were led at that time by the moderate Karl Renner. The first was the approval of the draconian Treaty of St. Germain, which formalized the end of the First World War and the establishment of the Austrian Republic. The treaty set most of Austria's new narrow frontiers, which enclosed a population of 6.5 million people

28. Ignaz Seipel, "Das Volk und die künftige Staatsform," *Reichspost* (Vienna, 23 Nov. 1918), morning edition, 1.

29. Klemperer, *Ignaz Seipel*, 94–109, quote on 109.

who had once lived in an Empire of 55 million. In such a humble state, cut off from the large industrial pockets in Bohemia and the grain fields of Hungary, Austria's politicians and business class feared for the new state's economic survival. Moreover, at that time there was a strong inclination among the populace to abandon the small state solution and join the larger and more economically viable state of Germany. In this situation, Seipel worked as a coalition partner to bring the conservatives into the fold of the new Austrian state. While Renner led the socialists into supporting the small republic, Seipel continued to shepherd the Christian socials into the dual task of supporting a republican state in general and the small Austrian state in particular. This project entailed defining a new, smaller horizon for the Austrian state, and also making sure that the Austrian state put down roots and grew into something of its own. During a debate on the budget in the Constitutional Assembly in 1920, Seipel defined Austria as "a small state…a state in which everything is process, in which nothing is fixed […]. This state has no tradition of existence, of living, and such circumstances account for why any identification with the state has not welled up in the populace."[30] The work of politicians would thus be to create a state that Austro-Germans could believe in and identify with. In the years between the fall of the monarchy and the drawing up of the constitution, Seipel's vision of democracy with a new, smaller, and Christian state made him ready to work with Karl Renner to found the Austrian Republic. As such, Seipel was one of the first ranks of Austrian politicians to believe in this new state.

Such belief in the possibilities of the small Austrian state provided Seipel a good basis for pushing the constitution and finding common ground with the social democratic leadership. If the socialists feared the centrifugal tendencies of the Austrian provinces, they were right to look to Seipel for help, since he too wanted to ensure the territorial integrity of the small Austrian state. Seipel had been chosen by his fellow parliamentarians to serve on the constitutional committee as vice chairman. The chairman was none other than Seipel's future ideological opponent, the social democratic politician and Austro-marxist theorist, Otto Bauer. Here Seipel met an intellectual partner with whom he found it difficult to achieve common ground. And while the "titanic struggle" between Seipel and Bauer paved the groundwork for Austria's tumultuous political ride through the entire decade of the 1920s, one can get too wrapped up in the clash of ideological titans to see the individual "Austrian lives." Can one explain Seipel without

30. *Stenographisches Protokoll der Konstituierenden Nationalversammlung für Deutschösterreich* [hereafter SPdKN], 73. Sitzung (20 Apr. 1920), 2119.

Bauer? Such a thing is difficult.[31] For if Seipel could be flexible and able to compromise with the equally state-focused and undogmatic Karl Renner, Seipel's outlook and his practice of politics became more dogmatic and uncompromising when Otto Bauer sat across the negotiating table from him. Clearly, Bauer awakened in Seipel a competitiveness—and yes, an ideological intransigence—that Renner did not. When Karl Renner remarked that Bauer was beholden "to the same dogmatism as a left-socialist as Seipel was as a Catholic priest," Renner did not pay either a compliment.[32] But Renner sought to portray his social democratic colleague, Otto Bauer, sucked into an ideological wrestling match with Seipel, in which the rules were not to maintain a side or position so much as to throw the other opponent out of the political ring. And frankly, Bauer's evolution as an Austro-Marxist was never as flexible and open as Seipel's early liberal Catholicism. The 1920s saw Seipel drift further away from compromise and from working with the other side of the aisle. Seipel was accompanied, if not guided, on this path by Otto Bauer.

But Seipel's oppositional course was a gradual development. In May 1920, while serving on the constitutional committee with Otto Bauer, the forty-four year-old prelate published an article in the *Reichspost,* "Out with the Constitution," which expressed sympathy with the impatience of the general populace with the Constitutional Assembly at its lack of success writing a constitution for the new state.[33] But, nonetheless, Seipel cautions patience while understanding the urgency of the moment. He instructs his audience that the constitution will be important in order to resurrect the economic stability of the Austrian state and to show the world that Austria will be a worthy and solvent business partner. In order to be a viable state, Austria needs a working, viable economy. To acquire a viable economy, given the international trade context of post-war Europe, Austria needs a solid constitution. Here we see the formation of Seipel's policies for the rest of the decade: the fusing of Christian socialism with

31. In fact, understanding the competition, and yet admiration, for one another has been the subject of useful and readable studies of the 1920s Austria, for instance: Reimann, *Zu Gross;* Norbert Leser, *Genius Austriacus: Beiträge zur politischen Geschichte und Geistesgeschichte Österreichs, 2nd ed.* (Vienna: Böhlau, 1986), 141–75.

32. Karl Renner, *Österreich von der ersten zur zweiten Republik.* (Vienna: Verlag der Wiener Volksbuchhandlung, 1953), 42. For other discussions of Seipel and Bauer, see Leser, *Genius Austriacus*, 141–75; Thomas Olechowski, "Ignaz Seipel--vom k.k. Minister zum Berichterstatter über die republikanische Bundesverfassung," *Kelsen Working Papers* online-version (3 Jan. 2011): 151–56, <http://www.univie.ac.at/kelsen/workingpapers/seipelbundesverfassung.pdf.>

33. Ignaz Seipel, "Heraus mit der Verfassung!," in *Der Kampf um die österreichische Verfassung* (Vienna and Leipzig: Wilhelm Braumüller, 1930), 83-86.

capitalism.[34] Such a course put Seipel well into range of the ideological cannons of Otto Bauer and the left wing of the social democrats, but in 1920, Seipel still had the luxury of backing compromise. He ended the article by explaining that coalition government and compromise was necessary to finally bringing the constitution to the table, "To finish the constitution in good time is the aim and meaning of coalition politics. For this reason, we have upheld the coalition with great sacrifice, we have accepted some things and tolerated other things—which from our party's standpoint were difficult to do; we unceasingly with all our energy have defended what the general uncertainties would have made worse, so that we could finally give our state a constitution."[35] His article responds to the impatience, especially in the Christian-social dominated provinces, with the lack of a constitution. Although Seipel expresses sympathy with the general tenor of impatience, his article argues that a constitution will be worth the political compromises, and ultimately, the wait. This impatience had resulted in a series of conferences in which all the provinces gathered to discuss constitutional issues and the framework of the Austrian state.[36] Once again, Seipel does his part to keep the political right together and in a working pact with the social democrats.

Eventually, the constitution emerged, but not before the coalition itself crumbled on 10 June 1920. A caretaker government under the chancellorship of Michael Mayr took over the government, which was staffed with ministers from all the parties. Its task was to finish the constitution and hold the ship of state together until new elections in October of that same year. In the meantime, the constitutional committee had selected from its own membership a smaller, seven-man subcommittee to hammer out the details of the constitution. Once again, Bauer was selected to chair the body and Seipel selected as vice-chairman. The subcommittee met during the summer of 1920, but eventually ground to a halt over questions of school oversight and finances. These questions revolved around the fundamental relationships between the federal government and the provinces as well as the church and the state and had to be negotiated between the parties themselves.[37] The constitutional scholar Felix Eramacora reports that the

34. Confer what August M. Knoll calls Seipel's third "capitalist" course: Knoll, *Von Seipel zu Dollfuß, 9–10.*

35. Ignaz Seipel, "Heraus," 86.

36. The provincial conferences began in early 1920. See the *Neue Freie Presse's* [hereafter NFP] of the provincial conference in Salzburg: NFP (16 Feb. 1920), 2-3.

37. Felix Ermacora, *Quellen zum Österreichischen Verfassungsrecht (1920): Die Protokolle des Unterausschusses des Verfassungsausschusses samt Verfassungsentwürfen*, Mitteilungen des Österreichischen Staatsarchivs 8 (Vienna: Berger, 1967), 17–21.

party lines were so firmly drawn on these questions, that negotiations nearly fell apart.[38] But by the end of September, with the constitutional subcommittee working again, Seipel reported to the National Assembly that the document was finished on the 29th. On the same day, Seipel and Bauer together submitted the proposal that the "National Assembly may put to vote the attached draft of a law, which establishes the Austrian Republic as a federal state (*Bundesverfassungsgesetz*.)"[39]

Seipel's work in the early years of the republic to put the state on firm footing gave Austria a different *Entstehungsgeschichte*—a different birth narrative—than it might have had otherwise. Unlike Czechoslovakia, which founded itself as a response to the old Monarchy, which it rejected as authoritarian, militaristic, and dominated by Germans, Austria was first saddled with the status of a remnant state by the *Entente*.[40] And while some in Austria either wanted to shake loose from the past or embrace the German state instead of facing the world as a small "remnant," Ignaz Seipel rather postulated that the new republic allowed Austria's Germans to build on their past and their traditions, to make the state democratic, Christian, and stable. Not only did Seipel continue to have ties to the last emperor of the monarchy, Charles I, but he argued for continuities between the small Austrian republic and the old Austrian empire—not least of which was the appropriation of the 1867 fundamental articles on citizens' rights which were carried over into the 1920 constitution. In essence, because of Seipel, the history of Austria is different than that of its neighbors: Austria could not reject its imperial past at St. Germain, and it would not under Seipel. But, as we shall see, Seipel would not accept a republic that changed little, either.

The Party Politician

With the constitution settled and the Austrian Republic established, Seipel did not simply settle back into Church life. He became the head of the Christian Social Party in June 1921, months after it had overtaken the

38. Ibid., 20.

39. The report of the Constitutional Subcommittee is reprinted in Ibid., 547–57. The presentation to the National Assembly can be found in *SPdKN*, Sitzung 100 (29 Sept. 1920), 3375-85.

40. See, for example, the discussion of Czechoslovak state identity in opposition to the Habsburg Monarchy as militaristic, German, and authoritarian in Martin Zückert, "Antimilitarismus und soldatische Resistenz: Politischer Protest und armeefeindliches Verhalten in der tschechischen Gesellschaft bis 1918," in *Glanz - Gewalt - Gehorsam: Militär und Gesellschaft in der Habsburgermonarchie (1800 bis 1918)*, Frieden und Krieg. Beiträge zur historischen Friedensforschung 18 (Essen: Klartext, 2011), 199-218.

social democrats as the largest party in Austria. And after forging a cabinet of civil servants which was to be led by the chief of Vienna's police, Johannes Schober, Seipel himself took the reins of government nearly a year later, on 25 May 1922. It is useful to take a moment to reflect on the differences in Seipel's life between 1917, when he still was a Professor of Moral Theology in Salzburg, and 1922, when he was not only the head of a political party, but of the government. Between 1917 and 1922, Seipel's rise in the party and in Austrian politics paralleled a concomitant decline in the Austrian State. Seipel's quality as a priest, and moreover his calm determination, allowed him to collect and direct the trust of Austria's conservatives in these five years filled with crisis. But while Seipel had hitherto always been the leading voice of many, up until 1922 he had not been the leader with ultimate responsibility for both the party and the state. Now that he was, his style became more combative and his opponents, especially Bauer, more fierce. But still, in the first half of the decade Seipel still managed to focus his policies on establishing, strengthening, and founding the Austrian Republic. Moreover, he did this in the midst of (and no doubt, with the help of) a general financial crisis.

Seipel's first stint as the Federal Chancellor lasted from 25 May 1922 through 7 November 1924—898 days. From the beginning, Seipel's term in office was dominated by Austria's financial crisis. Hunger and a lack of coal did not subside with the end of the war. Rather, by 1922 it became less clear that Austria would receive the help it needed from outside. Its government had been running huge deficits and was becoming increasingly unable to buy coal or foodstuffs on the world market. Sir Arthur Salter, the head of the economic and financial section of the League of Nations, observed in a 1924 article in *Foreign Affairs* that, "Austria lived—but pitifully and precariously. She froze in winter, and a larger part of her population was hungry throughout the year. Her middle class was almost destroyed, and it was a common sight to see scientists or historians of European reputation ill-clad or obviously starved. The mortality was high and, among children, terrible."[41] Seipel took over the government in a clear crisis and it was equally clear that a determined policy and direction was needed to steer Austria out of it. As the *Neues Wiener Tagblatt* characterized this need on Seipel's ascension to the chancellorship, "A ministry with a strong hand is being formed behind the curtains. […] A simple change in ministers without a fundamental change in the system would be worthless."[42] What Seipel

41. Sir Arthur Salter, "The Reconstruction of Austria," *Foreign Affairs 2, no. 4* (June 15, 1924): 631.

42. Quoted in Rennhofer, *Ignaz Seipel, 283–84.*

showed of himself in the years between 1922 and 1924 was an aptitude for international politics that was hitherto unobservable. Moreover, as he sought to stabilize the Austrian currency, reduce the size of the government and governmental agencies, and stabilize the state budget, Seipel moved directly into the crosshairs of the social democrats. As the rhetoric against Seipel and his role as a priest intensified, so did Seipel's eagerness to defeat the social democrats, not only at the ballot box but in parliamentary debates and at the negotiating table. Seipel the clever prelate had emerged; but Seipel the pragmatic compromiser had left the stage.

I have argued in an earlier volume of *Contemporary Austrian Studies* that Seipel's handling of the financial crisis was an important founding moment for the Austrian Republic, in which Seipel was able to cashier many of the state's civil servants while, at the same time, using the opportunity to stabilize the Austrian currency and Austria's economic viability.[43] Focusing instead here on Seipel the person, we can observe that he quickly learned to play the game of international politics. Faced with hyperinflation and most of Austria's assets already mortgaged to cover earlier loans, Seipel embarked on an international campaign to seek assistance. Highlighting Austria's financial problems not only as a humanitarian case but as a state that was near falling apart, Seipel pulled on the heartstrings of some and worried others with an impending upset in the balance of power in central Europe. By the end of the summer in 1922, the governments of Europe referred the matter to the League of Nations, where helping Austria became a matter of its own prestige. Seipel's own international reputation also grew by leaps and bounds through the process. On 6 September 1922, Seipel addressed the General Assembly of the League of Nations in his black cassock. His appeal for help was also marked by a challenge to the League to live up to its humanitarian responsibilities. Seipel the priest impressed the League delegates so much that they did not see Seipel the politician in front of them—and so Austria quickly became an important test case for the League itself. By October, Seipel's government had negotiated a series of three protocols with the governments of Great Britain, France, Italy, and Czechoslovakia, which provided 650 million gold crowns—enough to cover Austria's budget over two years.[44]

43. John Deak, "Dismantling Empire: Ignaz Seipel and Austria's Financial Crisis, 1922-1925," in *From Empire to Republic: Post-World War I Austria,* Contemporary Austrian Studies vol. XIX, eds. Günter Bischof, Fritz Plasser, and Peter Berger (New Orleans: UNO Press, 2010), 123-41.

44. For more detail on the negotiations and the terms of the Geneva Protocols, see Ladner, *Seipel als Überwinder der Staatskrise,* 123–60; Deak, "Dismantling Empire," 135–38.

The Geneva Protocols, as they came to be called, established a government program of austerity and a currency program that gave the right of note to an independent bank set up by the League. Moreover, the League appointed a commissioner to oversee the government's new austerity program, which entailed not only price hikes by the state monopolies but also the planned cashiering of 100,000 civil servants. When Seipel returned to Vienna following the negotiations with the League, the social democrats criticized him furiously for abandoning a program of self-help and, more appropriately, for not including all the parties in the negotiations. To the social democrats, Seipel had betrayed his country. Karl Renner, in measured tones that were aided by thirty-years of hindsight, remarked in his memoirs that Seipel's Geneva Protocols "sacrificed the independence of the country," they "made victims of the wide masses of the working class and wage earners with the burden of the reconstruction," and finally they "delivered the financial interests of the land into the hands of international finance capitalism." Naturally, then, the social democrats "opened a passionate campaign against both Seipel's person and his program."[45] Thirty years before, Renner claimed in parliament that a foreign commissioner to oversee the state budget was a new form of defeat for Austria's independence and parliamentary democracy.[46] After another priest, longstanding representative from Upper Austria Johann Hauser, defended Seipel's program, Karl Seitz, now a veteran member of the social democratic delegation in parliament, ridiculed the priests for preaching love and forgiveness, while at the same time advocating the "unforgivable sin" of high treason against their country.[47] The fierce debate over the Geneva Protocols ushered in a personal *Kulturkampf* in Austrian politics, one that would envelope Seipel and his social democratic adversaries for the next ten years.

Moreover, this personal *Kulturkampf* had real political consequences. As the government under Seipel followed through on many of its reforms, the conflict intensified between Seipel and the Christian socials, on the one side, and the social democrats on the other. The SPÖ started a public campaign in early 1923 that called for working-class Catholics to leave the Church—a move that would push Seipel into even sterner opposition to the socialists. As von Klemperer notes of this time in Seipel's career,

45. Renner, *Österreich*, 57.

46. *Stenographisches Protokoll des Nationalrates der Republik Österreich* [hereafter SPNR], III. Session, Sitzung 138 (12 Oct. 1922), 4414.

47. SPNR, III. Session, Sitzung 138 (12 Oct. 1922), 4433. See also Klemperer, *Ignaz Seipel,* 207–208.

the priest and politician "stopped seeing [social democracy] in terms of accommodation, and regarded it more and more, in all its doctrinarism, as anti-Church."[48] Political polarization became coupled with violence. On 1 June 1924, Karl Jaworek fired two shots from a pistol at Seipel's chest at close range. One bullet penetrated his chest on the right side and struck his lung. Rushed to a hospital, Seipel suffered from complications. The bullet stayed lodged in his chest and Seipel contracted an infection severe enough that he was administered last rites.[49]

What would have happened had Seipel died in the hospital in 1924? His legacy would have been less ambivalent than it is and quite possibly he would not be seen as the great enemy of social democracy in the First Republic. By 1924, Chancellor Seipel had—in the span of only seven years—risen to fantastic prominence in the Christian Social Party. He had participated in all of the events that put Austria on a path toward independence and self-sufficiency: the collapse of the Monarchy, the acceptance of the republican state, the passage of the Treaty of St. Germain, the drafting of the constitution, and the negotiation and implementation of the reconstruction of Austria through the Geneva Protocols. Seipel could—if Austrian historiography believed at all in heroes—be one of the founding fathers of the republic.

Of course, the lingering problem that Ignaz Seipel presents, and one that cannot be avoided, is his increasing alienation from parliamentary democracy. Seipel indeed survived the attempt on his life in 1924 and recovered slowly. By November 1924, Seipel had resigned as chancellor and left the formation of a new government in the hands of Rudolf Ramek, a Christian social from Salzburg. However, Seipel did not retreat into Church life but stayed on as head of the Christian Social Party. Additionally, he traveled throughout Europe and to North America, speaking as a priest and the former chancellor of Austria on Austria's situation and the problems endemic to postwar European politics. By October 1926, with the Christian Social Party again asking him to take the reins of government, Seipel returned as chancellor.

Over the next three years, Seipel's chancellorship would be marked by further political polarization and stalemate. Seipel formed a unity government, consisting of all the non-Marxist factions after parliamentary elections in April 1927. Less than three months later a crowd stormed the Palace of Justice on Vienna's Schmerlingplatz, in response to the acquittal of three members of the right-wing *Frontkämpfervereinigung*, who had

48. Ibid., 229–31, 231.
49. Rennhofer, *Ignaz Seipel,* 402–403.

been accused of murdering a forty-year old and his eight-year old son in Schattendorf. The crowd threw government files into the street, where they were set on fire. Soon the palace itself was set ablaze. Other fires were set in the city as well, including the editorial offices of the Christian social newspaper, *Die Reichspost*.[50] The police chief and former Federal Chancellor Johannes Schober responded by arming his police with carbines, which were then used with deadly effect against the crowd. The social democratic leadership, including Otto Bauer and Karl Seitz, appealed to Seipel to make concessions to the working classes to keep the bloodshed from spreading. But Seipel refused. In the end over ninety people died, and hundreds were seriously wounded.

While Bauer and Seitz tried to extend olive branches to Seipel and work with him to calm the situation—even offering coalition partnership—Seipel refused. He was determined not to bring peace but to politically defeat his rivals. One can get a sense of this new Seipel from the diaries of Joseph Redlich, who had served as Finance Minister in the last imperial cabinet with Seipel in 1918. Redlich had, in the meantime, taken up a professorship at Harvard University, but returning to Austria during the summer break in 1927, he met with Seipel for almost two hours in the Federal Chancellery three weeks after the riots and their brutal suppression. For Redlich, Seipel recounted the events of the July riots and the burning of the Palace of Justice and, especially, his meetings with Bauer and Seitz. Seipel relished his role as passive-aggressor, in which he encouraged the social democrats to follow their logic to the bitter end, "There is only one thing left to do," he said to Seitz and Bauer, "You really have to have a revolution!"[51] A few days earlier in parliament, on 26 July, Seipel addressed the violence which had broken out between the workers and the city police. He called the workers' actions a revolution and spoke on behalf of a "wounded republic" admonishing her ungrateful children. Toward the social democrats, Seipel accused the leadership of wasting their parliamentary authority in the eyes of the people and now using it to try to protect persons guilty of revolution. Toward the end of his speech he thundered at parliament, "Do not demand that parliament and the government show clemency toward the victims and the guilty of these fateful days, but which would be cruel to the wounded republic. Demand nothing, which would appear as a free pass for those

50. For a summary of the events surrounding the riots in Vienna in the middle of July 1927, see *NFP*, 18 July 1927 (evening edition).

51. Josef Redlich, *Schicksalsjahre Österreichs: Die Erinnerungen und Tagebücher Josef Redlichs 1869-1936*, eds. Fritz Fellner and Doris Corradini, 2nd ed., Veröffentlichungen der Kommission für neuere Geschichte Österreichs 105 (Vienna: Böhlau, 2011), ii, 649–52, 650.

who rose up."[52] Seipel the moral theologian had now become Seipel the politician. At the same time, he became the "prelate without mercy."

In this speech, the Chancellor hinted at his increasing impatience with parliamentary democracy. He blamed parliament for the workers' revolt, saying that parliament had "piece by piece, for months now, forfeited its authority, and bears responsibility" for allowing the appearance to come forward that its members do not want democracy itself.[53] But Seipel, in end effect, can be held equally guilty of the same accusation. The endless ideological confrontation with the social democrats, the burning of the Palace of Justice, and the prospect of never being able to secure outright victories in Austrian parliament, led the prelate into an intellectual search for alternative political courses. "True democracy," reminiscent of Platonic forms, became Seipel's catchphrase for a solution to Austria's parliamentary and social crises. Such thinking, a longing for a way out of the political morass, led the man to completely forget his early course of compromise and pragmatism, his commitment to living in the world.[54] As Seipel drew himself closer and closer to the *Heimwehr,* his search for a better, higher, and truer democracy latched onto this organ's own militant anti-Marxism and the physical presence of armed paramilitarism.

Seipel's Afterlife

Seipel resigned on 3 April 1929, roughly two-and-one-half years after he had taken up the chancellorship for a second time. He longed to leave politics, his health was failing, and, yet, he was only fifty-two. A year later, he would resign the chairmanship of the Christian Social Party. But, though he had taken the major steps away from politics, Seipel could not help but turn around to watch the political arena. Another stint as foreign minister followed at the end of 1930; Seipel stood for election as Federal President in 1931—and lost.

On 2 August 1932, Ignaz Seipel died, two-and-a-half months after Pius XI's encyclical, *Quadragesimo Anno.* On 5 August, his funeral train wound its way through the streets of Vienna, between St. Stephen's, the Chancellery, and Parliament—between the edifices that represented Seipel's two vocations. He was buried in Vienna's Central Cemetery—but only

52. SPNR, V. Session, Sitzung 7 (26 July 1927), 133.
53. Ibid.
54. See for instance, Seipel's speech held in 1928 at a meeting of the Graz chapter of the Christian Social Party, "Der Ruf nach echter Demokratie," printed in Ignaz Seipel, *Der Kampf um die österreichische Verfassung* (Vienna: Wilhelm Braumüller, 1930), 130–35.

rested there two years before his body was removed and interred alongside the body of Engelbert Dollfuß—the successor of Seipel as the head of political Catholicism in Austria and the architect of Austria's authoritarian, clerical-corporatist state. Together they rested as priest and martyr in the "Chancellors' Church"—in the Seipel-Dollfuß Church in Vienna's fifteenth district.[55] The National Socialists, after the annexation of Austria in 1938, took Seipel's remains back to the Central Cemetery. The three burials of Ignaz Seipel represent a real problem in Austrian historiography concerning Seipel's political legacy for the Austrian Republic. Where do his bones belong? With the graves of the Republic or with Engelbert Dollfuß and Austrofascism?

While Seipel's bones still rest in the Central Cemetery among the *Ehrengräber,* this question of Seipel's legacy and where his bones should lie have not been definitely put to rest. The Dollfuß-Schuschnigg regime had appropriated Seipel as their "founding father" as well. In August Maria Knoll's essay, quoted at the beginning of this article, Knoll asked the question, "What is Seipel's legacy?" Knoll would find his answer in Dollfuß himself. Knoll—in 1934—saw Dollfuß as Seipel's "political heir and viceroy." He continued, "in religion, in both statesmen's conceptions of fatherland, state and society, lie continuities from Seipel to Dollfuß."[56] For the Catholic-conservative camp in Austria, Seipel was a connection to Godliness, a connection that was exploited in service of a fascist regime. And though he had started on the intellectual and political path to authoritarianism himself, it was his bones—and not the man himself—that were carried there.

Otto Bauer, Seipel's opponent in many debates and the ever-present bogeyman in Seipel's political tactics and plans, honored Seipel with a moving portrait in print.[57] Calling Seipel the "by far most significant man and the only statesmen of European caliber whom the bourgeois parties have produced," Bauer recognized before the readers in the *Arbeiter-Zeitung* Seipel's strength, self-discipline, his energy, and mental acuity, which was brought to bear in "his struggle against us." But Bauer, ready to concede to the dead what he did not concede to the living, remarked that Seipel's fight against the working class "undoubtedly was led with honest inner conviction—he was as convinced of the justice of his cause as we are of

55. For a recent article on the sacralization of Dollfuß, see Lucile Dreidemy, "Austrofaschismus: Totenkult für einen Diktator," *Die Zeit,* 21 July 2011, sec. Geschichte, <http://www.zeit.de/2011/30/A-Engelbert-Dollfuss> (1 Jan. 2012).

56. Knoll, *Von Seipel zu Dollfuß*, 11, 13.

57. Otto Bauer, "Ignaz Seipel," in *Werkausgabe*, vol. 7 (Vienna: Europa Verlag, 1979), 466–70. Originally published in *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, 3 August 1932.

the justice of our own." But Bauer also recognized that Seipel had played a major role in the foundation of the Republic—a republic that he had also sought to change toward the end of his life. As Bauer recognized in Seipel a figure that, in the defense of his Church, moved from "opposition to Socialism, into passionate hatred" for it, Bauer forgot to mention the active role his party and he himself had in fostering such hatred.

But more than this, Bauer's own omissions have been superseded by new ones. Ignaz Seipel's life tells us much about the failures and the challenges of understanding the Austrian First Republic. Seipel was in many ways the founding father of the Austrian Republic. But his increasing impatience with parliamentary democracy, his growing hatred for socialism, and his willingness to embrace or use anti-democratic movements (including the National Socialists) made him into the spiritual father of Austrian clerical-fascism. Seipel is hard to reconcile with the needs of the present. But in the end, we have to ask ourselves, what is history (and thus biography) for? To judge the past, or to understand it? If our goal is to judge, we can calmly put Seipel into the category of saint or devil. If our goal is to understand, then we must accept Seipel in all his ambition, complexity, goodness, and failures, and make him relevant in our understandings of the present.