

Will Austria Go Nazi?

By LUDWIG LORE

NO ONE familiar with Austrian conditions was surprised when the smouldering antagonism between Chancellor Kurt Schuschnigg and Vice Chancellor Prince Ernst Ruediger von Starhemberg burst into open flame with the removal of the Prince from the Cabinet and the Vice Chancellorship on May 14th. It is more than a personal victory for the dour Schuschnigg, however. It is Austria, trying to find herself. Up to this hour she is still floundering helplessly in the tides of political circumstance.

When Chancellor Dollfuss outlawed parliament and the political parties after the February uprising of 1934, it was his intention to rebuild Austria on new political and social foundations. Cardinal Innitzer, his mentor foresaw a German Christian corporate state built on the principle laid down in the Papal Encyclical *Quadragesimo anno*. The backbone of this new order was to be the Executive, resting on the power of the armed Heimwehr within and the Italian government and the Holy See without. The expression "*Quadragesimo anno*" rolled as easily off the tongue of the man on the streets in those days of 1934 as the word "Fascism." Together they were regarded as the alpha and omega of all political wisdom.

To give concrete expression to the union of Fascism and Catholicism, Prince Starhemberg, leader of the Austrian fascist movement, was made Vice Chancellor in the Dollfuss government. After the Nazi attack on the government and the assassination of Chancellor Dollfuss by a National Socialist fanatic, however, not Starhemberg but the then Minister of Justice and Education Dr. Kurt Schuschnigg was made Chancellor of Austria. The Prince without whose Heimwehr troops the government could not have held itself in power in those frenzied days remained Vice Chancellor and became chief of the "Fatherland Front."

The Catholic Church made it clear that it would under no circumstances give the power of the state into the hands of the rabble-rousing representative of Austria's professional militarists. The position of the semi-fascist Heimwehr and its fascist Prince-ling leader was doubtful from the first. In the two years of the Schuschnigg-Starhemberg regime the Heimwehr lost much of its influence. Partly this was its own fault. It demanded more and more power but offered no commensurate service in return. As early as October of last year when the reconstruction of the state was under advisement, there was a general demand for gradual disarmament of all semi-military formations. It was urged that the car-

rying of arms by private citizens be forbidden by law and that all weapons in possession of Heimwehr and other groups be turned over forthwith to the government arsenals.

Starhemberg's opponents demanded that an end be made to the political dualism under which the Chancellor, the nominal head of the state had no control over its military power as represented by the "Fatherland Front." When, during a public demonstration on May 10 it came to an open brawl on the streets of an outlying section of Vienna between Schuschnigg's Catholic "Sturmschaaren" and Starhemberg's "Heimwehr" troops, the government declared that matters had gone far enough. Starhemberg was dismissed and the Heimwehr ordered to disarm. The Sturmschaaren and the peasant "Freiheitsbund" volunteered to do so of their own accord.

It was a demonstrative victory for the Catholic Church. Austria is now on its way to become the land that Dollfuss dreamed of, a Catholic state under authoritarian dictatorial rule. Names like Cardinal Innitzer, Schmitz, Buresch and Reither, Christian Social leaders, are again to the fore. The standards of the Austrian state now rest in the hands of Catholic leaders who are planning to hand them over to the scion of the House of Habsburg at the first opportunity.

PRINCE Starhemberg is a private citizen again. But he is far from being resigned to his fate. His dramatic personality has been in the limelight too long to vanish at a wave of Schuschnigg's hand. He is the last of a family of fighters. One of his forebears, the illustrious Prince Ernst Ruediger von Starhemberg, saved Vienna when it was beleaguered by a Turkish army of two hundred thousand men under the Kara Mustapha Pasha in 1683, holding the city against the invader with a force of 8000 citizen soldiers until the Polish army came to its rescue.

Starhemberg was an officer in the World War though he was barely nineteen when it ended. After the German Revolution of 1918 he joined the Oberland Freecorps, one of the most outspoken of the counter-revolutionary military organizations of that time. He became an ardent National Socialist and took part in the famous Nazi-Hitler-Ludendorff Buergerbraeuhaus Putsch in 1923.

After that very little was heard of him until 1927, when the Palace of Justice in Vienna was set afire during a police raid on demonstrating workers. This gave the Prince his cue. He organized a chasseurs battalion at his own expense. From the ownership

of a troop of 700 well-equipped and fully-armed warriors it was only a step to the head of the entire Home Defense Corps, a fascist body originally organized for the defense of Austria's frontiers, which later launched the anti-Socialist offensive of the reactionary middle class which provoked the February uprising.

Prince Starhemberg owns the boundless estates of the Starhemberg family which are said to comprise half of the Upper Austrian province. He owns numerous castles, many of them famous landmarks in a country proud of its heritage of beauty. But these possessions are mortgaged to the hilt. Starhemberg himself is deeply in debt. Everything he has is forfeit to usurers, who advanced the enormous sums he needed to arm and train his Heimwehr retainers. In July 1933 he owed to one institution alone, the Linzer Sparkasse, a private cooperative savings bank, the sum of 12 million shillings of which, according to the *Wiener Arbeiter-Zeitung*, not one shilling has been paid. His cash indebtedness is estimated at almost a hundred million. Starhemberg notes are as plentiful as fleas and almost as worthless. To the state the former Vice Chancellor is indebted to the tune of one million shillings for taxes. The authorities who rob the impoverished peasant of his land and the unemployed laborer of his last stick of furniture without a qualm, when they fall behind in the payment of their burdensome taxes, are more than lenient toward the patriot Starhemberg. For who knows, the bankrupt Prince of today may be the all-powerful dictator of tomorrow!

Dr. Kurt Schuschnigg, a thin, sandy haired pedant of 39 with a closely-clipped grayish-yellow mustache, is in almost every particular his antipode. Catholicism is the dominant factor of his character. He was born in Riva on Lake Garda, now in Italy, the son of a General of the lower nobility. In politics he is a bred-in-the-bone monarchist. As a young lawyer he turned his attention to politics and began his career as a Christian Social deputy in the Austro-Hungarian parliament. He became the protégé of Ignatz Seipel, the great leader of political Catholicism in Austria. It was Chancellor Seipel who predicted a great future for the earnest young deputy whose pedantic and methodical sobriety and total lack of humor are in such striking contrast to the careless optimism of his political rival. Schuschnigg is not a careerist. He sees himself as the emissary of God sent to restore order in Austria. To fight God's—and his monarch's—battles he created his Tyrolian Sturmschaaren.

Chancellor Schuschnigg is firmly convinced that only a monarchy can restore Austria's territorial integrity and political independence as well as the unity of its people. But being the man he is, he refuses to give his consent to a royalist Staatsstreich to place the pretender Otto on the Austrian throne. Were he a Starhemberg he would use the power

now in his hands to force a decision, but the bureaucrat Schuschnigg prefers to achieve his end by eternal negotiations with Rome and London, Paris, Budapest and Prague.

Despite this difference in character Schuschnigg and Starhemberg could have worked for a common end. What divides them are not subjective but objective reasons. The peace of St. Germain which sealed the fate of the new Republic at the close of the World War, made Austria a national entity without sufficient land to feed its people or a chance to develop its industries to a point where they could pay for the importation of foodstuffs and other products from without. From the very beginning Austria was forced to live on the charity of her more fortunate neighbors, France, Italy and Great Britain. Clearly this condition could not last forever, especially since the rising tide of international depression was making it increasingly difficult for these nations to continue their generosity. Under the circumstances the Austrian people were easily won over by Nazi Germany's blandishments. Large groups of the population have come to believe that union with Germany is Austria's only chance to free herself from the domination of nations with whose people she has little in common and on whom she has no just claim.

That the Catholic Schuschnigg is not in sympathy with such plans goes without saying. It was his idea that monarchical restoration would knit the people of Austria into a united nation, strong enough to discourage Berlin's annexationist plans. But monarchist restoration to Dr. Schuschnigg means the approval of London, Paris and the countries of the Little Entente.

The direct occasion for Starhemberg's dismissal was a telegram the latter sent to Mussolini, congratulating Il Duce on his victory in Ethiopia. In this message the Prince of Vienna's cafe world accused the governments of western Europe of "dishonesty, hypocrisy and lying" and assured his fascist master of the "ultimate victory of the fascist idea." Several hours after the telegram was dispatched Austria had a new government—without Starhemberg. For once the French and British envoys had had the courage to protest against the arrogant presumptuousness of this fascist disciple in the Austrian Chancellery.

This protest, of course, was only the immediate reason for Starhemberg's dethronement. The real cause lies deeper. On April 25 the leaders of the Heimwehr had met in a secret conference at which Starhemberg had announced his new program. This program was printed—presumably by mistake—in the Heimwehr organ the *Innsbrucker Nachrichten*.

"The issue in Europe and in the rest of the world is not one of political forms or party doctrines," the declaration read. "The line that divides all Europe

into two parts is the line that separates the Bolshevik from the anti-Bolshevist front. Western democracies have not given serious enough attention to the penetration of Bolshevism into and its dangers for European national life. For that reason it is necessary to oppose Bolshevism with the idea of Fascism and to that end to bring the fascist states together into a common front. It must be possible to assemble the fascist states in a crusade against Bolshevism, in which case Austria would once more fulfill its mission by serving as a national bridge between the peoples of the North and the South. . . ."

Starhemberg believed that he was ordained to bring Hitler and Mussolini together. At the time of his dismissal he was in close touch with Franz von Papen. Schuschnigg knew what effect that would have on the states of Europe to whom Austria must still look for financial assistance and assured the British and French Ministers that the Vice Chancellor had written and spoken for himself alone, not in the name of the Austrian people or the government. To permit him to remain in office after that was manifestly impossible.

Fearful, obviously, of the consequences of his act, Chancellor Schuschnigg hied himself to Italy, where he reaffirmed the Rome Protocol which makes Italy the God-father of fascist Austria and Hungary its ally. Mussolini sided with him against Starhemberg. Immediately after his return Schuschnigg addressed a meeting of the Fatherland Front on the subject of restoration of normal relations with the Reich. Papen departed for Berlin and almost at once the Austrian press reported that Germany would give her approval to the restoration of the Habsburg regime. "United with the Reich," said the *Neue Freie Presse*, often used by Schuschnigg as his semi-official mouthpiece, "we can look forward to the time when Austria will again be a monarchical state on a fascist foundation." This optimism seems somewhat pre-

mature. Why, after all, should Hitler move a finger for Austrian stabilization under a monarchy when to do so would put an end, once and for all, to his Anschluss aspirations. That Mussolini will support a Habsburg regime is more likely. Italy fears the growth of German power in Europe and would welcome a monarchy in Austria, if only for that reason.

Nevertheless the day of the Austrian monarchy is still a long way off. The last meeting of the Little Entente—Jugoslavia, Rumania and Czechoslovakia—which convened late in May, expressed itself more definitely than ever as opposed to Otto's return and declared that it would mobilize against Austria at once in the event of a Habsburg restoration move. London and Paris, on the other hand, will do nothing to weaken their influence on Belgrade, Bucharest and Prague.

MORE than two years have passed since the dark February days when the Austrian proletariat shed its blood in a last unsuccessful stand against the fascist regime. Hundreds of the men and women who were arrested in connection with that revolt are still in Austria's jails and concentration camps.

The clerico-fascist regime is unimpaired. It is not impossible that it may make its peace with Hitler, in which case it would take on a more specifically National Socialist character. But in the final analysis Schuschnigg's trek from capital to capital over the map of Europe, looking for aid that never quite materializes, is a concrete expression of his fear of the growing opposition and organization of the Austrian working class. The rulers in Vienna know that they cannot fight on two fronts. Having tried to hoodwink Austrian labor into submission and failed, they are turning to Berlin.

For Austria's working class radicals the fight has only just begun!

The Dying Luddite

(YORKSHIRE, 1812)

"NAME your accomplices!" said the priest
to the man who lay with darkening eyes.
"So may you, haply, be released
"from hell's eternal fires, to feast
"in mansions in the skies!"

The wounded man turned on his bed.
"Can you . . . keep . . . a secret . . . Sir?" he said.
"Yes, yes!"—the quick reply.
The Luddite slowly raised his head
and whispered, "So . . . can I!"

KENNETH PORTER