



# **The February Struggle in Austria and Its Lessons**

**By**

**BELA KUN**



**WORKERS OF ALL COUNTRIES, UNITE!**

## Contents

I. NOT AN END BUT A BEGINNING .....	3
II. AUSTRIA'S ROAD TOWARDS A REVOLUTIONARY CRISIS .....	5
III. THE ARMED FORCES OF THE TWO FRONTS .....	24
IV. FIVE DAYS UNDER FIRE AGAINST FASCISM .....	28
V. THE POLICY OF AUSTRO-MARXISM AND THE STRATEGY OF THE UPRISING .....	40
VI. SOME IMPORTANT TACTICAL LESSONS OF THE ARMED STRUGGLES .....	56
VII. WAS IT RIGHT TO TAKE UP ARMS? .....	71
VIII. TOWARDS NEW STRUGGLES .....	87

Published July, 1934, by WORKERS LIBRARY PUBLISHERS  
P. O. Box 148, Sta. D (50 East 13th St.), New York City

Republished for the first time in December, 2025 by  
WORKERS PARTY OF MASSACHUSETTS

# I. NOT AN END BUT A BEGINNING

ON FEBRUARY 12, 1934, the workers of Austria rose in arms. With boundless heroism tens of thousands of proletarians—men and women, old and young, even children—waged the only just war, the civil war of the oppressed against their oppressors, against fascism. For five days the insurrectionists fought against the forces of fascist counter revolution. The ruling bourgeoisie mobilized all its armed forces against the insurrectionists—the standing army and the police pack, the gendarmerie and the fascist gangs. It threw into the struggle all types of arms—rifles and machine guns, armored cars and aeroplanes, bomb throwers, field-guns and howitzers.

The Austrian proletarians fought with a heroism of which only the members of a class to which the future belongs are capable.

The bourgeoisie in Austria and their fascist gangs are celebrating their bloody orgies on the battlefield of the suppressed armed struggle, such as only a class is wont to do which is letting its last vital forces run riot in wild fascist terror.

Without central political and military leadership the workers fought through the bloody struggle which claimed many victims. By raising their heads from the swamp of mental slavery of social-democracy and taking up arms against the fascists, they have forsaken one path and entered upon another. One path, the path they have forsaken, was the path of social-democracy, which for tens of years promised to lead them to Socialism by this path of peaceful methods. The other path, the path they have now taken, was the path of the armed uprising, by which the proletariat of the Soviet Union, led by its Bolshevik Party, has actually arrived at Socialism on one-sixth of the earth's surface.

However, the words uprising and insurrectionists, when used in connection with the February struggles in Austria, are employed only conditionally. The whole description which we give of the February struggles shows that it was not an uprising in which the working class, led by a revolutionary Communist Party, prepares for and wages an armed struggle with clear slogans for the seizure of power, clearly setting itself the task of smashing the bourgeois state power and setting up the dictatorship of the proletariat. The heroic struggles of the Austrian proletariat—and their heroism cannot alter this

fact—were not only in a military but also in a political sense an expression of defensive resistance to the bourgeois use of violence. The workers took up arms in order to ward off something. An uprising of the working class which can be described unreservedly as an armed uprising must be prepared for among the masses by a revolutionary workers' party with clearly set aims.

Austrian social-democracy was not the party of the armed uprising; from the start it was the party of sabotage, of betrayal of the armed uprising. We therefore employ the expressions uprising and insurrectionists only in a conditional sense—in the sense that the actions of the workers in Austria took on the form of broad armed struggles.

One of the most important prerequisites for the victory of the working class has been and is being created in these struggles. During the heat of the uprising those mental chains in which social-democracy held the great majority of the Austrian workers have been smashed to pieces. The working class which has fought such battles as those in Vienna, in Linz, in Steyr, in Bruck-an-der-Mur and the other scenes of the glorious uprising, cannot be barred for long by the fascist gangs from following this new path of revolutionary struggle.

It is not the working class which was defeated. The proletariat has won a great political victory over social-democracy.

This victory is the beginning of the complete victory over the bourgeoisie, because the workers of Austria in these battles, with arms in their hands, have not only begun the great work of changing the conditions but have also begun the work of changing themselves—the most important prerequisite for qualifying themselves for the seizure of power, for political rule.

Thus, the uprising, though suppressed, is not an end but a beginning.

## II. AUSTRIA'S ROAD TOWARDS A REVOLUTIONARY CRISIS

The class struggle between bourgeoisie and proletariat in Austria had already become a more or less open civil war since July 15, 1927, since the rising of the Vienna proletariat in defense against the attacks of fascism. Since that time the various governments have made a number of changes in the constitution, aimed at legalizing the civil war of the bourgeoisie against the proletariat. The bourgeoisie took one step after another to seize the weapons from the workers and to arm their fascist gangs to the teeth. Relying on armed force, the bourgeoisie reduced the low living standard of the workers more than ever.

In dealing with the immediate pre-history of the uprising, we will go back only to the period since the turning point, since Dollfuss' coup d'etat of March 7, 1933, which took place shortly after the Reichstag elections in Germany.

Dollfuss' coup d'etat signified that Austrian finance capital, which had dominated the Austrian republic since the beginning of its existence, was now openly setting up its unbounded rule, was laying bare its class dictatorship. In consequence of the coup d'etat of March 7, 1933, power did not pass from the hands of one class into those of another. The Austro-fascists, Dollfuss and Starhemberg, did not even boast of doing that of which Hitler and his national-fascist gangs boasted from demagogic motives-namely, that they had brought about a "national revolution". The Austrian fascists declared clearly and succinctly that they only wanted to tear down the barriers which, in their opinion, might hinder the unbounded exercise of bourgeois rule, which might hinder the breaking down of the resistance of the working class during the time of severe crisis. Finance capital continued to be the ruler in Austria, as it was at the time when Karl Renner and Otto Bauer formed their "socialist" government on March 16, 1919, at the time of the "People's Republic" of social-democracy. Finance capital ruled in Austria during the period which Otto Bauer described as the "period of transition between two revolutionary processes", when, in the opinion of Austro-Marxism, there was an "equilibrium of class forces" in Austria. Finance capital ruled in Austria when the "People's Republic" of social-democracy, according to the words of the social-democrats, "changed" into a bourgeois republic. The state power in Austria was the rule of finance capital, and not "the political domination of the reactionary petty bourgeoisie", as Otto Bauer wanted to persuade the workers. The form of exercise of this rule changed in so far as the

bourgeoisie ever more and more resorted to naked violence, instead of the method of parliamentary deceit, for holding down the revolutionary workers. But the substance of this state power remained the same throughout the whole period; it was the power of finance capital over the working class.

The fascization of Austria, which found its expression in the coup d'état of Dollfuss on March 7, 1933, was thus not a change of the ruling class but only an abrupt alteration in the methods of rule employed by the already ruling class.

In what did this change in the methods of rule of finance capital find its expression after this turning point, and what was the aim of this change?

## **The Meaning of the Coup d'Etat**

The coup d'état of March 7, 1933, signified in the first place the elimination of parliament and the introduction of the system of emergency decrees issued by the executive power, as the normal method of governing the country. In contradistinction to the German system, the regime of emergency decrees was not introduced on the basis of any paragraph 48 of a "democratic" constitution, like the Weimar one, but on the basis of a War Enabling Law dating from the time of the Hapsburg monarchy and which had been designed for the conditions prevailing during the World War. The Austrian bourgeoisie was arming for open civil war in order to break the resistance offered by the working class to the efforts of the capitalists to find a way out of the crisis, in order to prevent the revolutionary way out; it introduced war legislation in good time. The elimination of parliament was dictated by the needs of the bourgeoisie to create a flexible executive power against the working class—a power not restricted in its actions by any rules of parliamentary procedure.

The Austrian bourgeoisie had to concentrate its whole power against the working class at all costs. Its forces were greatly weakened as a consequence of the crisis, and, according to the calculations of the leading strata of the bourgeoisie, only an extreme concentration of these weakened forces, coupled with the use of all means of violence, could restrain the working class from taking the revolutionary path. The fascization of Austria proceeded under peculiar circumstances. The victory of fascism in Germany made the "incorporation" of Austria with the aid of one part of the Austrian bourgeoisie a burning question on the order of the day. One part of the bourgeoisie in Austria demanded "incorporation", while another part was against the idea of Anschluss



with Germany.

The Austrian bourgeoisie was split, and the Anschluss question deepened this cleavage still further. Moreover, the great imperialist powers, who were and are striving to prevent Austria's Anschluss with Germany, relied upon this splitting of the camp of the bourgeoisie into different factions. The process of fascization in Austria was thus given a peculiar character by the international struggle of imperialists for the country. Thus the two tendencies of fascism which were formed within the camp of the bourgeoisie received their distinct characteristics: one of these tendencies took shape as national-socialism or Hitler-fascism, the other as Austro-fascism or clerico-fascism. Both of them made it their objective to fascize the state in their own way, and Austro-fascism won the hegemony in the fascist movement. It was Austro-fascism which had the honor of abolishing bourgeois democracy in Austria.

What were the consequences of fascization?

The following facts must be named in the first instance: An intensified policy aimed at increasing the bourgeoisie's apparatus of violence and at cutting down social legislation and wages. The draft budget of the Dollfuss government for the year 1934 contemplates a saving of 54,200,000 schillings in the expenditure for social insurance. At the same time, according to the Oesterreichischer Volkswirt, this draft budget indicates the following items of increased expenditure:

National Service Dept. at the Federal Chancellor's Office (i.e. fascist propaganda) .....	1934 (in millions)	1933
Police .....	1.00	0.10
Gendarmerie.....	60.87	58.65
Army .....	34.57	32.09
	94.00	94.00
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	190.44	173.44

Thus, whereas the expenditure on social insurance is decreased by 54,200,000 schillings, we have an increased expenditure of 17,000,000 schillings on the bourgeoisie's apparatus of violence. In addition it must be noted that the expenditure for police and gendarmerie have already undergone a considerable increase during recent years. On the other hand, after the coup d'etat, in the

period from June to October 1933, the wage index of the workers in Vienna dropped from 108 points to 88 points.

After the coup d'etat, the bourgeoisie, relying on the increase of its armed forces, which was accomplished by the inclusion of fascist Heimwehr formations in the body of the police, commenced an intensified political persecution of the working class, in order to take advantage of the further limitation of freedom of action of the workers and their organizations, for the purpose of effecting a further reduction of wages and making the conditions of work still worse. An intensified suppression of the Communist press set in. One after another, the revolutionary mass organizations of the workers were prohibited and soon after followed the suppression of the revolutionary party of the Austrian proletariat—the Communist Party of Austria. The already existing limitations of the freedom of assembly and demonstration as against Communist and other revolutionary workers were extended to a prohibition of meetings and demonstrations as against the whole working class. Through pressure of the state apparatus, with the help of terrorist measures, the yellow trade unions—the Christian and Heimwehr unions—were promoted at the expense of the free trade unions.

In the middle of March the Schutzbund formations in Tyrol were dissolved and the social-democratic and reformist trade union press was subjected to preliminary censorship. On March 30, the Schutzbund was dissolved in all provinces of Austria, and shortly after the government incorporated the Heimwehr formations in the state apparatus as auxiliary police. The government issued an emergency decree prohibiting strikes. It prohibited the May Day celebrations and mobilized all its armed forces against the workers, who, notwithstanding, attempted to demonstrate on May 1. After this came severe attacks on the eight-hour working day and a number of emergency decrees cutting down social insurance for employed and unemployed workers. Compulsory labor service was introduced. All this took place, for the most part, in the first half of the year 1933.

Austrian social-democracy has continually spread the idea among the workers that all Austrian problems are decided by the foreign powers, that everything which happens in Austria only happens by order of those imperialist countries to which Austria stands in the relation of a dependency. Austria is a dependent country—of that there can be no doubt. But all these measures taken by the Austrian bourgeoisie to intensify the oppression and exploitation of the Austrian workers were undertaken by the Austrian bourgeoisie itself in its own

interests exclusively. The Austrian workers who followed social-democracy may now begin to reflect as to what aim was served by the spreading of this fatal feeling of impotence among them.

## **The Splitting of the Austrian Bourgeoisie and Its Causes**

Even after the coup d'état the Austrian bourgeoisie was still divided within itself to an extreme degree. All its sections which had an influence on the course of events were indeed agreed on one point—namely, that in the given situation in the country it was no longer possible to govern by parliamentary methods. They were at one against the working class, but each faction of the bourgeoisie had special group aims, determined by its special group interests. The greatest role in the cleavage of the bourgeoisie was played by the special group interests on the questions of foreign trade policy, of taxation and credit policy, and also by the question of the antagonism between town and country. All these inner political contradictions were concentrated, as though in a burning glass, in the problem of Austria's Anschluss with Germany. This question was accentuated after Hitler's advent to power by the raising of the problem of revision of the peace treaties and of the arming of Germany. The Anschluss question became the central question of the European policy of the leading imperialist powers, especially of Germany, France and Italy, with England pursuing a "tacking" policy the whole time. Austria became a nodal point of European imperialist policy; the inner political intensification of affairs in Austria became intertwined with the sharpening of the European situation, which in its turn led to a further extreme deepening of the already existing contradictions within the camp of the Austrian bourgeoisie.

The warring factions of the bourgeoisie, split as they were on questions of internal politics, formed two great camps on the Anschluss question—the adherents of the Anschluss with Hitler-Germany (the national-socialists, who, according to various estimates, exercise influence over one-third of the bourgeoisie of all strata) and the opponents of the Anschluss (the "Fatherland Front", which comprises the Christian Social Party and Heimwehr fascism).

Apart from the two great fascist parties, the Landbund (Land League) does not take any definite stand towards the Anschluss. Let us now cast a glance at the class and party relations and at the international situation, which accelerated the maturing of the revolutionary crisis, the outbreak of open civil war.

The largest party of the Austrian bourgeoisie which forms a component

part of the now ruling Fatherland Front is the Christian-Social Party. This party, as the oldest party of Austria after the Social-Democratic Party, a party which originated in the pre-war period and has been in power for a long time, possessed the oldest and largest mass organizations of all bourgeois parties. It is the party of native Austrian finance capital, of the large manufacturing industry, of those capitalist circles which are connected first and foremost with French and English finance capital and have their markets in the Balkan and Danube countries. Its supporters are recruited mainly from the urban petty bourgeoisie, from the mountain peasantry in the Alpine districts. It possesses organizations in all the provinces of Austria. It also possesses a small labor wing and its own trade unions, in which backward elements from the working class and from the ranks of the employees are organized. It is "anti-Semitic in moderation".

The capitalist strata which stand behind the Christian-Social Party had always been against the Anschluss with Germany. They feared the competition of German capital on the home market. They had before them the example of Slovakia, where the more powerful Czech finance capital has brought the industry of Slovakia to a complete standstill since the latter's amalgamation in the Czechoslovakian republic. Their interest in the markets of the Danube and Balkan countries, Hungary in particular, determined the orientation of considerable parts of the Christian-Social Party on the formation of a Danube federation instead of an Anschluss with Germany; they are defenders of the restoration of the Hapsburg dynasty. Their policy was largely determined by the interests of the Catholic Church, and this also led to the accentuation of their opposition to the Anschluss after the setting up of the Hitler dictatorship, from which the Austrian clergy feared the curtailment of the hegemony of the Catholic Church. The Christian-Social Party, as the governing party responsible for the crisis, has lost many of its petty-bourgeois adherents.

The partner of the Christian-Social Party in the Fatherland Front, which carried through the fascization of Austria, is the Heimatschutzwehr,\* called the Heimwehr for short. The Heimwehr has left the imprint of an open and pronounced fascism upon the organization of the Fatherland Front. The Heimwehr, which from the beginning has borne the character of a semi-military formation, is under the leadership of the remains of the feudal, black-and-yellow aristocracy. It came into being under the leadership of officers of the old Austrian

---

\*Home Defense Corps.

army in the struggle against Yugoslavia for the defense of the province of Carinthia. It took on its final form after the split of the national-socialist movement in Austria, since which time there has been a bitter feud between the Hitler movement and the Heimwehr, although a few not inconsiderable sections of the Heimwehr (especially in Styria) have always favored collaboration with Hitler. The Heimwehr recruited its mass membership from among petty-bourgeois, but especially from among middle and large peasant elements, above all from among those who were discontented with the Christian-Social policy in regard to credits, tariffs and taxation. Its collaboration with the Christian-Socialists is to be explained by the interlocking of large landownership with native finance capital but the direct financing of the Heimwehr by Italy has influenced its foreign policy in an anti-French direction. The basic feature of the foreign political orientation of the Heimwehr today is hostility to the idea of the Anschluss. This was due to the fear felt by the big landowners and rich peasants for the competition of German agriculture—a fear which was still further intensified by the competition between Hitler and the Heimwehr leadership, especially Starhemberg. Just as in the case of the Christian-Socialists, the aspirations for a Hapsburg restoration played a great part in determining the attitude of the Heimwehr towards the Anschluss question. An Anschluss with Germany would have frustrated once and for all the plans for restoring the hangmen's dynasty of the Hapsburgs, and this made the Heimwehr's hostility to the Anschluss still greater. The desperate position of the Austrian petty handicraftsmen, small traders and middle peasants has driven many of them into the ranks of the Heimwehr, but on the other hand the Heimwehr has only been able to win a very small number of followers in the ranks of the workers.

The Christian-Socialists formerly orientated themselves almost exclusively on France. However, the French plans "for the organization of the Danube basin" took little account of the foreign trade interests of the Austrian bourgeoisie and of the policy of Austrian agriculture, which was directed towards "autarchy", and this led to a cooling off of Franco-Austrian relations, to a turning of the Austrian bourgeoisie towards Italy. Nevertheless, France maintained a great part of its influence over the Christian-Socialists. The foreign political orientation of the Heimwehr is decidedly Italian. Both tendencies in the Fatherland Front have sought and continue to seek in Italy the protection of "Austrian independence" against the attacks of Hitler Germany.

The Fatherland Front became the representative of Austro-fascism, also

called clerico-fascism. Austro-fascism made much less use of social demagoguery than was done by the national-socialist movement in Germany. In its propaganda for the *Staendeordnung* \* it openly harked back to medieval times; it harped on the traditions of the guild system in order to woo recruits among the petty bourgeoisie; evoking among the latter, as well as among the peasants, memories of the "good old patriarchal times". The "social" element in it is the "socialism" of the papal encyclical and of the episcopal pastoral letter.

The organizations of the *Landbund*, which are not inconsiderable but which have been pushed into the background in recent times, are representatives of the rich peasantry with a certain following among the petty bourgeoisie in some provincial towns. They are upholders of the "autarchy" of Austria against the foreign competition offered by the agrarian economy of neighboring countries. And for this reason they are also opposed to the *Anschluss* today. They are also advocates of an Austrian *Standestaat*\*\* with a certain admixture of democracy against the big landowners and against banking and commercial capital, against the monopolies which exploit peasant farming. Their foreign political orientation has always been a wavering one.

The National-Socialist Labor Party of Austria was a regional branch of the German National-Socialist Labor Party. Since the sharpening of the contradictions between Germany and Austria, Hitler, under foreign political pressure, has given this organization the title of an independent party. Nevertheless, it has remained nothing more than a branch department of the German National-Socialist Party headed by a "prefect" of Hitler's. This party is backed by that part of Austrian heavy industry, which is in the hands of German finance capital and forms an appendage of German heavy industry (above all the *Alpine-Monangesellschaft*). The National-Socialist Party, especially since Hitler's advent to power, has become a point of attraction for surplus Austrian intellectuals who find themselves in a hopeless position, and for handicraftsmen who are discontented with the Christian-Social Party. In its ranks there are many state officials, members of the late *Grossdeutsche Partei*, the oldest upholder of the *Anschluss* idea. The National-Socialist Party has penetrated into the ranks of the workers even less than has the Hitler party in Germany. The national-socialists are carrying on the struggle for the "incorporation" of Austria

---

\* *Staendeordnung*: The medieval division of society into states.

\*\* *Standestaat*: The estate State.

in Germany; they employ a bitter language against France and against the countries of the Little Entente. In regard to Italy and Hungary, they naturally take whatever may be the stand of the German fascist government at the given moment.

The Social-Democratic Party of Austria has throughout the whole post-war period been the ally of native finance capital, bound up with the French-English banks. This was shown most clearly by its participation in the reorganization of the bankrupt Austrian Creditanstalt. However, social-democracy and the leaders of the free trade unions are also connected in yet another fashion with these capitalist circles, among which Czech finance capital is also to be included. A number of industrial and commercial undertakings of Austrian social-democracy, united by the Arbeiterbank, were nothing less than branches of this finance capital. In regard to the Anschluss question, there was a division of roles among the social-democratic leaders. Otto Bauer posed as an upholder of the Anschluss idea, Karl Renner for a long time wrote lengthy treatises on the advantages of a Danube Federation. After Hitler's advent to power, social-democracy, together with native Austrian finance capital, opposed the Anschluss. It had a pronounced orientation on French capital and on Czechoslovakia, which it attempted to disguise on the one hand by catchwords against Hapsburg restoration and on the other hand by the slogans of combining the democratic countries against fascism and of international anti-fascist solidarity. This did not prevent the social-democrats from calmly tolerating the orientation of the Fatherland Front on Italian fascism, as the lesser evil in comparison with Hitler.

From this brief review it is apparent that the fable spread by Austrian social-democracy to the effect that everything which happens in Austria takes place independently of the will of the Austrian bourgeoisie was nothing but an attempt to hold back the Austrian workers from the struggle against their own bourgeoisie. Austria, as a dependent country in the system of imperialism, which became a nodal point, an axis of international politics in Europe, was and is a problem of foreign politics, but not only of foreign politics, as Austrian social-democracy asserted and continues to assert today. It did not follow from the intertwining of Austria's national problems with international problems that the Austrian working class was powerless to decide its vital questions in the class struggle against its own bourgeoisie. Austrian social-democracy took advantage of the intertwining of the home and foreign political problems of

Austrian capitalism in order to try to persuade the workers that the questions of the Austrian working class could not be decided by the class struggle at home but by foreign political maneuvers. Thus, the main enemy, according to the Austro-Marxist conception, was not Austrian capital, nor even the National-Socialist Party, still less the Austro-fascist Fatherland Front, which was to be tolerated and regarded as the "lesser evil" compared with the national-socialists. The main enemy, said social-democracy, was abroad; the main enemy was Hitler, and since a part of the bourgeoisie in Austria took a stand against the Anschluss, against the "incorporation" of Austria, one must make common cause with these Austro-fascist opponents of Hitler-fascism and also, of course, with the democratic countries, i.e., with French and Czech imperialism.

Meanwhile events have shown that the intertwining of home and foreign political contradictions in and around Austria does not by any means result in powerlessness, in hopelessness for the working class and for its mass actions in the class struggle. The accentuation of the foreign political contradictions around Austria meant the accentuation of the cleavage of the bourgeois forces in Austria, and this accentuation of the contradictions within the bourgeois camp has been an essential factor driving forward at high speed the advance of Austria towards a revolutionary crisis after Hitler's advent to power.

Was not the accentuation of the international situation around Austria, of the contradictions between Germany and the countries which oppose the Anschluss (France, the Little Entente, Italy, etc.) an essential factor which sharpened to an extreme degree the contradictions between Austro-fascism and Hitler-fascism, between the two enemies of the working class? Was not the accentuation of these international political contradictions an essential factor for the Dollfuss government, a factor which made possible the suppression of the National-Socialist Party in Austria?

The fact that the situation in Austria was influenced by international politics did not only involve difficulties; it simultaneously presented very great possibilities for the revolutionary class struggle of the Austrian working class. The prerequisite for overcoming the difficulties was to take advantage of these possibilities. This could only be done in the revolutionary class struggle. But this was just what Austrian social-democracy did not want.



## **The Workers Are Pressing Forward to Revolution, Social-Democracy Puts on the Brakes**

After the fascist coup d'etat the revolutionizing of the working class in Austria proceeded with increasing rapidity and on a growing scale. The heroic Communist Party of Austria unswervingly continued its revolutionary work despite all persecutions from the fascist powers—persecutions which were tolerated and supported by social-democracy. Its influence was steadily broadening and deepening.

On May 1 the social-democratic leaders were still able to hold back the workers by means of the barbed wire entanglements placed by the fascists around the inner city, but partial strikes against the government's acts of political terrorism were occurring ever more frequently. The month of August represented a turning point. The "unauthorized" strike of the workers of the Alpine-Montangesellschaft showed that Austrian social-democracy and the reformist trade unions were no longer in a position to prevent all resistance by the working class against the robbery of the last remains of their freedom of action, as it had done on March 7, on the day of the coup d'etat. The Social-Democratic Party was collecting signatures among the workers for the opening of parliament, for the defense of the constitution, and—carried on negotiations with Dollfuss and his supporters regarding a revision of the constitution with a view to introducing a Staendeordnung modified by universal suffrage. They fed the Austrian workers with hopes of the support of the French social-democrats and radical socialists, and of the Czechoslovakian government, in which Czech and German social-democrats participated; they tried to calm the workers, whose mood was growing more revolutionary, by promises of the "pressure" which the parties of the Second International would bring to bear upon Dollfuss through the bourgeois governments of their respective countries in the interests of Austrian democracy.

In July 1933 Otto Bauer, in his article in the Kampf, gave the following advice to the workers, who were clamoring for struggle:

"The forces of the working class are weakened by the economic crisis, by unemployment, by the mighty wave of counter revolution which is pouring over Central Europe from Germany. In such a situation we must take advantage of the contradictions in the bourgeois camp and try to win allies for the working class in the bourgeois camp."

Thus, instead of utilizing the contradictions in the bourgeois camp—contradictions which weakened the bourgeoisie—for a decisive struggle against advancing fascism, the task of the working class was to be: to win allies in the bourgeois camp, in the camp where the only difference between the various parties in the question of fascization was with regard to tempo and to the choice of foreign allies.

There is no language strong enough to describe this policy. This is indeed the Realpolitik of Austro-Marxism.

However, the leader of Austro-Marxism, the chief theoretician of the Second International, went still further in the "defense of democracy against fascism". He wanted the social-democratic workers to take the national-socialists under their protection against the persecutions of the Dollfuss government. In the same article he hurled reproaches at the "opportunist democrats" who were unwilling to regard the suppression of the Nazis as an attack on democracy. He wrote:

"However, an opportunist democratism, which is highly indignant at the violation of democratic rights of freedom when it is directed against us, but applauds the same violation of democratic liberties when it hits our opponents, will never be able to mobilize strong moral forces against dictatorship. [Dictatorship of which class?—B.K.] Only a steadfast adherence to democratic principles, which does not lightheartedly sacrifice freedom even for the purpose of struggle against our enemies, a firm adherence to law, which combats the violation of law even when directed against our enemies, will be able to win fellow-fighters for freedom, fellow-fighters for endangered rights far beyond the ranks of the working class."

When the Communist Party of Austria, by a violation of the democratic constitution, was robbed of the freedom of demonstration by the social-democratic mayor Seitz; when Schober, the former police president of the social-democratic government (1919), the bloodhound of July 15, 1927, and the Federal Chancellor who enjoyed the support of social-democracy (1929), subjected the Communists to bloody persecutions; when the Dollfuss government suppressed the Communist Party and, shortly after, *Die Rote Fahne*, Otto Bauer did not raise his voice to such an exalted melody on the subject of democracy and could not summon up the "moral courage" to defend democracy against the violation of law and of the constitution. He did not do this until it was a question of the violation of the "democratic freedom" of the Austrian branch of

the Hitler-fascists.

The workers were revolting; they were eager for struggle. One wage movement followed the other, seldom leading to actual strikes. The latter were throttled by the trade union leaders. After the coup d'état, the Social-Democratic Party leaders nipped in the bud every militant movement on the part of the workers with the slogan: "Keep the initiative, keep moving, keep on showing that the Social-Democratic Party is there."

The leaders were indeed always there when it was a question of throttling the mass actions of the revolutionary workers, just as when it was a question of looking for allies in the bourgeois camp.

### **Four Points Which Did Not Intimidate the Austrian Bourgeoisie**

The feeling of opposition among the workers to the leadership of the Social-Democratic Party and the free trade unions was growing stronger. The oppositionist workers, in contradistinction to the "oppositionist" leaders within the camp of social-democracy, were seeking close connections with the Communists. The influence of the Communist Party over the oppositionist social-democratic workers was spreading.

During the strike in the Alpine-Montangesellschaft the state of feeling among the workers throughout all Austria was one of great excitement. The successive emergency decrees of the Dollfuss government caused this excitement to mount higher and higher. The experience of the Hitler terror was having its effect on the Austrian working class. Will the fate of German social-democracy overtake us?—this question was worrying the masses of members of the Social-Democratic Party. The petty bourgeois and small peasant masses were likewise indignant at the impudent attacks of the Hitler government and the continual secret negotiations of the Heimwehr and of those surrounding Dollfuss with the national-socialists. These negotiations called forth great vacillations among them in regard to the policy of the Austro-fascists. A decisive attack on the bourgeoisie would have resulted in tearing away these petty bourgeois and small peasant elements, who were beginning to waver, from the Fatherland Front, and might have led them into struggle side by side with the working class.

A proof of the excited state of feeling, of the will to struggle among the broadest sections of the people in Austria was the calling of a conference of the executives of the free trade unions in September 1933. Under the pressure of this

state of feeling among the masses, the trade union leaders were compelled to hold out the promise of a general strike in the event of further attacks on the part of fascism. At this conference they defined the *casus belli* with fascism under four points. These four points defined the prerequisite for the calling of a general strike. These four points were also adopted in the form of a resolution by the Extraordinary Party Congress of the Austrian Social-Democratic Party in October 1933, likewise convened under mass pressure.

According to these points the Austrian workers were to "hold themselves in readiness" to begin a general strike, if:

"(1) The government dissolves the municipal administration of Vienna or appoints a government commissar; (2) if the federal government dissolves the Social-Democratic Party or prohibits its activities; (3) if the federal government dissolves the trade unions or 'incorporates' them in any way; (4) if the federal government introduces a new constitution in an unconstitutional manner."

The Social-Democratic Party leaders did not conceal the fact that a general strike was bound to turn into an armed uprising. In the illegal weekly of the Austrian social-democracy, *Ruf der Wahrheit*, of January 19, 1934, it is written:

"However, the general strike under present conditions must inevitably lead to the struggle being settled by arms, to civil war."\*

This realization on the part of the social-democratic leaders was precisely one of the main reasons why they did not want the general strike. Austrian social-democracy knew it was right in this—that the general strike under the given conditions must inevitably turn into an armed uprising, into a civil war. The situation was precisely such, that the struggle against fascism could only be waged with the final revolutionary means; the accentuation of the revolutionary crisis was at hand. But the Social-Democratic Party did not want to fight in a revolutionary way. It would rather give up the struggle against fascism than employ revolutionary means against it.

When the *casus belli* arrived, the trade union leaders did not call a general strike and answered the appeal of the Communist Party for a general strike with counter-measures. When, despite this, a political mass strike broke out, social-democracy forgot about the four points and issued no call to arms. Social-democracy stuck to the constitutional path when there was no longer a

---

\* Quoted by the *Sotsialistichesky Vyestnik*, Paris, No. 2, Jan. 24, 1934.

constitution in Austria. And yet it had plenty of arms in its possession and the fighting spirit of the workers was clamoring for arms. The four points, whose adoption was forced upon social-democracy by the advance of the revolutionary crisis, were not the preparation for the building of barricades in the proletarian uprising; they were barricades to defend the bourgeoisie, which was advancing towards fascism, from the revolutionary proletariat, which was charging forward to fight.

The four points were the best pretext for preventing the preparations for a general strike and for the inevitable armed uprising.

## **The Revolutionary Crisis Demands a Decision**

Shortly after the beginning of the year, there was a further sharpening of the revolutionary crisis. The violence of fascism had already become the only form of law in Austria. To this law the working class could only oppose its sole right—the right to revolution. The fascists were literally on the march towards civil war; only they were not yet sure how the workers would behave. They reconnoitred the front of the working class in order to find out how the proletarians in social-democratic organizations would react to the completion of the work of fascization. This gave rise to one act of provocation after another by the organs of state power commanded by Vice-Chancellor Fey.

At this time, when the state of feeling among the broadest masses of the working class demanded that the struggle should begin, the Social-Democratic Party leaders had only one care to prevent a putsch. In an issue of the illegal weekly of the Social-Democratic Party of Austria, appearing under the name of *Der Ruf*, on January 8, 1934, we read the following with regard to these cares of the Social-Democratic Party leaders:

"A struggle begun by a signal from above would be a putsch. It cannot be successful. The irresistible outbreak of the hatred of the people that is revolution. Revolutions cannot be made from above. They become reality of themselves when their time arrives. Only a revolution can be victorious—not a putsch." \*

While events were advancing at top speed towards a revolutionary crisis, social-democracy actually did nothing to organize the revolution. But it did everything possible "from above" in order to delay a little longer the outbreak of

---

\* Quoted in above mentioned number of *Sotsialistichesky Vyestnik*.

the hatred of the people, which had already risen to the boiling point. A putsch was out of the question. Nor was there any conspiracy for a putsch; there was only a conspiracy against revolution. An uprising against fascism could rely upon the most advanced class, upon the rising of the whole proletariat against fascism; all that was needed for this was comprehensive political and organizational preparation. A revolutionary state of feeling prevailed not only in certain strata of the working class, not only in the working class itself; a revolutionary upsurge of the people against fascism found its expression in the sympathy and solidarity of the broadest masses of the people with the uprising.

The vacillations in the ranks of the bourgeoisie, the utter confusion in the bourgeois camp, found their expression on the one hand in the secret negotiations of Count Alberti, the leader of the Lower Austrian Heimwehr, with the "enemies of the Fatherland Front", with the national-socialist leaders, but on the other hand they were also expressed in the contradictions between the Heimwehr and the Christian-Social Party. On the very eve of the uprising, Heimwehr leaders had to have Heimwehr leaders arrested.

Social-democracy spoke against a conspiracy for a putsch in order to bring about a conspiracy with Dollfuss against the decision which the revolutionary crisis urgently demanded. Social-democracy wrote that revolution is the irresistible outbreak of the hatred of the people, and meanwhile did everything in its power to delay the outbreak of the people's hatred. It did not appeal to the power of the working class, of the toiling people against fascism, it pretended to be holding the armed force of the Schutzbund in readiness against a new coup d'état, in order to arrive at a compromise with the Austro-fascists by means of a conspiracy with Dollfuss.

But that too proved impossible. On January 30 the government began to take decisive steps toward a coup d'état. Fey, the Hapsburg major and Heimwehr leader, takes power into his own hands. The Heimwehr is mobilized in Tyrol under the pretext of preparing for resistance to a Nazi putsch. At the same time the government issues a decree depriving a number of municipalities of their police functions. Even before this government commissars have been appointed for all provincial administrations.

The Arbeiterzeitung pretends the Austro-fascists are really taking these measures against the national-socialists. On January 31 it writes:

"Without doubt the great majority of the Austrian people want resistance against the national-socialist attack. . . . It seems to us that the struggle against Nazi

terror could be waged more effectually, with more legal security, in a completely constitutional manner."

On January 31—not a putsch on the part of the workers but mobilization of the Heimwehr in Tyrol. The demands of the Heimwehr are not directed against the national-socialists. They demand the dissolution of the Social-Democratic Party in Tyrol, the self-dissolution of the Christian-Social Party and the replacing of the provincial Tyrolese government by a dictatorial committee consisting of representatives of the Heimwehr and the monarchist Ostmaerkische Sturmscharen.\*

The Arbeiterzeitung minimizes the importance of the actions of the Heimwehr. On February 2 it still speaks of a "peculiar dual position of the Heimwehr".

On February 3 the Arbeiterzeitung reports: "The situation in Tyrol still unclarified."

On February 4 it writes again: "For the present the situation still remains unclarified."

On February 7 the Arbeiterzeitung reports that the demands put forward by the Heimwehr in Tyrol have also been raised in Upper Austria, and discusses the question of universal suffrage as the basis of the constitution.

On February 8 the Arbeiterzeitung reports that the police have searched for arms in the Social-Democratic Party headquarters in Vienna.

On February 11 the Arbeiterzeitung publishes a leading article under the title "Days of Decision". It writes about the preparations for the immediate transition to the Staendestaat, whose constitution— in the words of Dr. Ender, the constitution minister—will be "authoritarian, nay almost dictatorial". The Arbeiterzeitung reports on the orders of Vice-Chancellor Fey, by which the mayor of Vienna is deprived of all rights in the sphere of public safety service, these rights being transferred to the police president. It notes that: "We are living through days of all-important decision."

"Days", writes the Arbeiterzeitung, and on the very next day begins the armed onslaught of the police and Heimwehr against the party headquarters in Linz.

---

\* Storm troops of the Eastern Marches; the name contains a historical reference to medieval

times, when Austria formed the Eastern Marches, or frontier district, of the Carlovingian Empire.

The whole of this pre-history of the uprising has been written by us exclusively on the basis of social-democratic sources. The parliamentary side of events is lacking in this description—but a parliament in which the social-democratic leaders could raise protests was no longer there. Only the streets were there. Only the masses were there. And only the weapons were there.

Perhaps, someone may say, the Social-Democratic Party leaders could not write everything they wished to write? Perhaps they did just the opposite of what they allowed the *Arbeiterzeitung* to write? They let their newspaper write about constitutional questions, about giving way, about the defensive attitude of the working class, but perhaps in reality they made all preparations for a decisive attack against fascism?

It would have been quite legitimate to have done everything to lead the class enemy astray, to have made every effort not to betray the tactics which were being pursued in order not to allow the mobilization of the masses to be hindered. But on this occasion the words and the deeds of the Austro-Marxists—for once—coincided. Let us see what social-democracy did in the last hours before the uprising, in the heat of the revolutionary crisis and also after the outbreak of the uprising; let us listen to the words of such authoritative witnesses as Otto Bauer and Julius Deutsch. After his arrival in Czechoslovakia, Otto Bauer declared to a representative of the Suedost press agency:

"We took all possible steps to arrive at a compromise with Dollfuss. Nay, more. We let it be known that under certain conditions we were ready to vote extraordinary powers for the government for a period of two years. Nevertheless, our proposals were rejected by Chancellor Dollfuss. He declared that he did not want any negotiations with the socialists."

When the Austro-Marxists began to employ very radical gestures, they plucked up courage and declared, in order to calm workers, that, in the event of an attack on democracy by the bourgeoisie, they might recognize as justifiable a dictatorship of the proletariat—without Soviet Power, of course—for a period of a few months as a stage of transition "from democracy to democracy",—this only in case of extreme emergency, if the bourgeoisie employed violence against the working class. In regard to fascist dictatorship, they were more liberal; they were ready to recognize a fascist dictatorship as justified for as long as two years.

In his declaration Otto Bauer also mentioned that even on February 12,



when the uprising in Linz was already going on, when the workers in Vienna had already come out on strike, the Social-Democratic Party leaders had not decided on calling a general strike and that even at the last moment it sent two mediators (two Christian-Socialist politicians) to the government with the task of "finding means to calm the working class". However, "this step, too, was of no avail".

"We are not pursuing a policy of prestige", said Otto Bauer immediately after the coup d'état of March 7, 1933, when he reported to the Vienna party functionaries on the rejection of the social-democratic offers of coalition by the Christian-Social Party. At a time when the workers were already taking up arms he could still do nothing but continue his attempts to make the policy of the working class that of begging from the bourgeoisie.

Julius Deutsch, the leader of the Schutzbund, likewise informed the same correspondent of the Suedost press agency in Czechoslovakia: "When the struggle had already begun in Linz, the socialists in Vienna still tried to maintain peace."

To be sure, the Heimwehr wanted to do this too, and so did the police, so did the army, so did Chancellor Dollfuss, so did Vice-Chancellor Fey, so did the banks, the factory owners, the big merchants and the hotel owners. All of them, together with Julius Deutsch, wanted to have a quiet time of it in Vienna. This purpose was served by the terrorist measures of the fascists and by the endeavors of Julius Deutsch—to prevent the workers from taking up arms.

All of them did all they could for the maintenance of peace. The fascists sent their armed forces to attack the working class, while Julius Deutsch and Otto Bauer sent two Christian-Socialists as mediators.

It turned out differently from what Otto Bauer and Julius Deutsch and the other social-democratic leaders had wished. It was not only the forces of counter-revolution which marched to the attack; the social-democratic workers of the Schutzbund and those outside the Schutzbund, together with the Communists, also took up arms.

The effects of the revolutionary crisis could not be obviated by the Social-Democratic Party, trade union and Schutzbund leaders. The February uprising of the Austrian workers began.

The two fronts unfolded themselves against each other—the front of Austro-fascist counter revolution and the front of the armed uprising of the Austrian working class.

### III. THE ARMED FORCES OF THE TWO FRONTS

The number and the relation of the forces, both those of the front of the counter revolution and those of the revolutionary uprising, were not only no secret to the leaders of the various parties; they were also exactly known to the broad masses. The reserves of the uprising are more difficult to estimate, since they are much more flexible and more difficult to review in their extent than the reserves of the counter revolution; but at all events, they were much greater than those of fascism.

#### **The Armed Forces of the Counter Revolution**

The counter revolution had the following types of armed forces at its disposal: (a) the regular army, (b) the auxiliary army, (c) secret armed formations which had been mostly "legalized" after the coup d'etat of March, 1933.

(a) The regular army. According to the Treaty of Saint Germain the Federal Army is an army of paid volunteers; its number is restricted to 30,000 men, consisting of 1,500 officers, 2,000 non-commissioned officers and 26,500 soldiers; formerly this number had not been reached.

After Hitler's advent to power in Germany and the intensified efforts of the German fascists to attain the "incorporation" of Austria. in Germany, France and the other Great Powers involved permitted Dollfuss to increase the standing force of the army for the protection of the independence of Austria. Up to the outbreak of the uprising, the number of new regulars recruited into the army brought the standing force of the Federal Army at that time, insofar as is known, up to about 35,000 men.

The army consists of six brigades, two of which are stationed in Vienna. The six brigades are composed of twelve regiments of infantry (32 battalions and 4 independent battalions), six battalions of cyclists, six squadrons of cavalry, six divisions of artillery, three independent detachments of artillery (partly motorized), six battalions of sappers, six telegraph and telephone companies and six automobile companies. The arming of the Federal Army was restricted by the terms of the Saint Germain Treaty; this treaty did not allow the Austrian Republic any tanks, airplanes, heavy artillery or chemical war material.

Until a few years ago the Federal Army was depicted by social-democracy as the most democratic army in the world and it was the pride of social-

democratic military politicians. After the cowardly betrayal by social-democracy during the July uprising of 1927 in Vienna, the bourgeoisie got complete hold of the leadership of the Federal Army, and ousted the social-democrats step by step from their positions in the army. In the committee of army delegates, the social-democratic military union was represented with 218 mandates, while the Christian- Social Union (the Wehrbund) had only 35 mandates. In 1927, after the July betrayal, the number of social-democratic mandates dropped to 118, while the number of Christian-Social mandates rose to 214. In 1929, when the Federal Army was purged of social-democrats and the government completely abolished the rights of the army delegates, the number of social-democratic mandates was only 23, while that of the Christian-Socialists was 250. There are almost no social-democrats left in the officers' union, whereas the officers now include a very large number of Hitler's followers.

Such were the successes of the social-democratic Realpolitik in the military sphere.

(b) The auxiliary army, consisting of police, gendarmerie and frontier guards.

The police consisted of 17,500 men. It is better armed than the Federal Army. It possesses armored cars, and it has police airplanes and chemical war material at its disposal. The rank and file are armed with rifles and well equipped with machine guns.

The gendarmerie consists of 5,500 men and is armed with carbines, bayonets and sabres, and equipped with machine guns. Every gendarme possesses either a bicycle or a motorcycle.

The frontier guards, consisting of about 9,000 men, are armed in the same way as the gendarmerie.

All these military formations were formerly in the hands of social-democracy; in their great majority, they were organized in the free trade unions. After 1927 they have for the most part slipped out of the hands of the social-democratic leadership.

(c) The formation of fascist civil war. The Heimatsschutzwehr (known as the Heimwehr for short) consists, according to various estimates, of from 100,000 to 150,000 members. Its leader, Prince Starhem- berg, has his headquarters for the most part in Linz. The Tyrol Heimwehr organization comprises from 25,000 to 27,000 men. In Carinthia the Heimwehr numbers from 25,000 to 30,000 men. In Styria it numbers 30,000 members. Only part of these organizations may be

described as armed forces. The arms consist of infantry rifles, light and heavy machine guns and field guns. The training of the Heimwehr has been carried out by active and reserve officers of the Federal Army.

The Ostmaerkische Sturmscharen constitute a comparatively young and unorganized formation—the "personal army" of Chancellor Dollfuss. No reliable data are available regarding their number. But they are said to be not only not very numerous but also lacking military training.

The League of Austrian Officers is said to consist of more than 10,000 members, including about 1,500 to 2,000 active officers. It was not armed up to the time of the uprising.

The National-Socialist Austrian Labor Party, the Austrian branch of the Hitler party, is said to have numbered several tens of thousands of armed members before its dissolution. The Dollfuss government was unable to confiscate its arms. Those arms which fell into the hands of the police were abundantly replaced from Germany. The national-socialist formations have comprised in their ranks many active officers and police officials, some of whom have been removed from the army and the police and now form the cadres of the national-socialist commanders.

## **The Armed Forces of the Uprising**

The Republican Schutzbund (Defense League) was a social-democratic organization for the defense of the bourgeois republic. With what aim the Social-Democratic Party leaders founded this organization is shown by the fact that the Communists were excluded from its ranks. The Schutzbund had already been suppressed before the beginning of the uprising, but it continued its existence semi-legally, as an organization of pseudo-functionaries of the Social-Democratic Party of Austria. According to its statutes, the Schutzbund accepted into its ranks members of the Social-Democratic Party who had been party members for at least two years and had reached the age of twenty.

Before its dissolution the number of members in the Schutzbund is said to have reached the figure of 100,000. On the basis of various data it may be assumed that immediately before the uprising the number of members was about 80,000. The arms of the Schutzbund consisted of revolvers and infantry rifles, automatic pistols and hand grenades. The Schutzbund possessed large stores of arms which were partially confiscated by the police. Besides infantry

rifles and revolvers these stores of arms included many machine-guns, hand grenades and, according to some reports, several cannon. The Schutzbund possessed also radio transmitting apparatus in all important centers.

The Schutzbund was headed by a central executive of three members in which Julius Deutsch was the political leader (Commander-in-Chief), while a second member of the executive, the social-democratic General Korner, was the military leader.

In the various provinces the Schutzbund organizations were likewise headed by executives of three members, consisting of a political leader, a military leader and a deputy leader. Most of the military leaders were formerly active officers of the Federal Army, and until lately the majority of them were well-trained reserve officers and non-commissioned officers.

The 289 Schutzbund battalions which are said to have existed were distributed over 16 districts, including five district commands in Vienna, four in Lower Austria, two in Upper Austria, two in Styria, and one each in Carinthia, Tyrol, and Vorarlberg.

The training of the Schutzbund by way of military sports, shooting with small arms and tactical maneuvers was at a high level. The discipline of the members was exemplary.

The Communist Party did not possess any considerable organized armed formation. Small groups of soldiers in the Federal Army were beginning to organize around the newspaper *Der Rote Soldat*, which appeared illegally. Besides this, the Communists possessed considerable influence over some of the lower detachments of the Schutzbund.

Such was the relation of the armed forces of the counter revolution and of the armed uprising at the moment when the masses rose.

## IV. FIVE DAYS UNDER FIRE AGAINST FASCISM

Even before February 11, the armed forces of Austrian fascism—army, police, gendarmerie and the militarized organizations of the Austro-fascist parties—were all ready for the struggle. The retired major, Fey, Vice-Chancellor and at the same time deputy to the Heimwehr leader, Prince Starhemberg, had command of all the armed forces of counter revolution except the Nazis. On February 11 he made a speech from which it was clear that the government had decided to let loose its regular military forces and the regularized fascist gangs against the workers and their organizations.

The prelude to this was a period of feverish activity on the part of the police, both those in uniform and in plain clothes, reinforced by the Heimwehr auxiliary police. House after house was searched. The police was hunting for the stores of arms belonging to the Schutzbund. The working class districts of Vienna and the main centers of the Austrian provinces—Linz, Graz, Innsburg, Klagenfurt, Salzburg, Eisenstadt, Wiener Neustadt—were infested with police spies and Heimwehr agents, agents of the Fatherland Front in uniform and plain clothes. It was obvious that on the basis of blacklists previously drawn up, the Schutzbund commanders in particular, as members of factory committees, known to be radicals and illegal Communist functionaries, had been placed under observation, so that the police might be able to "put them out of harm's way" when the time came.

The following description of events is based on materials, unfortunately very scanty, which we pieced together from various newspapers.

### **First Day of the Fighting (February 12)**

In Linz the federal police, reinforced by a strong levy of armed Heimwehr forces, appeared before the Social-Democratic Party headquarters, in order to carry out a search for arms. That was a common occurrence in these days. Police and Heimwehr were met with machine-gun fire from the party's headquarters. The fascist "heroes" were not prepared for such a reception. In accordance with the time-honored traditions of the Austrian army, they "concentrated their forces towards the rear", i. e., took to their heels. The workers did not pursue them; they immediately began to put up barricades around the building.

The brigade commander of Linz, Major-General Zehner, took over the

command of the armed forces at Linz. He immediately sent a company of chasseurs alpins with a machine-gun detachment to attack the workers. The party headquarters was assailed with machine-gun fire and, after several hours' fighting, taken by the forces of fascism.

This battle was the signal for all Schutzbund formations in Linz and the neighborhood. Without waiting for orders from above, they occupied the Workers' Homes, the schools, the shipping wharves and one railway station, and made themselves ready for defense.

The counter revolution mobilized its forces fairly quickly and sent them into action. The Heimwehr troops in the neighborhood of Linz were given the alarm and an infantry regiment from Wels, a town in the neighborhood of Linz, was brought up. At the same time artillery was immediately sent into action.

There ensued violent fighting between the forces of counter revolution and the workers' troops, lasting almost the whole night and resulting in severe casualties on both sides.

On this day, provocational searches of houses and arrests were also begun in Vienna. In Floridsdorf, a number of factory committee members were arrested. The state of feeling among the workers was approaching the boiling point.

Immediately after the beginning of the fighting, a report was sent from Linz to the executive committee of the Social-Democratic Party. The members of the Schutzbund in Linz demanded solidarity-the calling of the general strike-for the situation had arrived in which, according to the decision of the Extraordinary Congress of the Social-Democratic Party of Oct., 1933, the general strike was to be declared: "Wait", was the answer.

The Social-Democratic Party leaders sent two Christian-Socialist mediators to Dollfuss to ask him for further negotiations.

The factory committee members of the Vienna Gas and Electric Plant were likewise directly informed from Linz of the beginning of the armed struggles. The workers in this plant thereupon went on strike. In Linz the general strike had already broken out, spontaneously and with elemental force, on the initiative of the railwaymen.

In Vienna the tramway and other municipal workers joined the strike of the gas and electricity workers between twelve and one o'clock. The workers were waiting for the call for a general strike, the members of the Schutzbund were waiting for orders to fight.

Meanwhile, the Town Hall, the party headquarters of the Social-Democratic Party and all the headquarters of the Schutzbund were occupied by police, by the gendarmerie and by the military.

The troops of the counter revolution also began to occupy workers' districts, barricading the inner city, using barbed wire entanglements.

The Communist Party of Austria called on workers to form Soviets.

The leaders of the trade union confederation thereupon issued a counter-slogan through its organs: "Wait! Go on working!"

After the beginning of the partial strike and the outbreak of rabid fascist terror by gangs of police and Heimwehr, the members of the Schutzbund also began to concentrate in their meeting places. However, the Schutzbund leaders did not stir. A large number of the leaders had already been arrested. The Communists and the junior commanders of the Schutzbund gave the alarm wherever they could.

A social-democratic member of the Schutzbund, who escaped from Austria into Czechoslovakia, told the correspondents of the newspaper, Reichenberger Vorwaertz, about the beginning of the fighting in his district, in Simmering:

"After getting the news, our company of the Schutzbund was at its post in thirty-five minutes. We were 340 men strong. That is to say, that number of men was to have turned out according to our lists. I had reckoned on only three-quarters of our men being on the spot. Actually, 405 men appeared. All those who had previously been expelled for breach of discipline turned out, and besides that, our company was joined by over 40 Communists, who placed themselves under our command and kept good discipline. We carried out our task, occupied a railway station and various blocks of buildings. We were waiting for the order to attack."

Not in all districts was the alarm given so promptly as in Simmering. The same junior commander relates as follows about this:

"Now the deputies of the various arrested Schutzbund leaders hesitated in giving the alarm in certain districts. This was how it was: We in Simmering had occupied our positions. The district next to ours had not done so until about five hours later. The other district next to us—not until eight hours later. We were simply left hanging in the air, could not go forward, and had to stick to our posts and wait until the others were ready. The arrests, the searches for arms and above all the hesitation in the leadership—at least, so I think—cost us the victory."



In his report in the newspaper, *Deutsche Freiheit*, appearing in Saarbruecken, another social-democratic functionary relates that in this way, "a good 10,000 men in Vienna were not sent into action". The mobilization and the sending of the forces into action was likewise hindered by the fact that the stores of arms and munitions were to a great extent known only to persons who had either been arrested, or did not report for action.

At this time 17,000 police, 3,000 to 4,000 gendarmes and some tens of thousands of the Heimwehr and members of the Ostmaerkische Sturmscharen had already been concentrated in Vienna and were ready for orders. Armored cars were brought up and artillery prepared.

The fighting in Vienna began in Favoriten (10th district), Simmering (11th district), Ottakring (16th district), on the southern (right) bank of the Danube. On the northern (left) bank of the Danube, in the great northeastern district of the city, in Floridsdorf (21st district), a great focus-point of the uprising was formed, which was joined by the adjacent suburbs of Kagran and Stadlau. On the right bank the East Railway Station and the North Railway Station were occupied. Communications between the southern and northern bank of the Danube were secured by occupying the main bridge, the Reichsbruecke. In the northern proletarian part of the city, in Doebling (19th district), the municipal tenement house, the Karl Marx Hof, became the most important center of the uprising. In the western part of the city, fierce fighting developed, above all around the Sandeleiten Settlement in Ottakring.

In the south, Simmering (11th district), Favoriten (10th district), including the East and South Railway Station, and the Laaerberg, with the radio station, formed the main focus-point of the uprising. Meidling (12th district), Margareten (5th district), and a part of Hietzing (13th district) were also the scene of fighting.

In the inner city, i.e., in that part of the city which is surrounded by the Ring, no fighting took place. In that part of the city which lies between the Ring and the Inner Circle (the Guertel), fighting took place only to a very small extent. Most of the fighting on the right bank took place in the working class districts between the inner circle and the outer circle.

All these centers of the uprising had been formed for the most part on the first day of the fighting. The fighting in the provinces also began on the first day—in Bruck-an-der-Mur, Graz, Leoben, Steyr, Linz, Salzburg, Innsbruck, in Wiener Neustadt—where the Schutzbund was taken by surprise by the police and for the most part disarmed—and elsewhere. The counter-revolutionary forces

immediately took the offensive and the fact that the railwaymen did not join the strike greatly aided the maneuvers of the general staff of the Austro-fascists. The national-socialists did not stir.

## **Second Day of the Fighting (February 13)**

In Vienna there was a political mass strike in the form of a partial strike; in the provincial centers general strikes broke out. All strikes were spontaneous movements. In many factories the workers were at their places but did not work. The bourgeois papers continued to appear.

Early in the morning a new and furious struggle developed around the Karl Marx Hof in Heiligenstadt (Doebling). The artillery of the fascist forces was brought up and opened fire, the workers defended the house with machine-gun fire from the roofs and windows. The artillery was reinforced by armored cars. One part of the house was reduced to ruins by the prolonged artillery bombardment which lasted about five hours. Part of the garrison withdrew, another part stayed in the house. The house was cleared of insurrectionists by the fascists with the greatest brutality.

In Margareten the fascist forces stormed the municipal tenement houses, almost all of which—after determined resistance by individual insurrectionists—were captured. In Favoriten and Simmering, where the Communists exercised more influence over the course of the fighting, the insurrectionists made counter-attacks at some points. In Simmering the Schutzbund occupied the area between the Aspang Railway Station and the Central Cemetery, with a view to capturing the great stores of arms belonging to the Schutzbund which had been stored up in the Cemetery.

In Meidling the workers fired upon three automobiles belonging to the counter-revolutionary forces and captured them. Detachments of the Schutzbund in Meidling captured three machine-guns in the neighboring barracks without resistance.

Near the East Railway Station the government troops sent armored cars into action and a bloody struggle ensued between them and the insurrectionists, who repulsed the government troops with severe losses.

In Ottakring the workers consolidated their positions, occupied several houses near the Workers' Home, where they established flanking positions and machine-gun nests and put to flight the Heimwehr and Federal Army troops. By the end of the day, the Ottakring Schutzbund detachments had occupied a

number of streets.

On the northern bank of the Danube, in Floridsdorf and Kaisermuehlen, the fighting was more bloody. Floridsdorf was bombarded by artillery fire from the Bisamberg.

The fighting was continued by both sides during the whole night of February 13-14. The workers also started guerilla fighting. In some cases Heimwehr troops were fired upon from private houses.

In Meidling, Simmering and Floridsdorf the government troops were subjected to violent fire from the inhabitants. The workers from the suburb of Stadlau hurried to the assistance of those in Floridsdorf.

Fighting continued in the provinces. In Linz some 4,000 workers were defending themselves on the right bank of the Danube against superior forces of counter-revolutionary troops numbering 6,000 men. In Steyr, where the factory and town were in the hands of the insurrectionists, the latter were bombarded with artillery. In Salzberg the army detachments were compelled to evacuate several streets. In Kapfenberg the workers surrounded and disarmed the fascists. The uprising began in Woergl in Tyrol.

### **Third Day of the Fighting (February 14)**

The government spread the news by radio that the uprising had been crushed, but the uprising continued none the less.

In Vienna two inter-connected sectors of the front were formed-the northeastern sector and the southern sector.

In Floridsdorf bitter fighting continued. Despite artillery fire, the workers did not abandon their positions.

In Heiligenstadt fighting broke out again around the Karl Marx Hof.

The fighting near the Goethe Hof became ever more bloody.

At some points in the Simmering district the workers repulsed the attacks of the counter-revolutionary troops. The artillery was brought up directly before the municipal tenement houses. The workers answered with machine-gun fire.

In the afternoon the workers in the Goethe Hof after bloody fighting repulsed the attempted storm of the government troops. Some of the government troops were killed in hand-to-hand fighting on the stairs and in the rooms of the houses.

Artillery was brought into action against the Laaerberg. The workers attempted to attack the radio station and dug trenches over a length of a mile and a quarter. On the Laaerberg about 2,000 workers are said to have occupied these entrenched positions. The workers from Wiener Neustadt were summoned to help those in Laaerberg, but without success.

In Ottakring the Workers' Home, from which the workers had been driven on February 13, was recaptured by storm.

In Meidling barricades were built. From these the workers defended the municipal tenement houses and repulsed the attack of the government troops with machine-gun fire. Fighting continued around the Matteotti Hof and Reumann Hof.

In Favoriten the workers in the bakery came out on strike and took part in the fighting around the Liebknecht Hof.

A new attack on Floridsdorf was begun in the early hours of the morning. It was preceded by a reconnaissance flight by a police aeroplane. The attack was prepared for by artillery and machine-gun fire from the government troops. A battery and a half of artillery opened fire and were supported by the cannon and machine-guns of the monitor on the Danube. After the whole district had been bombarded for three hours, fires broke out in a number of buildings. The workers continued their resistance without wavering.

To the south of the North Western Railway Line in Floridsdorf, in Jedlesee, the workers improvised armored cars from the municipal rubbish trucks and equipped them with machine-guns. In this way they supported the fighters in Floridsdorf.

In Floridsdorf the government troops sustained heavy losses. Most of the positions held by the insurrectionists could not be captured.

Near the Schlinger Hof in Floridsdorf several hundred insurrectionists made a sortie and drove back the government troops with hand grenades. From midday onwards the positions in Floridsdorf passed from the hands of one side to those of the other.

By evening a number of important positions in Vienna were still in the hands of the workers—the Karl Marx Hof, the Sandleiten Workers Settlement in Hernals, the Workers' Home in Ottakring, the Aspang Railway Station, the East Railway Station, the municipal slaughter house, the railway repair shops in Simmering, and a number of municipal tenement houses.

The government called up fresh reinforcements from the provinces and appealed to former officers and to those elements who sympathized with it to volunteer for service against the insurrectionists.

On February 14, the fighting continued in the provinces. The town of Kapfenberg had been occupied by the workers. In Linz the workers were defending the brewery, the freight station and the wharf.

In Freiberg, in the neighborhood of Linz, the workers occupied the powder storehouse and the town. The bombardment by howitzers and trench mortars from Linz was continued against the workers. The latter, forced to retreat, occupied some of the commanding heights in the neighborhood and continued to offer resistance.

In the neighborhood of Woergl the workers employed at the saw-mills and other enterprises came out on strike, armed themselves, and hurried to assist the struggle of the workers of Woergl. Heimwehr and Federal Army troops were sent to Woergl from Innsbruck.

## **The Workers Recapture Bruck-an-der-Mur**

The Heimwehr leader, Prince Starhemberg, bombarded the town of Steyr with motorized artillery, at first without success; later, however, the workers were forced to retreat.

In Bruck-an-der-Mur and Steyr mobile warfare developed between the insurrectionists and the government troops, the insurrectionists making several successful counter-attacks.

In Eggenberg the workers came out on strike, occupied the government buildings and the rail rolling mill.

In many places, especially in Vienna, the workers began to experience a shortage of ammunition. February 14 was the culminating point of the fighting. The courts-martial were functioning, wounded men from the hospitals were dragged before the court. The executioner began his work.

## **Fourth Day of the Fighting (February 15)**

In the night between February 14 and 15 severe fighting was still going on in Vienna. The insurrectionists were feeling not only the lack of ammunition but also the lack of food. Most of the municipal tenement houses were still in the hand of the workers. A lull in the firing occurred at various points early in the morning of February 15. Dollfuss issued an ultimatum by radio, calling upon the

workers to lay down their arms and promising an amnesty. The courts-martial, which had already begun to function on the 13th, were at work.

After Dollfuss' ultimatum, the fighting flared up again.

In Floridsdorf, the insurrectionists fought on despite the fact that the Schlinger Hof had been reduced to ruins by artillery fire. One part of the defenders surrendered, the other evacuated the building. The government concentrated further armed forces in the neighborhood of Floridsdorf. The Floridsdorf workers repulsed the attacks again. They made a counter-attack, which could only be held up by artillery fire in the rear of the insurrectionists. They began to retreat southward in the direction of Kagran. There they commenced the struggle again.

In Keisermuehlen the workers likewise recommenced the struggle for the municipal tenement, where they had barricaded themselves.

In Jedlesee fighting continued around the schools and the house of the municipal administration. Ten police officials were taken by the workers as hostages.

Artillery and bomb throwers with special grenades were brought into action against the Goethe Hof. A battery of howitzers bombarded the Goethe Hof from the left bank of the Danube. Fierce fighting continued for hours on end. At length the Goethe Hof was captured.

In Favoriten the workers maintained their positions during the morning in the bakery, and in four of the municipal tenement houses. The railway track on the southern line was blown up in the neighborhood of Vienna.

In Heiligenstadt firing broke out again round the Karl Marx Hof, of which one part was in the hands of the government troops, the other in the hands of the workers. The last wings of the Karl Marx Hof were taken by storm by the government troops.

Fighting continued in Steyr, Linz, Bruck-an-der-Mur, Ebensee.

In Wolfsegg (Upper Austria) the workers repulsed the government troops in bloody fighting.

In Eggenberg they forcibly seized the barracks of the gendarmes and captured some bomb throwers.

In Graz some important strategic points fell into the hands of the workers. The railwaymen came out on strike.

In Linz the workers retreated to Urfahr and continued the struggle in this district.

In the evening firing broke out afresh in the eastern parts of Floridsdorf, in Stadlau, and to the south of the Laaerberg. The artillery fire ceased. In the night of February 15, the insurrectionists were in general retreat.

Some detachments, especially those from Floridsdorf, fought their way through to the Czechoslovakian frontier; there they were disarmed and interned. Others scattered throughout the city.

During the night armored cars were on the streets-houses were searched for arms, for participants in the uprising, for hidden wounded. Savage massacres in the working class districts by the marauders of the battlefield, especially the fascist auxiliary police. Fighting on a large scale was over in Vienna.

On February 16 fighting still continued in Steyr, in Voitsberg (Styria), Ebensee (Sajzkammergot), and in a few other places.

The government sent further reinforcements from the Federal army to Steyr, where the Heimwehr fascists under the leadership of Starhemberg, despite numerical superiority and better arms, could not break the resistance of the workers.

The workers of Bruck-an-der-Mur withdrew into the woods and commenced guerilla fighting against the government troops. There was a further outburst of savage fascist terror in Vienna and in the provinces.

On February 17 only isolated clashes continued to take place between the workers and government troops.

In Ebensee the insurrectionists, after they had become convinced that the uprising in Vienna was at an end, gave up the struggle undefeated. The power station in Salzburg was put out of action by acts of sabotage.

In Tyrol and in Burgenland, where there had not been any considerable fighting, the state of siege was declared at an end. In Vienna, Graz, Linz, in the industrial centers, the fascist murdering continued.

All Social-Democratic Party and trade union organizations were dissolved. The illegal Communist Party called upon the workers for fresh struggles against the terror.

On the evening of February 18 the workers began new guerilla fighting. In Margareten and Meidling there was shooting between workers and police and

detachments of the Federal Army. The workers fired upon the police from the roof of the Reumann Hof. In this neighborhood firing broke out between the workers and Heimwehr detachments, and the workers routed the Heimwehr gangs. Firing also broke out again around the Karl Marx Hof.

The above represents only a sketchy and defective description of the fighting between the insurrectionists and the government troops. It cannot yet be finally determined how great was the number of insurrectionists or of the fascist and government troops. The number of the insurrectionists may be estimated without fear of exaggeration as from fifty to sixty thousand in all centers of the uprising. More than two-thirds of the Federal Army, police and gendarmerie had to be brought into action against the insurrectionists by the government.

Even after the uprising the government was unable to disarm the workers. Even the government reports mention that, despite all promises of an amnesty, the workers are not giving up their rifles and ammunition. Several thousand rifles, several hundred machine-guns, more than a million infantry cartridges, several thousand hand grenades were captured by the government when houses were searched.

The number of killed and severely wounded among the government troops may be estimated at several hundred. Some newspaper reports say that the number of killed among the insurrectionists is between 1,500 and 2,000. This figure is difficult to verify, as is also the figure of those wounded on the side of the insurrectionists. Many of the latter, even severely wounded workers, did not let themselves be taken to hospitals, where they would have been delivered over to fascist terror, but remained in hiding in Vienna or the provinces. The number of arrested persons may be reckoned at 4,000 to 5,000. All descriptions of the heroism of the insurrectionists, of the brutality of the fascists, which have been published in the press, are nothing compared with the actual facts. Only Marx's words about the Paris Communards can give an adequate idea of the heroism of the insurrectionists and the barbarity of the fascist gangs:

"The self-sacrificing heroism with which the population of Paris-men, women and children-fought...reflects as much the grandeur of their cause as the infernal deeds of the soldiery reflect the innate spirit of that civilization of which they are the mercenary vindicators. A glorious civilization, indeed, the great problem of which is how to get rid of the heaps of corpses it made..." (The Civil War in France, pp. 56-57. International Publishers, 1933.)



The struggle of the insurrectionists is not ended, it has only been interrupted.

The guerilla fighters, who gave immortal examples of courage, of organization and discipline, are now finding that which they lacked during the fighting-revolutionary leadership. They are finding the way to the revolutionary party, to the Communist Party of Austria.

## V. THE POLICY OF AUSTRO-MARXISM AND THE STRATEGY OF THE UPRISING

In so far as it is at all possible as yet to give a complete picture of the uprising, this may be done in the following manner:

1. The uprising, which broke out during the course of two days in almost all important political and industrial centers of the country, was not preceded by a general strike. The Communist Party of Austria issued the call for a general strike, but the trade union leaders were against it. The contemplated general strike remained a partial strike up to the last. Where the trade union leaders were able to do so, they called upon the striking workers during the uprising to resume work. In Carinthia there were no armed struggles whatever, as was also the case in Vorarlberg.

2. There was no central political and military leadership. The Social-Democratic Party leaders and the central executive of the Schutzbund did not issue the call for an armed uprising. The central executive of the Schutzbund did not take command of the insurgent troops during the fighting.

3. In the armed struggles against the fascist coup d'etat social-democratic workers fought side by side with Communist workers. The great masses of the workers were not called to arms, they were even hindered by the social-democratic and Schutzbund leaders from arming themselves from the stores of weapons belonging to the Schutzbund. The Social-Democratic Party and the Schutzbund possessed great quantities of arms, which were kept in storage but were neither brought nor distributed during the entire course of the uprising.

### **Did the Uprising Save the Honor of Social-Democracy?**

The parties of the Second International, who use the suppression of the uprising as another argument for their rejection of the methods of armed uprising against the bourgeois State power, at the same time attempt to make capital out of the uprising of the Austrian proletariat in order to save the honor of social-democracy, of the Second International. Thus, for example, the German social-democratic newspaper, *Deutsche Freiheit*, appearing in Saarbruecken, writes:

"The failure of German labor leaders on July 20, 1932 and on other occasions has involved the Austrian working class in the catastrophe. But the Austrian working class, on its February 12, did not endure another July 20. The stigma of capitulation without a struggle, *which was branded upon the German working class, is being wiped out in these days.*" (My italics.-B.K.)

In a similar fashion Latvian social-democracy, which has always been at pains to ape the whole phraseology of Austro-Marxism, makes quibbling attempts to construe a difference between the attitude of German and Austrian social-democracy on the occasion of the seizure of power by the fascists. The central organ of Latvian social-democracy, Sozial-Demokrat, draws a contrast between the attitude of the two social-democracies and raises the question: "Is social-democracy at all able to act otherwise than it did in Germany?" And to this question it gives the following hypocritical answer:

"There is also another view prevailing among the workers as to the attitude to be adopted under similar circumstances—namely, that it is better to go down fighting heroically than to let yourself be slaughtered as though at the shambles. This other path is being taken by the Austrian workers, and the international proletariat in its majority will probably recognize this path as the right one."

However, the path of the proletarians, who in Austria rose up with arms in their hands and fought with arms in their hands against fascism, was not by any means the path of social-democracy. It meant precisely the forsaking of the social-democratic path.

To be sure, many workers may ask this question today: Good, you Communists tell us that Austrian social-democracy, the party of the Austro-Marxists, is just such a party as the other parties of the Second International. You have declared in your writings that Austrian social-democracy would go the way of German social-democracy. But then how do you explain that Austrian social-democracy possessed such great quantities of weapons, of armed semi-military formations, as the Schutzbund had? What did Austrian social-democracy want arms for, if it did not want an uprising, an armed struggle?

This is indeed a fair question, and one which must be answered.

## **Rifles and Machine-Guns as "Scare" Pistols**

A weapon is a weapon—it may be said. Certainly. Only the question is whether it is right to speak thus. It is one thing when a weapon is in the hands of

a fascist, of a policeman, and is used for the murder of workers, for the suppression of the working class and of the toilers; but it is quite another thing when a weapon is in the hands of a worker and when, in his hands, it is turned against the bourgeoisie, against the fascists, or when it is used to liberate the working class from oppression, from exploitation, and to break the resistance of the capitalists.

What did the leaders of Austrian social-democracy have in mind? For what purpose were the weapons in their possession to be used? On this point let us hear a most authoritative witness, Otto Bauer:

"The working class must remain armed in order to defend itself against a violent attack. But if the working class is sufficiently well armed, the bourgeoisie will hardly venture upon a violent attack. The bourgeoisie cannot desire open civil war. Such civil war would completely ruin Austria's credit abroad and thus destroy the foundation of the whole rule of the bourgeoisie. The bourgeoisie will shun this course, which is dangerous for it too, the more so since it has absolutely no need of it."

Thus, the "Realpolitik" of Austro-Marxism—this policy of which its representatives so proudly boasted in opposition to the Communist "Putschists"—is based on the following idea: The weapons of the Schutzbund are designed to have such an effect upon the bourgeoisie that the latter which has the whole State power in its hands—"may not venture" to employ violence. We can keep the weapons in storage and let it rest at that. Besides, the bourgeoisie is thereby compelled "not to desire" violence; in fact it has no need of it whatever.

To be sure, the bourgeoisie had no need to employ violence insofar as the Social-Democratic Party and trade union leaders, both before and after the coup d'état of March 7, 1933, surrendered step by step and without resistance all the positions which the Austrian working class had held, and thus paved the way for the coming of fascism. Anyone who does not believe this need only refer to the most important facts of the recent past.

On May 17, 1927, the social-democrats-Seitz and Renner, Bauer and Deutsch, and the rest-surrendered the weapons of the Schutzbund from the Vienna arsenal without resistance to the government. They did the same in Graz, in Wiener Neustadt and in Ottakring.

On July 15, 1927, after the spontaneous uprising of the Vienna workers, they called a general strike, but only in order to get the masses off the streets, to send

them home. Those workers who wanted to continue the struggle on the streets were abused as "roughs", "rogues", and "vagabonds".

In May 1928 they concluded a pact with the fascists at Huettenberg, by which they surrendered the exclusive jurisdiction of the free trade unions in regard to wage agreements.

In December 1929 they voted for the changes in the constitution which made it legally possible to enlist the Heimwehr for the support of the police and to call out the troops against the workers.

In April 1930 they made possible the so-called Anti-Terror Law, which guaranteed protection of fascist strikebreakers in mills and plants.

In June 1930 parliament passed a law on "disarmament", the way for which was paved by repeated proposals on the part of social-democracy "for general disarmament". The disarmament law gave the bourgeoisie a new weapon for disarming the workers.

After July 15, 1927, when social-democracy had proved by its conduct that it did not intend to defend its positions by mobilizing the working class against the bourgeoisie, it was without resistance thrust out of the police forces, out of the army and the gendarmerie by the government. The social-democratic trade union organizations in the army, among the police, and in the gendarmerie collapsed when their members were expelled from these state institutions, when the others deserted to the trade unions of the enemy.

All these measures taken by the bourgeois republic had the backing of armed force—the regular and irregular troops of the bourgeoisie, which was becoming fascist.

These measures were carried out partly by the direct use of armed force, partly by the threat of weapons.

The rifles, the automatic pistols, the light and heavy machine-guns could not fulfill the function which had been assigned them by the social-democrats; they failed in the role which had been assigned them by Otto Bauer, Julius Deutsch and the Schutzbund General Koerner; they proved themselves incapable of serving as "scare" pistols against the bourgeoisie.

The bourgeoisie did not let itself be intimidated by the weapons which were kept in storage.

Thus, a weapon is not always a weapon. Social-democracy, which

emasculated many of its followers when it disarmed them, also "emasculated" the weapons themselves.

The bourgeoisie "needed" violence. The fascists "ventured" on a violent attack. The bourgeoisie had no fears that the foundation of its whole rule—based as it is on violence—might be destroyed by the use of its means of violence. It ventured upon the coup d'etat of March 7, 1933, for it knew that the social-democratic leaders only intended to keep the weapons of the Schutzbund stored up as "scare" pistols. It knew that so long as the social-democratic leaders had the rifles in their possession, so long as the working masses did not slip out of the hands of the social-democratic leaders, so long as the members of the Schutzbund took their orders from Julius Deutsch, Otto Bauer and General Koerner—the weapons would indeed remain weapons, but not weapons against bourgeois violence.

The Austrian bourgeoisie rightly understood the Linz program of Austro-Marxism. It grasped to a nicety the sense of the "only if" and "if however" inserted in that document. It understood what was meant when the Linz program said:

"Only if the working class is sufficiently well armed to defend the democratic republic against any monarchist or fascist counter-revolution, only if the Federal Army and the other armed bodies of the state will also defend the republic, in the event of the power of the republic falling into the hands of the working class through the decision of universal suffrage—only then will the bourgeoisie not dare to resist the republic. . . ."

"Only our opponents can force us to take a path of violence," stated Otto Bauer.

The bourgeoisie understood this in the way it was really meant by Otto Bauer—namely, that social-democracy will oppose the use of force even when the enemy has already taken up arms.

However, the social-democratic workers understood the Linz program "incorrectly". They understood it to mean that social-democracy was ready to call upon them to take up arms against the use of violence by the bourgeoisie. They did not understand that social-democracy will not hear of the use of weapons and will not permit such use as long as it is able to prevent it. They let themselves be trained in a spirit of defense, in the hope that social-democracy after all, despite everything, would sometime let the weapons be used for defense against bourgeois violence. They let themselves be deceived by the senseless idea that it

is possible for an uprising to be carried through without preparation, as a bullet is shot from a pistol, and thus let themselves be restrained from undertaking preparations for the organization of the uprising, confident in the knowledge that they had weapons. They permitted social-democracy, both before and after the coup d'état of March 7, 1933, to continue to use the great supplies of arms of the Schutzbund as "scare" pistols, despite the fact that the bourgeoisie—as events showed—did not let itself be intimidated or scared.

Thus, a weapon is no weapon against the bourgeoisie so long as a Social-Democratic Party has charge of it.

### **Ground Arms-Wait!**

The February uprising of the Austrian workers was not by any means the continuation of the policy of Austrian social-democracy. Its outbreak rather expressed the fact that the workers had broken with this policy.

An unnamed leader of Austrian social-democracy published an article in the bulletin of the Second International, *Internationale Information*. In this article, which appeared during the uprising he states:

"Despite this [i.e., despite the state of feeling among the workers and in the Schutzbund in particular-B.K.], the party headquarters still stuck to its line even now. It deemed it necessary that the workers should await the results of the negotiations of the Federal Chancellor with the governors of provinces on the demands of the Heimwehr-negotiations which were fixed for Monday, February 12—and that they should not strike out until at any rate one of the four contingencies arose in which, according to the decision of the Party Congress, a defensive struggle for the protection of constitutional order was unavoidable. On Sunday the functionaries of the party executive still gave instructions in this sense to comrades who reported on the excited state of feeling among the workers, and warned them against striking out on their own initiative."

But did the opposition in the Social-Democratic Party perhaps make preparations for the uprising? Perhaps the leaders of the opposition called the workers to arms? What was the attitude of the opposition in the Social-Democratic Party of Austria?

The social-democratic press did indeed contain reports of a "Left" opposition which, it alleged, opposed "the wait-and-see tactics" of the party leaders. This opposition of the "Lefts" did indeed make a declaration at the Extraordinary Party Congress of Austrian social-democracy in October 1933—

a declaration which states in part:

"The policy of the party leaders since March of this year is a wait-and-see policy-tactics which allow the enemy to dictate all the dates, all the situations for struggle."

Thus, up to March 1933 there was nothing wrong with the policy of social-democracy! According to this, even the Huettenberg Pact with the fascists was all right! Not until after the coup d'etat were the teeth of the "Lefts" set on edge by the policy of Bauer and Seitz.

To be sure, they also made endeavors to outline perspectives for the future. Let us therefore take a closer look at these perspectives. The declaration says:

"We have to ward off a fascism which is not charging but slinking upon us."

According to these perspectives of the "Lefts", the Heimwehr, and the Nazis too, were to have crept or slunk into power, not taken power by storm.

These "Lefts" were also of the opinion that the government had no need whatever to employ violence—they were at one here with Otto Bauer—to complete the work of Austria's fascization. They wrote:

"It [i.e., the government—B.K.] will not conquer the Red municipality by a coup de main, it will bring about capitulation by means of a planned blockade. . . . Without pronouncing the word 'incorporation', it will virtually 'incorporate' one trade union after another, include one trade union after another in its system of government...The government will therefore not prohibit the party within a measurable time."

After indulging in this continual phrase-mongering against the "policy of defense", the "Lefts" recommended the following "policy of attack":

"We must take the offensive with a clear program of demands, with an ultimatum to the government. Our minimum demands must be: abolition of all emergency decrees, restoration of all workers' rights, relief for all unemployed, dissolution and disarmament of all fascist formations. If the government does not carry out our demands, the immediate aim of our struggle must be the overthrow of the government and the election of a government of workers and peasants."

After putting forward this immaculate program of a "respectable" revolution, the "Lefts"— who included among them many leading functionaries of the Schutzbund—naturally withdrew this "extreme Left" declaration as well.



They did so "in the interests of the unity of the labor movement", and, it goes without saying, as a proof of their hostility to the united front with the Communist workers.

Thus, the uprising was just as little the work of the "Left" leaders of the opposition in the Social-Democratic Party of Austria as it was the work of the erstwhile "Lefts", Otto Bauer and Julius Deutsch, who openly declared themselves against the uprising. The armed uprising broke out against the will of the party authorities and against the wishes of the "Left" opposition leaders of social-democracy. All social-democracy did was to leave upon the uprising an imprint which had fatal effects in strategical and tactical respects during the fighting—the imprint of a defensive.

## **The Main Basic Features in the Strategy of the Uprising**

Did the insurrectionists have a strategic plan for an armed uprising?

No! Nor was it in any way possible for them to have such a plan. There was no central political and military leadership to organize and lead the uprising. The standpoint of the Social-Democratic Party, and of the Schutzbund leaders, on the day of the uprising, may be summed up in the words: "There's no holding back now."

One section of the leaders—Seitz, Renner, Breitner, and Co.—understood this in their own way and surrendered themselves "constitutionally" to the police. In doing so, they may have uttered more declamations than did Severing and Grzesinski in Berlin, but they nevertheless clicked their heels and surrendered just as readily as their brothers in Germany. The social-democratic General Koerner, the military leader of the Schutzbund, of the armed forces of social-democracy, stayed quietly at home and waited till 7 p. m. on the day of the uprising. The machine-guns were already rattling, the artillery was already driving into action, but the commander-in-chief waited until the police came to fetch him. He issued no commands to his troops, but instantly obeyed the commands of the police. He was not "caught red-handed in the act". He was duly and lawfully arrested.

Other "leaders", such as Julius Deutsch and Otto Bauer, remained in the fighting zone. They allege that they were in Floridsdorf during the fighting. We are willing to believe them. But we know that their influence—if they did have any influence whatever over the course of events—could only have been a fatal one.

One does not begin a war—and civil war is a war too—without having an

idea of what is to be attained by war and in war. The first, as the science of war teaches us, is the aim; the second is the objective. The leaders of Austrian social-democracy had neither an aim nor an objective. They did not want an uprising, and if they meddled in the fighting in Floridsdorf, they can only have got in the way of the insurrectionists.

The insurrectionists had no strategic plan for the uprising, but despite this they fought to a large extent on the basis and in the spirit of a plan. In all probability, some plan of social-democracy and of the Schutzbund—conforming to the tendencies of the party program and the long years of practice of Austro-Marxism—had long been in existence. Some sort of a plan must have been drawn up by the leaders of the Schutzbund under the tutelage of the National Executive Committee of the Social-Democratic Party. The only question is--for what purpose was this plan intended?

The existence of this plan meant that the discontented revolutionary elements in the Schutzbund could be appeased with the words: we have a plan. The Schutzbund was trained both politically and militarily in the spirit of this plan. Thus, the plan was used by social-democracy for the same purpose as the weapons. It was designed to calm the workers and "scare" the government.

We do not know the details of this plan, which-as the social-democratic leaders intended-was never to be put into practice. However, we know that the main strategic idea of the "plan" was the defense of Vienna against the peasant counter revolution from the provinces and the defense of Austria against Hungary and Germany. This conclusion may be safely drawn from the whole literature of social-democracy.

Defense of the bourgeois republic-that was the basic idea of the plan of the triumvirate-Otto Bauer, Julius Deutsch and General Koerner.

The idea in which the insurrectionists had long been brought up, for which, on the basis of social-democracy's plan, they were to fight--this idea of bourgeois democracy had perished in their heads and in their hearts when they took up arms. But, as Marx said, they suffered not only from the living but also from the dead. The dead ideology of social-democracy, the dead ideology of bourgeois democracy was a dead weight upon the strategy and also upon the tactics of the armed uprising. A dead plan, which a revolutionary leadership had not yet been able to overcome, haunted like a spectre the minds of those who professed themselves the leaders of the fighting insurgent troops.

These facts solve the apparent contradiction—the contradiction that social-democrats did not want an armed uprising but nevertheless acquired arms; that the social-democrats spoke of the defense of democracy by storing up arms, but did not want to employ these arms against bourgeois violence even for the defense of bourgeois democracy; the contradictions that they had a defensive plan for the defense of their positions, but were willing to surrender and did surrender all their positions without a struggle, if only to prevent the coming of an armed uprising.

Social-democracy is not responsible for the armed uprising. It is responsible only for its defeat.

## **The Effect of the Social-Democratic Policy on the Strategy of the Struggle**

After a lost battle, after a suppressed uprising, it is easy to come upon the scene with belated wisdom, pedantically proving that the struggle could not have been won. Such wisdom-mongers, who are wont to make up their minds only after the event, will now, after the suppression of the February uprising, beget an abundance of literature whose only use will be to help the leaders of the Social-Democratic Party of Austria in their attempts to justify themselves. Moreover, these worthies will not even have to stint themselves with empty homage to the heroism of the Austrian proletarians.

On the other hand, nothing would be more dangerous for these courageous proletarians, nothing would be more detrimental to their interests, than if they were to allow the magnificent heroism of the participants in the uprising to restrain them in utilizing the lessons and in criticizing the strategy and tactics of the fighting.

The insurrectionists in Austria have indeed given admirable examples of courageous self-sacrifice and heroism. One had to be directly acquainted with these workers in order to be able to judge the Austrian working class correctly, in order to be able to distinguish between it and the crafty opportunism of its leaders, in order to be able to expect of the Austrian working class that which it has actually achieved in the armed uprising after having shaken off the deterring hand of the Social-Democratic Party leadership.

Despite all the help rendered by the Communists, the workers organized by social-democracy did not succeed, during the process of the armed struggles, in

making up for what had been lost during many long years when the majority of the working class was led by social-democracy.

This found its expression first and foremost in the fact that the clear slogans of a struggle for power—those slogans which might have been able to rouse and organize the broadest masses—could no longer penetrate into the masses under the given conditions. The fighting workers had the instinctive feeling that the moment had come when they must aim at the conquest of the bourgeois state machine. The example of the heroic struggle of the workers of the Soviet Union, the bright beacon of the victories of the October Revolution which led to Socialism, exercised a mighty influence upon the Austrian working class, upon great masses of proletarians in social-democratic organizations. The fifteen years' propaganda and agitation of the Communist Party of Austria have likewise had their effect. But the leading cadres of the insurrectionists nevertheless lacked the clear Marxist-Leninist consciousness of the fact that the proletariat must smash the State machine and set up on the ruins of the bourgeois State machinery a ruthless dictatorship of the proletariat—Soviet Power.

This lack of clarity was also bound to find its expression in the absence of a guiding strategical main idea, in the absence of the idea of the main strategic blow. As a natural consequence, the whole uprising took the line of defense and, as a whole, followed this line up to the very end.

The result of this was that even the unsurpassable heroism of the Austrian workers was unable to create two of the chief conditions for victory in the uprising—the greatest possible concentration of forces and the quickest possible action in attack.

While the fighting forces of counter revolution—despite the embittered feud in the camp of the bourgeoisie—had already been concentrated as far as possible (only the national-socialist fighting formations stood aloof), the fighting forces of the uprising were scattered. The workers showed complete readiness, in the words of Marx, "to defy all the consequences of the game", but despite this their fighting forces were obliged, as a result of the absence of central leadership, to take the defensive at important points. The workers in Vienna were not drawn together for a concentrated attack against the centers of power and the main troops of the bourgeoisie. The armed detachments of the Schutzbund allowed themselves to be tied down to positions of no political importance, to second and third-rate military positions, instead of surrounding the barracks, the

rallying point of the military, of the police, of the fascist troops—that is to say, their base—and instead of conducting an attack on the central positions of power and on the lines of communication of the counter revolution. "Thanks to" the policy of social-democracy, "thanks to" the sabotage of the general strike by the Social-Democratic Party and the trade union leadership, "thanks to" the policy of "waiting with arms grounded", and as a result of a political line aimed at complete inactivity, the insurrectionists were no longer able to take the fascist counter-revolution by surprise.

The absence of the central strategic idea in the uprising, the idea of the main blow, also resulted in one extremely important political factor in the uprising remaining unutilized. This important factor was the simultaneous rising in a number of industrial centers in Austria, the formation of almost independent areas of struggle in Vienna and the provinces. Nothing was done to place these fighting areas under a common command or at any rate to co-ordinate their struggles.

In Vienna such more or less isolated fighting areas were: Floridsdorf, Kagran, Stadlau, Simmering, the Slaughterhouse, the East and South Railway Stations, the Laerberg, Ottakring (the Sandleiten Settlement), Heiligenstadt (Karl Marx Hof), the Twelfth District (The Philadelphia Bridge), the Tenth District, the Second District (Goethe Hof).

In Styria: Karfenberg, Bruck-an-der-Mur, Graz, Eggenberg.

In Upper Austria: Linz, Urfahr as far as Steyer, Ebensee.

In Salzburg: the town and environs, Hallein.

In Tyrol: Innsbruck and the neighborhood, Woergel and the vicinity.

This meant, on the one hand, the tying down of the forces of counter revolution and on the other hand, the possibility of strategic co-operation between the fighting troops of interconnected focus-points of the uprising. It would really not have been a difficult task to throw these troops into a concentrated offensive and in this way to assure the insurrectionists the preponderance at the decisive spot—in the center of Vienna.

Considerable forces of the Schutzbund were tied down in some of these fighting areas. From numerous symptoms it may be concluded that the workers were dominated by a feeling that the forces ought to be concentrated and thrown from one fighting area to the other, above all to Vienna. However, this demand was nowhere met to any considerable degree. In general, the fighting on the right

bank of the Danube in Vienna was restricted to the area between the inner and outer circles; not only the inner city but even the area between the inner circle (Guertel) and the Ring did not become a scene of fighting.

Nevertheless, the members of the Schutzbund, especially where the influence of the Communists made itself felt in the common struggle, undertook one or two offensive tactical operations, which permit us to conclude that the insurrectionists were also striving to alter the strategic line of the uprising.

Thus, as early as February 12, the tramway workers made an attempt at seven o'clock in the evening to penetrate into the inner city on omnibuses. In Linz, attempts were made to occupy the radio station. In Vienna, at points where the influence of the Communists was stronger, especially in the Tenth and Twelfth Districts, the insurrectionists undertook a number of offensive operations. Nevertheless it was the defensive which left its mark on the entire uprising. Offensive operations were not undertaken to occupy the arsenal with large forces, to launch a decisive attack against the inner city. Large forces were not brought into action in order to seize the radio stations, the central telephone and telegraph offices. The insurrectionists themselves tied down their own forces and thus permitted themselves to be split up.

The maintenance of the defensive, a policy which the insurrectionists were unable to overcome during the course of the uprising, was a violation of all the most important rules of the armed uprising. In this connection we must recall what Engels wrote on the importance of the offensive in the uprising:

"The insurrectionary career once entered upon, act with the greatest determination, and on the offensive. The defensive is the death of every armed uprising. Surprise your antagonists while their forces are scattering, prepare new successes, however small, but daily; keep up the moral ascendancy which the first successful rising has given to you; rally those vacillating elements to your side which always follow the strongest impulse, and which always look out for the safer side; force your enemies to a retreat before they can collect their strength against you; in the words of Danton, the greatest master of revolutionary policy yet known, *de l'audace, de l'audace, encore de l'audace!*" (Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Germany, p. 100, International Publishers, 1933.)

Daring as was the conduct of the individual insurgent workers and also of

individual junior commanders of the Schutzbund, nevertheless the strategy of the uprising was the exact opposite of what Marx, Engels and Lenin prescribed as the main rule in the art of insurrection.

The consequences of this strategic mistake and defect proved fatal; the counter revolution, despite the fact that no political unity existed in its camp, was able to throw all the fighting forces at its disposal simultaneously into action. It was able to secure a preponderance of its fighting forces, due not so much to numerical superiority as rather to the fact that the fighting forces of the insurrectionists were not concentrated in any main direction for a possible attack. It was not required to scatter its forces immediately against the fires of rebellion flaring up in the provinces; it was able to maneuver with its forces. It proved to be in a position to hold only such a quantity of its troops continually in reserve, without using them directly for action, as was necessary for guarding the positions against which an attack was to be expected from the side of the insurrectionists. The inner city of Vienna, where the Austro-fascists had barricaded their headquarters, had only a very small garrison. Not much more than the usual guard was stationed in police headquarters; the barracks were unprotected and the artillery was brought into action without any large escort of infantry. From Carinthia and Vorarlberg, where the Social-Democratic Party succeeded in preventing an uprising altogether, the military leaders of the counter revolution were able to call up not inconsiderable forces and to throw these forces into other districts. The government was able—also in consequence of the shameful betrayal by the leaders of the railwaymen's trade union—to call up infantry and artillery from Vorarlberg, from Wiener Neustadt and from Burgenland, against Vienna. On the other hand, many elements among the revolutionary workers and in the Schutzbund who were eager for struggle but who were not engaged directly in the fighting—remained in their own districts (Carinthia, Vorarlberg, St. Poelten, etc.), and were not made use of at the decisive points of the uprising.

No less fatal were the consequences of this strategical tendency in regard to the task of drawing in the broadest masses to support the armed forces of the uprising.

When Julius Deutsch says that the population stood aloof during the uprising (or, as he expresses it, "during the conflict"), he is not speaking the truth in so far as he understands the term "population" to mean the workers and not the Nazis. Yes, even very backward elements among sections of the workers and

office employees, great masses of the petty bourgeoisie, did not stand aloof. They sympathized with the insurrectionists, they were waiting. They were waiting for partial victories, they were waiting for a decisive attack by the insurrectionists against the counter-revolutionary troops. The state of feeling among the wavering sections of the population in Vienna and the provinces, after the suppression of the uprising, the assistance which was rendered the wounded by the population, and the embittered and furious indignation which quickly made itself heard against the courts-martial, show that the waverers were already inclining toward the side of the insurrectionists.

When the chairman of the Second International, M. Vandervelde, has the face to appeal to the authority of Marx and Engels who said that an uprising cannot be victorious unless the army partly or wholly goes over to the side of the armed uprising, we may briefly answer him:

The prerequisites were present which should have made it possible to win over the soldiers to the side of the insurrectionists.

The desertion of the troops to the side of the insurrectionists is not an instantaneous action. It is important, it is indispensable to prepare for this desertion even in time of "peace" by systematic organizational work and work of political enlightenment among the soldiers. During the uprising, however, the question of achieving this desertion of the soldiers to the side of the insurrectionists not a question only of the work of political propaganda, which is extremely important, but above all a question of the strategy and tactics of the struggle, which by their superiority, by proof of their resolution and strength, can win over the wavering soldiers of even a mercenary army to the side of the revolution. The superiority of the strategy and tactics of the insurrectionists must find its expression in concentrated attack against the counter-revolutionary fighting forces. Nobody, not even the most rabid Austro-fascist, not even the most dyed-in-the-wool social-democratic leader, can assert that the Federal Army, the police, the gendarmerie fought for fascism with enthusiasm.

A social-democratic commander of the Schutzbund told the correspondent of the Reichenberger Vorwaerts about the following important fact:

"In the beginning two great barracks in Vienna refused to march against us. When they saw after two or three hours that we were not coming on, they finally began to waver, gave way to pressure and then marched out."

In cases where the police and gendarmerie were attacked by members of



the Schutzbund (in Bruck-an-der-Mur, Graz, etc.), they held up their hands and surrendered. A troop of the Schutzbund in Vienna, during its march from the Wiener Berg to Meidling, made a sudden attack upon the barracks there and was able to capture three machine—guns without resistance. Soldiers of the Federal Army in the Radetzky barracks fought against one another during the uprising. During the night of February 12-13, according to newspaper reports, the police and the troops of the Federal Army were so exhausted that a pronounced unwillingness to continue the struggle made itself felt in their ranks. The Neue Freie Presse reports how in the night between February 13 and 14 many detachments of the counter-revolutionary forces were so exhausted that they were almost incapable of fighting. Thus, all the pre-requisites were present for winning over considerable sections of the military forces of Austro-fascism to the side of the insurrectionists in the event of a decisive attack on the center, in the event of political and military disorganization in the leadership of the counter revolution, of the severing of its communications. The Vienna correspondent of a Vilna newspaper thus describes the situation in the night between February 12-13:

"One might have expected that the insurrectionists would launch a planned attack on the center of the city during the night. The seizure of the center would have meant eighty per cent victory for them. Towards morning the situation was precarious for the leadership of the government troops."

At the beginning of the uprising, during the course of the fighting, there was every possibility of winning over the wavering detachments of troops to the side of the insurrectionists and of thus causing vacillations among other detachments. Superior strategy and tactics, which were quite possible in the form of a concentrated attack by superior forces and in decisive tactical offensive operations, could have forced considerable sections of the counter-revolutionary forces to acknowledge this physical and moral superiority of the insurrectionists.

The numerical, physical and moral superiority, which was necessary in order to bring sections of the government troops round to the side of the insurrectionists, could not be achieved, because social-democracy and the reformist trade unions prevented the inexhaustible reserves of the working class from being mobilized for the general strike, for the armed uprising; it was they, social-democracy and the reformist trade union leaders, who prevented the employment of an offensive strategy, the concentration of forces for a decisive main blow against the fascist centers of power.

## VI. SOME IMPORTANT TACTICAL LESSONS OF THE ARMED STRUGGLES

The policy of social-democracy frustrated the broad development of the revolutionary forces of the working class, prevented the drawing in of the great reserves for the support of the uprising. It prevented a correct strategical arrangement and leadership of the struggle, given which it would have been quite possible to ensure the preponderance of the insurrectionists over the fascist troops. This is a fact which the whole frothy oratory of the entire Second International cannot obliterate.

But social-democracy also prevented the individual operations of the revolutionary fighting forces in the engagements, in which the highest bravery, the first essential in the fighter, the courage of the revolting workers was wonderfully proved, from being conducted in an offensive way and being combined into decisive struggles against the fascist forces.

But the defensive strategy of the uprising, the fatal consequence of the social-democratic policy, also compelled the tactics to bear the unmistakable mark of the defensive. Nevertheless the creative power of the workers, which in the heat of the struggle partially freed itself from social-democratic inhibitions, left its mark upon individual actions in the struggle. The influence of the Communist Party, of individual Communist fighting groups, even of individual Communist fighters, did much to change the tactics for the better.

The fighting tactics changed during the course of the uprising. They showed unmistakable signs of a turn from tactics of passive defense to an active, mobile defense. The insurrectionists carried through a number of operations which were of the nature of a counter-attack or a tactical attack. They were moreover driven to this by the tactics of the counter-revolutionary forces and especially by the fact that the Federal Army and police employed superior technical means of warfare artillery and armored cars.

Nevertheless the absence of a decisive military offensive against the centers of the counter revolution's apparatus of power remained to the end of the fighting the main characteristic of the workers' operations, and it was this that determined their outcome.

The reason why the tactical lessons of this uprising are of extreme importance is because this was the first great armed struggle of the proletariat in

the post-war period in which highly developed means of war technique found their tactical application on a broad scale in a great city.

The arming of the Federal Army, it is true, is restricted by the Treaty of Saint Germain; it possesses no airplanes, no tanks, no war chemicals, no heavy artillery, but all the more abundant use was made of the motorized artillery of medium calibre, of the motorized infantry of the Federal Army and its auxiliary troops. The police brought their airplanes into action for reconnaissance purposes and used their armored cars against the insurrectionists.

At the same time, the arming of the insurrectionists likewise surpassed that of almost all insurgent troops in the past. Modern infantry rifles, most of them of a uniform type, which obviate the difficulties in the supply of ammunition usual in uprisings, automatic pistols, light and heavy machine-guns, light and heavy bomb throwers, good hand grenades, were all in the possession of the Schutzbund in ample quantities. The Schutzbund also possessed motor bicycles, mounted with machine-guns, and motor trucks which the inventive genius of the workers converted into armored cars with machine-guns.

The analysis of the operations, of the fighting tactics, which we will here attempt in rough outlines, makes no claim to be either complete or final. And this for two reasons: first, because no more or less coherent and reliable description of the course of the fighting has yet been received; second, because we are for the time being compelled to use, for the most part, social-democratic and bourgeois sources. The social-democratic newspapers, despite their endless repetition of empty generalities about the heroism of the insurrectionists, would like to obscure precisely the concrete acts, the operations themselves, in order to be able to prove the "innocence of the workers" in the interests of the bankrupt social-democratic leaders. The bourgeois reporters for the most part, in describing the events, have from motives of sensation allowed their narrow-minded stupidity to run riot.

Despite these difficulties, we will attempt—for the time being on the basis of the scanty data available—at least to draw the most important tactical lessons from the fighting during the uprising. For thinking workers—not least for the social-democratic workers, who must draw the appropriate conclusions from the policy and strategy of social-democracy—the tactical lessons of the uprising are of great importance. They fought through the uprising together with the Communists. They will conduct the further struggles in still closer contact with

them, in a united revolutionary front under the leadership of the Communist Party. Both the negative and the positive lessons of the uprising are of extreme importance for determining the course to be pursued by the revolutionary workers, by their fighting troops, in the coming battles of the approaching new period of storm not only in Austria, but in all capitalist countries.

## **The Tactical Peculiarity of the Struggles**

One important factor in the tactics of the uprising was the fact that the struggle was not commenced in the form of street fighting or barricade fighting.

The social-democratic military politicians, or mere social-democratic literateurs without "education" in the science of war, have spread the theory that modern war technique and the layout of modern cities make street fighting impossible, and thereby, of course, also preclude the possibility of an armed uprising against bourgeois violence. And this, they allege, is a further reason why the workers "should calmly and sensibly wait" until capitalist society peacefully and smoothly "grows into" Socialist society.

It was the German social-democrats who, as early as the Nineties of the last century, prudently casting around in good time for arguments by which to support their policy of pure parliamentarism, even appealed to the authority of the great military theoretician of the international labor movement, Friedrich Engels. And it is for this reason that Engels' famous Preface to Marx's *Class Struggles in France* has been falsified by them in the most ordinary sense of the word. In publishing this Preface they have unscrupulously omitted a whole passage which followed after Engels' observation: "Rebellion of the old style, the street fight with barricades, which up to 1848 gave everywhere the final decision, was to a considerable extent obsolete." After many years, in 1924, the text was restored, and lo and behold—Engels wrote just the contrary of what the social-democrats wanted to prove through him as a basis for their opportunism. The passage formerly omitted reads as follows:

"But does that mean that in the future the street fight will play no further role? Certainly not. It only means that the conditions since 1848 have become far more unfavorable for civil fights, far more favorable for the military. A future street fight can therefore only be victorious when this unfavorable situation is compensated for by other factors. Accordingly, it will occur more seldom in the beginning of a great revolution than in its further progress and will have to be undertaken with greater forces. Those, however, may then well prefer, as in the

whole great French Revolution, in September 4 and October 31, 1870, in Paris, the open attack to the passive barricade tactics."

The other great theoretician and organizer of the armed uprising, Lenin, drew the conclusions from this tactical observation of Engels in his article "The Lessons of the Moscow Uprising":

"These tactics [i.e., the new barricade tactics in the Moscow uprising-B.K.] were the tactics of *guerilla warfare*. The organization which such tactics demanded is that of *mobile and exceedingly small detachments* of ten- five- three- or even two-men detachments."\* (My italics-B.K.)

One of the leaders of French social-democracy, Paul Faure, raised his soothing voice a short while ago when a hint was already in the air that the Parisian workers were ready to prove that the streets be—longed to them and not to the fascist gangs and the police packs of Chiappe; 250 machine-guns of the military or the police—he said—and any uprising is crushed at once.

The February uprising in Austria, especially the struggles of the Vienna workers, have proved that the workers too are able to shoot from machine-guns, that they can answer machine-gun fire with machine-gun fire. The fighting workers were ready for such a method of struggle as Engels and Lenin prescribed—for the use of small mobile detachments. In the Reichenberger Vorwaerts, a social-democratic member of the Schutzbund tells of his experiences in the Vienna fighting: "We were divided into shock troops; we knew how we had to conduct street fighting."

However, the fighting in the Austrian uprising was for the most part not street fighting. The barricade was not the typical form of struggle in Vienna or the provinces. There are two main reasons for this. First, that the defensive strategy did not lead to the occupation of any mobile positions, but only to the defense of the Workers' Homes (Ottakring, etc.), to the defense of the great municipal tenement houses, where members of the Schutzbund and other workers lived together en masse (the Karl Marx Hof was inhabited by about 5,000 people, the Goethe Hof by almost as many, etc.), to the defense of the Social-Democratic Party buildings, etc. The second reason is that the lack of forethought of the leaders of the Schutzbund allowed the armed forces to stick to

---

\*V. I. Lenin, The Revolution of 1905, p. 35. Little Lenin Library, Vol. 6. International Publishers, 1931.

their posts. The participant in the Simmering fighting, whom we have quoted above, tells us the following about this:

"You ask why we stuck to our posts? Well, the deputies of the various arrested leaders of the Schutzbund hesitated to give the alarm in the individual districts. . . . We were simply left hanging in the air, could not go forward, had to stick to our posts and wait until the others were ready." [i.e., until the alarm had been given in other districts.-B.K.]

Most of the premises which were occupied by the Schutzbund were of no strategic importance whatever. Only in isolated cases were positions occupied for political or strategical reasons (e.g., the occupation of the Reichsbrücke to defend the communications with the suburbs Floridsdorf and Kagran, the occupation of the East and Northwest Railway Stations). But also from the tactical point of view of this struggle, even from the standpoint of defensive tactics, the buildings which were occupied were not good positions. The Ottakring Workers' Home, for example, wedged in as it is between tall buildings, gave the insurrectionists occupying it no opportunity to develop a field of fire. Its occupation was only a waste of men and ammunition.

The uprising began in most cases as a sort of trench warfare.

In consequence of the defensive ideas of social-democracy and the Schutzbund, very little fighting took place in the open on the streets (Linz, Steyr).

A tactical consideration in the utilization of these municipal tenement houses and party buildings might have been the use of these houses to afford cover for the gathering of forces and for the troops themselves. This was something of a new phenomenon, for in previous uprisings the fighting round the houses has in most cases been the last despairing stage of the struggle of the insurgents against the counter-revolution. The occupation of such blocks of houses—those which are inhabited by a great number of workers and which represent good tactical positions—their utilization as depots for arms and munitions, as cover for the troops, might even be preferred in many cases to the cover afforded by barricades, for barricades provide less protection for the fighters and the reinforcements. But the choice of houses as initial positions, as a base of operations, should only be made under two main conditions: First, if the bulk of the fighting forces is used not to defend these positions but in the event of the enemy having already seized the initiative—for counter-attack against the military forces of counter-revolution and for attack against the most important positions of the bourgeois apparatus of force (the central authorities, central

radio, telegraph and telephone offices, barracks, police stations, arsenals, railway stations, garages, etc.); and second, if the positions are such that they make it possible to go over to the attack, if they command a view of the neighboring area beyond the range of firearms.

Both of these prerequisites of successful tactics in the occupation and utilization of positions were almost entirely lost sight of by the leaders of the Schutzbund detachments. The blame for this lies with the predilection of the Schutzbund for a tactic of passive defense. There was no transition to street fighting on a large scale, although the situation—despite the fact that the initiative had fallen into the hands of the fascists—was already ripe for such a move on the second day of the uprising, on February 13. The failure to mobilize the mass reserves within the working class and the lack of decision to concentrate the forces, at any rate in Vienna, for a great decisive blow against fascist counter-revolution—these two factors, without which it would have been possible to compensate for the "unfavorable situation", prevented such decisive street fighting in the uprising.

## **Passive Defense and Active, Mobile Defense**

Even from the extremely scanty description of the operations undertaken by the insurrectionists around the various points of struggle, it is permissible to conclude that the fighting tactics of the insurrectionists underwent a development during the course of the fighting. They developed from passive defense to active, mobile defense, to counter-attack, to tactical offensive operations.

The general characteristic of the fighting on the first day was almost exclusively passive defense. This in itself meant encouraging the counter-revolution to attack and weakening the effect of the insurrectionists' fire in defense. Besides this, the occupation of municipal tenement houses and other similar positions was carried out in such a way that the whole or almost the whole of the "garrison" was stationed in one house or in one block and took up a position of passive defense. Even when forced to defend a position, the basic tactical rule of the uprising is: not to confine yourself merely to defending the positions, but to occupy the premises to be defended with small forces, to effect the defense not directly but from flanking positions and by means of smaller detachments maneuvering on the streets, in order thus to broaden the field of fire and increase its effect, to get a chance to push forward and capture new positions. Only such tactics can be regarded as tactics of mobile defense and—in

certain cases—justify themselves as tactically correct. The legalistic attitude, in whose spirit the Schutzbund had been trained by social-democracy, is to blame for the fact that the tactics were aimed at defense, and that this defense was a passive one. But it is also to blame for another fatal characteristic of the tactics—for the absence of a clear line aimed at annihilating the enemy in battle. This latter mistake is very clearly characterized in the words of the Schutzbund member whom we have already quoted above:

"First of all the Heimwehr advanced against us. We let them come on till they were fifty meters off, and to each troop which came up we sent a man with a flag of truce. He told them in our name that if they advanced further we would fire. Almost all of them wanted to retreat at that. But the leaders brandished their pistols against their own Heimwehr men, so that they advanced all the same. However, when we began to shoot, they ran away. Later on some police troops advanced in open order. Despite all the clean-up, we still had a lot of our own people in the police. We knew them, of course; and there was an agreement that we should not shoot at them. In the beginning we kept to this agreement, and we only picked out the 'black sheep' besides the fascist commanders. Later on, when the armored cars were brought into action, we could not keep to this agreement."

"Humane" feelings, the endeavor not to permit any "superfluous" violation of the law by occupying private houses or to "do any harm to innocent people" had fatal effects on the tactics pursued during the fighting. However important it may be for the insurrectionists to employ the method of fraternization in regard to the troops of the counter-revolution, to treat the inhabitants in the fighting areas in accordance with their class position—not to do any harm without cause to proletarian elements, to petty bourgeois—nevertheless the all-important thing remains that the direction of the fighting should be aimed at the assertion of one's own point of view at all costs, at annihilating the fighting forces of the class enemy. In an uprising, too, the prerequisite for breaking down the morale of the enemy is to inflict physical losses upon his forces. The break-up of discipline, the loss of courage, of confidence, of interconnection in the enemy's forces, the frustration of the plan of the enemy's command—all these prerequisites for the break-down of the enemy's morale can only play their part if the tactics of the insurrectionists make it quite clear that they will shrink at nothing in order to annihilate the counter-revolutionary fighting forces.

On the second day (February 13) as a result of the extremely bloody fighting and, in certain cases, of the greater participation and organized action of



the Communists, the insurrectionists were already beginning to use other tactical methods than those employed at the beginning of the fighting. In the defense of the Workers' Home in Ottakring several buildings in the neighborhood of this home were occupied and used as flanking positions on the second day of the uprising, a fact which enabled the insurrectionists to make better use of their weapons and in particular to increase the effectiveness of their machine-gun fire. The insurrectionists dug trenches in the park in front of the Sandleiten block, and this was also done in Favoriten, in Laerberg, in Floridsdorf. In Steyr the workers began to occupy the heights which surround the factory and dominate the town. This was done to a still greater extent in Bruck-an-der-Mur, where operations in many places were conducted on a wide front and where the insurrectionists occupied many tactically important positions, from which they advanced to take the offensive.

The fighting on the second and third days (February 13. and 14) still continued along the same tactical lines, the workers trying to win back their lost positions. On these days the defense of the insurrectionists had already become more mobile. There were more barricades on the streets, especially to prevent armored cars from being brought into action, etc.

The fact that the bridges had been left unoccupied and were there-upon seized by the police and Heimwehr, the closing of strategically important thoroughfares in Vienna by the military and the Heimwehr, made the transition to attack more difficult. Nevertheless there were many cases, especially in Floridsdorf, where a concentrated attack was attempted, though in no case were these tactics employed to an adequate degree. The fighting did not extend either to the bourgeois section or to the center of the city.

With a few exceptions (e.g., Bruck-an-der-Mur, Ebensee, etc.), the tactics pursued in the provinces were scarcely different from those employed in Vienna. The differences that did exist were probably caused, on the one hand, by the greater resolution of one or two local leaders, and, on the other hand, by the different layout of the towns. The latter factor compelled the insurgent troops, as a result of the small height of the houses, to occupy positions along several streets.

There are reports of several acts of diversion in the provinces against points on the railway (the Aspang Line, the Linz-Salzburg Line, the Eastern Railway).

The reports regarding the use made of improvised or captured armored

cars are very scanty and it is impossible to form a judgment of the tactical use made of these weapons by the insurrectionists. In so far as can be ascertained from these reports, armored cars were mostly employed by the insurrectionists for purposes of mobile defense or for winning back lost positions. The police made abundant use of armored cars for rapid offensive operations, for preparing to storm premises occupied by the insurrectionists. Some reports tell us that the insurrectionists prevented the armored cars from being brought into action by means of barricades and wire cables.

From the very beginning fighting took place almost exclusively around those buildings in which the workers had entrenched themselves, for the defensive unfortunately left its mark upon the tactics of the uprising to the very end. This enabled the counter-revolution fully to develop its technical preponderance, which consisted first and foremost in the possession of artillery. That was fatal to the uprising; it could only have been compensated for by bold offensive tactics.

## **Artillery and the Struggle Against It**

The use of artillery against insurrectionists is not a wholly new phenomenon. In the Moscow uprising of 1905, and still earlier in the French uprisings, the military forces of counter-revolution included also artillery and they used it in the fighting. The insurrectionists in Vienna knew that artillery would be brought into action against them. They had received news from Linz that the artillery there was immediately brought into action against the workers. The above-mentioned participant in the fighting at Simmering relates as follows: "We had also planned to storm the artillery barracks. If we did not succeed in that, we meant to prevent the artillery from driving out. If we failed there too, we intended to blow up the barracks."

The basic core of these plans was a sound one.

The artillery, of which abundant use was made in Vienna and the provinces, was the most dangerous weapon against the insurrectionists. In Vienna it was used right in the city itself; in one part of the town it was brought up to a distance of one hundred and twenty meters from the positions which it had to shell. The guns were stationed on the Bisamberg near Vienna and on two of the important heights in the neighborhood of Steyr. The positions held by the insurrectionists were generally bombarded directly, for the most part at very short range, right in the middle of the proletarian districts.

The social-democratic reports speak of the use of artillery as an elemental occurrence whose consequence cannot be compensated for. They describe the uprising and its outcome in such a way as to give the impression that the artillery alone, brought into action by the counter-revolution, decided the fate of the uprising and that this fate could not be averted,—a fresh attempt to "compromise" the armed uprising in the eyes of the workers as an obsolete method of the class struggle.

What was the situation with regard to artillery fighting in the uprising and to the struggle against the artillery? Is it a matter of sheer impossibility for the insurrectionists, in the words of Engels, to "compensate for" the use of artillery? Is it impossible to employ such tactics as may enable and ensure a successful struggle against the artillery on the part of the insurrectionists?

The Schutzbund member from Simmering appreciated the importance of storming the artillery barracks. In every future uprising one of the most important tasks of the uprising will be to storm and occupy in good time the artillery barracks, to capture the arms and munitions of the artillery. But even if such an attempt to capture should fail the cause is by no means lost. Such an attempt to capture the artillery barracks and the arms supply of the artillery must be carried out by a body of troops sufficiently strong so that, in the event of the first attempt ending in failure, it may be possible for the reserves of the insurgent forces to destroy the barracks. The tearing up of the neighboring streets, their occupation by strong forces with a view to firing on the gunners and drivers as the artillery drives out, actions aimed at compelling the artillery garrison to take a defensive position—all these are other correct methods for preventing the use of artillery.

But even when artillery has been brought into action, the cause of the insurrectionists is not by any means lost. Artillery positions both inside and outside the city can be charged by means of armored cars (improvised for the purpose, if necessary). But in Vienna, despite the fact that the insurrectionists had at least improvised armored cars in their possession, such attempts were not made.

The greatest mistake in the struggle against the artillery was that the insurgent troops, even after the bombardment of the houses by the artillery, allowed themselves to be tied down and did not go over to mobile tactics, to skirmishing on the streets, to the building of barricades, to flank attacks on the artillery. The danger which the artillery represented for the outcome of the

struggle could in this way not only have been compensated for to a large extent, but even converted into its direct opposite, into the source of a change of feeling in the ranks of the counter-revolutionary army. The capture of an enemy battery would undoubtedly have led to such change of feeling among the fighting forces of the fascists.

Social-democracy will find a thousand and one reasons for proving that the uprising is a thing which the working class should most carefully avoid, since any uprising can be quelled with a howitzer battery or a division of artillery. Nothing is more false, nothing is more lying than such an assertion. A bold offensive policy, flexible strategy and tactics in the uprising, assure the possibility of struggle and victory even against the artillery of the counter revolution.

## **The Liaison Service of the Insurrectionists During the Fighting**

The failure of the insurgent troops to occupy the central telephone and telegraph offices, the radio stations, the bridges, the garages, meant that they had no proper means of communication among one another—a fact which had very harmful effects upon the course of operations. Cooperation between them was rendered extremely difficult. The Schutzbund possessed its own radio network. The equipment was kept carefully stored up, and after raids by the police it was replaced by new equipment. Legalism and defensive ideas prevented the Schutzbund from immediately occupying "other people's" radio stations. The post and telegraph employees' trade union had to a large extent been "incorporated" by the Dollfuss government; the strike of the telephone and telegraph employees was of a short duration. Just as with the police, so also in the case of the telegraph and telephone officials, the Schutzbund leaders reckoned on being able to get along without occupying the central offices. "Our people will see to it all right"—without its being necessary for us to damage equipment which "will be ours tomorrow". It is not surprising to find this attitude among the social-democrats, who adopted a similar standpoint in regard to the bourgeois State, in regard to the fatherland: "We must defend the State, the fatherland. We will have the majority one day and then the State will be ours." The habit of relying "on their own people" in the "incorporated" trade unions and in general their inveterate legalism, resulted in Schutzbund leaders using the city telephone system during the fighting for the exchange of information on the military situation--which meant of course that the police simply listened in to this information.

Another fatal consequence of social-democratic legalism was the failure to occupy the garages, the refusal to requisition private automobiles. The only exception in this respect were Linz and Bruck-an-der-Mur. In Vienna, according to reports received, the insurrectionists only seized one or two motor trucks from the municipal enterprises. Even the automobiles of Mayor Seitz, of the City Councillor Dannenberge and other social-democratic functionaries, municipal and otherwise, were utilized by the counter-revolutionary forces.

A new and interesting factor in the tactics of the fighting was the use made of the sewerage system for maintaining contact among the individual detachments of the Schutzbund and for evacuating individual bodies of troops from the municipal tenement houses occupied by the insurrectionists.

Up to date there are no reports regarding reconnaissance work on the part of the insurrectionists. The report of the Simmering Schutzbund member quoted above contains a statement that before the uprising the police set all their spies to work and took great precautions to prevent reconnaissance work on the part of the Schutzbund. The municipal tenement houses were placed under police supervision. "For example, when I went home to fetch fresh linen," said a member of the Schutzbund, "I met a police spy before my house." To judge from many reports, women and children performed reconnaissance work for the insurgent troops. The counter-revolutionary troops were not sentimental about it. Among the killed there are seventeen children under twelve and twenty-three under sixteen years of age, most of whom fell while serving the cause of the uprising. They were not accidentally struck down by the weapons of the fascist gang.

## **The Hinterland of the Uprising**

An idea of the organization of munition supplies and the distribution of ammunition may be obtained from the fact that in one or two fighting areas the struggle had to be given up for lack of ammunition. Meanwhile, as a social-democratic functionary reports in the social-democratic paper, *Deutsche Freiheit*, there was

"No lack of weapons of all kinds. Both friends and enemies were surprised by the magnificent equipment with machine-guns, firearms and hand grenades. We were far superior to the government troops."

These statements, especially the last, may indeed be quite true. The *Berliner Boersen-Zeitung* also reported that the government troops had no more

ammunition for rifles of modern design and had to get additional supplies from Horthy Hungary. The negligence of the Schutzbund leaders in organizing the supply of ammunition is a further sure sign that the social-democratic leaders had no intention whatever of launching an armed struggle against fascism in earnest and were, up to the last moment, opposed to the arms and munitions being used, even during the uprising, for the destruction of the enemy. This is not to be explained by "Austrian superficiality, laxity and carelessness", as many Austrian social-democratic leaders would now like to explain when they abuse the insurgent workers of Austria, almost in German fascist fashion, as an "inferior race", unable to create any organization during the uprising.

The social-democratic newspapers also report that the food supply system failed and that the insurrectionists in many cases were left 72 hours at a stretch without food, without a warm room. The meals were for the most part prepared by the workers' wives in the various buildings and carried out to the men. The workers' wives often did this under machine-gun fire, and Julius Deutsch, the Schutzbund leader, boasts of the fact that in certain detachments the fighters went hungry for three days at a stretch, without touching "other people's property".

Another result of this idiotic legalism—the basic characteristic of the leaders of the Social-Democratic Party and the Schutzbund—was that no care was taken for the security of the workers engaged in the fighting. Plainclothes policemen performed espionage work for the counter-revolutionary forces in the fighting areas, and the workers were given sermons about "humanity" when they wanted to pick off the spies with a bullet during the course of the armed struggle. No arrests of hostages were permitted, despite the fact that high state functionaries and rich bourgeois were living in the fighting areas. The bankers, the factory owners, the high-placed officials could sleep peacefully in the residential quarters. In Floridsdorf, when the insurgent groups were forced to withdraw and wanted to take hostages in order to secure their retreat, they were strictly forbidden to do so. The Social-Democratic Party functionaries were ready to defend the class enemy with their very bodies. The policy of Austrian social-democracy from time immemorial had been based on reciprocal assurances. "We guarantee you capitalism, you guarantee us our little republic"—that was the reciprocal assurance policy practiced between Austrian finance capital and Austrian social-democracy. "We guarantee you the independence of Austro-fascism from Nazi fascism. You must only guarantee

universal suffrage as the basis of the *Staendeordnung*"—that was Otto Bauer's policy in regard to Dollfuss. The realization of this policy was in the main frustrated by the workers, but it was still possible for this policy to bear such "small fruits" as the defending of policemen who were spying upon the insurrectionists from treatment according to the laws of war, the defending of capitalists financing the fascists and of fascist leaders from being taken as hostages.

Political work among the population during the uprising, in so far as this depended on the social-democrats, was not carried on. The numerous printshops situated in the fighting areas or near to them were not made use of by the social-democrats, much less occupied. Only the Communist Party of Austria published leaflets during the uprising, calling the people to arms, calling upon them to support the fighting workers with arms in their hands. The bourgeois newspapers, which appeared during the uprising, were terror-stricken on the first day: they showed great restraint. Later, they were full of the usual slanders against the insurrectionists. On the street cars, after they began running, and in the taverns, many Communists were arrested for carrying on agitation in favor of the uprising. An especially great part was played by the radio in the hands of the counter revolution. Abundant use was made of the radio in order to confuse the workers with lying reports. The *Schutzbund* radios did not interfere with the government radios; their existence was probably kept a secret from the insurgent troops.

## **The Tactical Worth of the Troops**

Only one opinion prevailed as to the fighting value of the insurgent forces in all reports on the February uprising. As soldiers, the members of the *Schutzbund* towered head and shoulders above all the types of the counter-revolutionary armed forces—Federal Army, police, gendarmerie, *Heimwehr*, *Ostmaerkische Sturmscharen*. Both the rank and file and the junior commanders of the *Schutzbund* had behind them the experience of the imperialist world war. Their tactical training, their experience of fighting, was far higher than that of all the types of the counter-revolutionary troops. The moral superiority of the *Schutzbund* members and the Communist fighters in many cases can hardly be conveyed in words. To the last man and to the last cartridge they really fought after the fashion of General Bem, the commander of the Vienna uprising of 1848, the hero of three revolutions—the Polish, the Austrian and the Hungarian.

The members of the Federal Army are recruited for the most part from the younger post-war generation. Their training was shown during the fighting to be very deficient. The police represented the best fighting troops of the counter revolution. The Heimwehr failed in all cases, and proved itself a cowardly pack of marauders. The leader of the Heimwehr, Prince Starhemberg, could do nothing against the insurrectionists of Steyr despite numerical superiority of forces and the assistance of artillery. Only the regular troops were able to break the resistance of the insurgent forces. The special defense formations of the Fatherland Front, Dollfuss' bodyguard, the Ostmaerkische Sturmscharen, were a worthy competitor of the Heimwehr in respect of miserable cowardice.

The tactical lessons of the February uprising show, just as do the lessons to be learned from the strategy of the uprising, that social-democracy is guiltless before the bourgeoisie; it has incurred its historical guilt before the working class.



## VII. WAS IT RIGHT TO TAKE UP ARMS?

The fascist gangs, the soldiery, the police pack are raging in Vienna, in all Austria. Raving terror is strangling the heroic fighters of the uprising. The hangmen of Dollfuss and Starhemberg are waiting for the word of the bloody court-martial: To the gallows! The organizations of the overwhelming majority of the Austrian working class, the free trade unions, which the Austrian working class, through tens of years of painful and sacrificing struggle, strove to build up as the organizations of the class struggle, but whose leaders have sold them at the decisive moment, are shattered to pieces. The proudest pillar of the Second International, Austrian social-democracy, the party of "Austro-Marxism", has been dissolved.

The Austrian workers fight on. Their mood is not one of defeat. They do not despair. In vain does the government of the National Front try to induce the workers to surrender their arms. Espionage and bribery may enable them to confiscate some arms from the great supplies of the Schutzbund; these they may hand over to the cowardly marauders of the battlefield, the gangs of the Heimwehr and the Dollfuss bodyguard which calls itself the Ostmaerkische Sturmscharen. The Austrian workers however have no intention of surrendering to the class enemy their rifles, their automatic pistols, their machine-guns, their hand grenades, their fighting knives, which have proved themselves true friends and reliable means of struggle during the uprising. The government extended the term for the surrender of arms until February 25. But it could only get as many workers' weapons as it could steal.

Those who want to keep their weapons, those who are carefully keeping their weapons in hiding, will not raise the question: Was it right to take up arms?

But those who wanted the Austrian workers to look on "with their arms grounded", while Austro-fascism "coolly" set up the unlimited dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, those who wanted the workers to regard their automatic pistols only as "scare" pistols which were to make the bourgeoisie "afraid", must of course answer the question as follows: It was wrong to take up arms.

But there are also waverers! who wavered before the uprising. Among the workers there are some There are some who thought that an armed uprising is altogether impossible, that it is altogether wrong to take up arms. There are also waverers who even during the uprising thought that the leaders of social-democracy were right after all when they said: The moment has not yet come to

take up arms. Now, too, there will be waverers who think, who well-meaningly hold the opinion, that it was a mistake to take up arms then, at that moment, that an armed uprising was doomed to failure in advance owing to the objective situation, owing to the relation of forces between the classes in Austria, owing to the international situation. They, too, raise the question: Was it right to take up arms? And they cannot answer.

We Communists are obliged, after mature consideration, to answer this question clearly and unequivocally. This is our duty, because we must subject our tactics continually, and especially after every stage of the struggle, to a thorough examination in the interests of further struggle. It is our duty to free the waverers of their doubts, to forge them into bold fighters, into resolute warriors in the revolutionary struggle for the liberation of the working class, to convince them of the correctness of our principles, of our tactics. It is our duty to answer this question in order to expose the lies of the agents of the class enemy in the working class, the lies which spread defeatism in the ranks of the working class, in order to oppose the lies by our truth.

### **Three Opinions-One Meaning**

The parties of the Second International have already answered the question that has been raised. The answers can roughly be divided into three groups:

-The organ of the English Labor Party, The Daily Herald, in its number of February 15, 1934, quotes the speech of Mr. A. Conley, chairman of the Trade Union Congress, who gives the following appraisal of the armed struggles of the Austrian workers:

"The bloodshed and destruction in Vienna must have produced a sense of horror in all reasonable and peaceably-minded people throughout Europe. It is dreadful to contemplate the continuation of this fratricidal conflict. . . . The authorities appear to have been waiting for the opportunity to attack the trade unions and the Socialist organizations, and the Socialists' defense has brought about a terrible situation, which should rouse public opinion throughout Europe to the strongest protest."

A clear answer to the question put. The "bloodshed and destruction in Vienna", whether on the part of the counter-revolution or of the insurrectionists, can only be regarded with horror. Mr. Conley cannot be reproached with having a class standpoint. The Vienna workers who fought in the only just war against the

hirelings of the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie, against the murderous fascist bandits, thus are fratricidal murderers, the armed uprising has thus caused the terrible situation which aggressive fascism has set up in Austria in the form of its bloody regime! So it was wrong to take up arms, not only now but under any circumstances whatever. Thus the English Labor Party.

-The organ of the Polish social-democracy (P.P.S.), Robotnik, indulges in historical philosophizing. It draws parallels between the Paris Commune and the armed uprising in Vienna. It writes:

"Both Vienna and Paris were almost cut off from the rest of the country and did not arouse any corresponding response. Whereas the French petty bourgeoisie to a large extent supported the Commune, the Vienna petty bourgeoisie followed Fey or Hitler." Robotnik does not give here a clear and unequivocal answer to the question: Was it right to take up arms? But it does give an indirect answer. Robotnik would like us to forget that the uprising in Paris in 1871 was confined to Paris alone. The February uprising in Austria did not begin in Vienna but in Linz, and broke out simultaneously in almost all political centers of the country (Graz, Linz, Innsbruck) and in almost all industrial centers. Vienna was not cut off from the rest of the country. The uprising was not less powerful in the provinces (Bruck-an-der-Mur, Steyr, Linz, etc.) than in Vienna itself. The other part of the parallel, that about the petty bourgeoisie, is no less lying. A part of the French petty bourgeoisie supported Thiers, the leader of the counter-revolution, and the Versailles troops during the Paris Commune no less than did one part of the Vienna petty bourgeoisie support the Heimwehr. Those sections of the petty bourgeoisie who followed Hitler stood aloof from the struggle. Among the strata which supported Dollfuss and Fey considerable vacillations against the completion of the process of fascization by means of armed force were to be observed before and during the uprising.

This social-democratic conception means: There was not a revolutionary situation in Austria, the proletariat was isolated, the bourgeoisie enjoyed the unlimited support of all small property owners in town and country.

-The third way of appraising the situation, from which the answer to the question whether it was right to take up arms may be deduced, comes from the leader of the Schutzbund and the military-political specialist of Austrian social-democracy. Julius Deutsch declared to the correspondent of the organ of Belgian social-democracy, Le Peuple:

"It was not the leaders of the Party who determined the hour of struggle. . .The

final provocation, that at Linz, caused the cup to run over, and the patience of our comrades broke. The central committee of the Party could not then do otherwise than follow this signal for struggle. . . The population, though sympathizing with the fighters, remained for the most part aloof from the conflict."

This opinion seems to be distinguishable from that of the Daily Herald or Robotnik. The main question here is the moment of the armed uprising, not the justification of the use of force in general or the question whether a revolutionary crisis or a revolutionary situation existed in Austria when the workers took up arms. However, this statement does not give a clear answer to the question either.

The lack of clarity in these views may create the impression among the social-democratic workers that there were three opinions prevalent in the Second International, from which three different answers may be deduced to the question: Was it right to take up arms?

However, these three opinions, outwardly divided, have one meaning. One conclusion follows from the three opinions: It was wrong to take up arms.

Not all of them say this as plainly as did Plekhanov after the Moscow uprising of 1905. Not only the technique of war, of the armed uprising, has been further developed since the time when the ideological leader of the Mensheviks stabbed the revolutionary workers in the back; the technique of demagoguery, the technique of deceiving the people, has undergone a great development, has been reduced to a fine art.

If one takes the matter lightly, if one does not take into consideration the waverers, the despairers, those who still believe the social-democratic leaders, one can only answer the question as follows: "The uprising itself is an answer to Otto Bauer's view that a 'counter-revolutionary situation' prevailed in Austria and that there was not a revolutionary crisis, not an immediate revolutionary situation."

But we cannot be content with this answer. We must subject the situation at the moment of the uprising to a thorough analysis, just as we have done above in regard to the road of Austria towards the revolutionary crisis. Only a concrete analysis of the class forces and their relations on the eve of the uprising can lead us to an answer which really carries conviction.

## **How Austrian Social-Democracy Views the Revolution Situation**

Before we examine the situation on the eve of the uprising, we would first like to give an idea of how Austrian social-democracy visualizes the historical situation, the moment which, in its opinion, is mature for revolution. We will take as a basis not the theoretical treatises of the Austro-Marxists—those writings in which they have displayed their sophistical arts in their full brilliance. We will take as our basis a definite example of their behavior in a definite situation—their attitude to a definite appeal, an appeal for revolutionary struggle.

Immediately after the seizure of power by the Hungarian proletariat, the revolutionary government of the Soviet Republic of Hungary addressed an appeal to the Austrian Workers' Soviets. In answer to this appeal the National Executive Committee of the Workers' Soviets of Austria sent a letter on March 23, 1919, to the proletariat of Hungary. The letter was signed by Friedrich Adler and contains this passage:

"You have appealed to us to follow your example. We would gladly do so from our very hearts, but at the moment we unfortunately cannot. In our country there is no more food. Even our scanty supplies of bread are due only to the supply trains sent us by the Allies, which makes us completely the slaves of the Allies." Thus, they preferred to remain slaves of the Allies and to go on starving for the bourgeois republic.

The Austrian workers were not content with this answer. The Austrian Communists conducted a bitter struggle in the Workers' Soviets against the social-democratic answer. The leaders of Austrian social-democracy felt themselves obliged to define more clearly their opinion as to when the hour of capitalism would strike in Austria, when the moment for revolution in Austria would come. This was done by the *Arbeiterzeitung* of March 23, 1919:

"When the storm of proletarian revolution sweeps away the bourgeois governments in the neighboring countries, and the proletariat rises in the Allied countries as well, when the chain of hunger, by which we are bound fast to the Allied bourgeoisie today, will be broken, and when proletarian governments can give us coal and food. . . then the day may come when we too will be able to go the way of the Soviets. . . For the present there is no other safe path than the path of democracy."

To be sure it must be said that these elements of the revolutionary situation, which the Austro-Marxists regarded as essential before the path of struggle for Soviet Power could be taken in 1919, were not present even at the moment of the uprising in February 1934. However, this stale excuse, even at that

time, not only signified the demand for a legally attested to, hundred per cent security of victory in the struggle for the power of the workers' Soviets. It signified also the opposite of the revolutionary struggle, the holding down of the revolutionary forces of the proletariat. Many even of those who cannot be convinced in any other way will have been convinced by the events in Vienna as to the results to which the "safe path of democracy" has led—the path in which Austrian social-democracy put its trust.

Marxism gives a different characterization of the situation in which the struggle for power by the armed uprising of the proletariat can and must be begun.

## **Did Elements of Revolutionary Situation Exist in February, 1934?**

It is an elementary duty of every revolutionary not to play at armed uprising. But it is an equally elementary duty to take advantage of a situation which is ripe for an armed uprising, to seize power by all means, without hesitation, without wavering. The revolutionary situation which arises from the state of the relations of class forces inside and outside a country provides not only the possibility for an armed uprising but also, to a lesser or greater extent, the chance of the victory of the armed uprising and the possibility of maintaining revolutionary State power when it has been set up.

What was the situation in Austria when the armed uprising began? Let us begin with the external political prerequisites for the revolutionary situation in Austria in order to answer the question: Did the uprising have chances of victory, would the Austrian working class, had it achieved Soviet Power, have been able to maintain power in its hands?

One reason why we begin with the external political prerequisites of victory is because Austrian social-democracy, as we have seen, has always repeated ad nauseam that all problems of Austrian political life are decided exclusively or in the first instance by external political factors. Every Austrian worker remembers the form of prayer which the Austro-Marxists of the "Left" and Right, both Otto Bauer and Karl Renner, according to the given situation, shouted forth to the world or whispered into the ears of the discontented workers and functionaries: "Our poor little Austria! We are so small, so poor, we can't do anything. Everything is decided in Geneva, where the great powers in the League of Nations hold the reins in their hands."

On the eve of the uprising the European situation was, briefly, as follows:

The center of the extremely involved situation was occupied by the German question—the problem of the arming of Hitler Germany and the campaign of the national-socialists for the "incorporation" of Austria. Around these problems the antagonisms between Germany and the anti-revisionist bloc under the leadership of France—the bloc to which the two neighboring states of Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia also adhered—were sharpened to an extreme degree. On the question of Germany's arming the three leading imperialist great powers—England, France and Italy—were unable to find a common denominator for their policy. Between Italy, Austria's other great fascist neighbor, and Germany, relations were also strained, and it was precisely as a result of the intensification of the national-socialist agitation of Hitler Germany for the "incorporation" of Austria that events were moving in the direction of a further sharpening of the antagonisms. This sharpening of Italian-German antagonisms on the Anschluss question also had its effect on the attitude of Horthy Hungary, causing the latter to favor a rapprochement with Dollfuss Austria under Italian protection. This made the relations between Hungary and Czechoslovakia, and also between the two other countries of the Little Entente (Yugoslavia and Rumania) even more hostile than usual.

The commanding authority of the Socialist great power, the Soviet Union, as a vital factor of international politics on the eve of the uprising, remains beyond all question.

Under the strained relations prevailing in Europe since Hitler's advent to power, in face of a situation created by the conclusion of a whole series of comprehensive facts, no individual State, however powerful it may be, can independently, regardless of France on the one hand or the Soviet Union on the other, take any decisive military step without incurring the danger of counteraction on the part of the other. This applies especially to military actions which affect the state of affairs created in Europe by the Versailles Treaty or which make for the revision of this treaty.

Hitler's Germany, obviously the main enemy of a proletarian Austria, could certainly not secure the consent of France and of the Little Entente to an intervention against Austria. An attempt by Hitler to invade Austria would have meant not only a storm of popular resistance against the military intervention of the Nazis, but in all probability it would also have meant war between Germany and the bloc of powers under the hegemony of France. The other danger, that of

intervention by Italy, could hardly have become a reality without Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia, and a rapid collaboration between Italy and the Little Entente was not to be expected even against a revolutionary Austria. A Hungarian intervention would have brought about immediate war measures on the part of Czechoslovakia, Rumania and Yugoslavia, for such an intervention would have meant—among other things—the occupation of Burgenland, the formerly Hungarian part of Austria, and would thus have ushered in a war by Hungarian fascism for the re-conquest of Slovakia from Czech imperialism. Any intervention on the part of Germany or Hungary would have raised the question of the forcible revision of the Versailles frontiers; any intervention on the part of Italy would have been conceived as a death-blow to the national and international interests of Germany and France, not to mention the interests of Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia.

Europe, it is true, was not split into such hostile camps as was the case at the time of the October Revolution. The situation today, however, was and is quite different from what it was at the time of the intervention against Soviet Hungary, when at the time of the outbreak of the proletarian revolution in March 1919 the vanquished disarmed imperialist camp of the Central Powers was opposed by a united camp of the Allies. Beside this, intervention against Soviet Hungary began at once and the Hungarian proletariat was able to wage a war for months on end against imperialist intervention. This war ended with the defeat of the revolution, first and foremost because the Hungarian social-democratic leaders, in conjunction with their Austrian colleagues and acting under the direct orders of Allied imperialism, sabotaged the revolution both from within and from without.

But as a result of the policy of German fascism and of the questions of armaments and of revision raised by it, a rapid collaboration of the European powers, in particular of the countries bordering upon Austria, against the victorious Soviet revolution would hardly have been possible on the eve and at the moment of uprising. Thus the problem of gaining time, of obtaining a respite, would not have been insoluble for the Austrian revolution in the event of its victory. And this provided one important external political element of a revolutionary situation, of the situation suitable for an armed uprising, of the chances of victory in the struggle for power and of successful struggle for maintaining State power when it had been won.



## **International Proletariat Was Ready to Defend the Revolution**

If the relations in the camp of the capitalist states in Europe on the eve and at the moment of the uprising were such that a victorious revolution in Austria would not necessarily have had to reckon with an immediate rallying together of its imperialist enemies, the situation of the European proletarian revolution was still more favorable. A Soviet Austria could count on a great and widespread revolutionary workers' movement in Europe coming to its protection.

In France—a general strike of the greatest dimensions, a common struggle against fascism on the part of Communist and social-democratic workers organized in revolutionary and reformist trade unions, a real united front of the militant masses. In England—preparations for great mass actions against unemployment, really reaching a high stage of development, a widespread anti-war movement which has penetrated into the reformist trade unions too. In Czechoslovakia—a growing revolutionary movement coupled with the beginning of an internal political crisis, the beginning of inflation, an incipient governmental crisis, and the growing readiness of the Czech workers, including those in the social-democratic and reformist camp, to form a united front with the Communist workers against fascism. In Hungary—great strike movements under the leadership of the revolutionary trade union opposition, coupled with growing influence of the Communist Party on the mass actions of the working class. In Germany—the beginning of a new wave in the revolutionary upsurge, coupled with the unbroken strength of the Communist Party of Germany, with the growing will of the working class to take action against fascism, and the growing readiness of former members of the Social-Democratic Party and of the reformist trade unions for the revolutionary united front. In Switzerland—a great anti-fascist movement. In Italy—movements of unrest even in the fascist trade unions.

The state of feeling among the workers in the neighboring countries at the time of the uprising and after its suppression, as well as the international mass actions against the Dollfuss government, confirm the words of Comrade Stalin, spoken at the Seventeenth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union: "The masses of the people have not yet reached the stage when they are ready to storm the citadel of capitalism, but the idea of storming it is maturing in the minds of the masses. . .there can hardly be any doubt about that."

In the light of the situation described above, it is hardly possible to

conceive what effect a victorious uprising, ending with the setting up of Soviet Power in Austria, would have had on the European working class. It can be readily seen that the uprising would have become a storm signal drawing the masses of the European working class at an increasing tempo ever closer and closer to the storming of the citadel of capitalism. And this would have meant further security for the Austrian revolution against a possible intervention.

Meanwhile, we will not confine ourselves to an analysis of the international prerequisites which determine the presence or absence of a revolutionary situation, of a favorable moment for the armed uprising. An analysis of the class relations in Austria provides no less justification, in fact it even provides more justification, for an affirmative answer to our question: Was it right to take up arms?

## **The Crisis of the Rulers**

The advance of Austria towards a revolutionary crisis, as we have seen above, was proceeding rapidly. Since the beginning of 1934, especially in the month of February, there was an intensification of the contradictions within the hostile class forces which opposed the revolution of the working class. The struggle between the Nazis and the Fatherland Front had become accentuated to the highest degree. This was shown not only by the bursting paper bombs—German fascism's favorite article of export to Austria; it was proved above all by the fact that the Austrian Nazis stood aloof from the struggle of Austro-fascism against the revolutionary uprising. Even within the Fatherland Front important signs of disintegration are to be observed: secret negotiations by the Heimwehr leader, Count Alberti, with the Nazis; the arrest of a number of Heimwehr leaders who were conspiring with the Nazis; peasant demonstrations against the Heimwehr; the stand taken by Dr. Stumpf of Linz, provincial governor of Upper Austria, against the Heimwehr demands; a whole series of attacks by the Christian-Socialists against the Heimwehr demands; the demonstrative opposition by Kuntschak, the leader of the labor wing in the Christian-Social Party, against the abolition of Vienna's autonomy; increasing resistance by the Christian-Social Party to its being dissolved by the Dollfuss-Starhemberg bloc and to self-dissolution as well. Relations between Dollfuss and the Heimwehr were strained. The Landbund resisted the bloc formed by these two parties. Almost all these factors became more involved between the beginning of the year and the outbreak of the armed uprising.

The cleavage in the camp of counter revolution, the disorganization of its

forces, had to be utilized by the working class for a decisive struggle against fascism. These contradictions within the camp of the bourgeoisie were a sure sign of the beginning of a revolutionary situation. To take advantage of these contradictions was the commandment of the hour.

The working class was pressing for a revolutionary utilization of these contradictions and of the revolutionary situation created by them. Austrian social-democracy wanted to utilize them likewise, but after its own fashion. Its aim was to persuade the Dollfuss government to allow social-democracy to play at parliamentary opposition against it without the convocation of parliament; for this purpose they wanted to conclude a tacit alliance with Dollfuss.

But precisely because of the contradictions within the counter-revolutionary camp, the Dollfuss group was unable to accept social-democracy's proposal of an alliance. The continuation of the tactics of the "lesser evil" by social-democracy, its search for allies in the camp of Austro-fascism, meant nothing more nor less than the refusal to take advantage of the elements of a revolutionary situation provided by the contradictions in the bourgeois camp. It meant giving direct immediate support to counter revolution against the proletarian revolution.

## **The Petty Bourgeoisie Was Wavering**

Even during the uprising Austrian fascism was unable to mobilize all the forces of the bourgeoisie against the proletarian uprising. This was proved not only by the fact that the Nazis stood aloof during the battles of the counter-revolutionary forces against the insurrectionists, but also by the attitude of the Landbund, of the Christian-Socialist organizations which gave no active help to the soldiery, the Heimwehr, the police, the gendarmerie. Nay, more! The cowardice of the Heimwehr gangs, of the Ostmaerkische Sturmscharen, the refusal of many members of the Heimwehr and Sturmscharen to enlist for active service against the insurrectionists is not a "spiritual phenomenon", as the Austro-Marxists would have us believe, but a political fact which is to be explained by the vacillations of the petty bourgeois and peasant elements in this vanguard of counter revolution.

The fact that the contradictions among the different strata of the bourgeoisie, of the petty bourgeoisie, among the different sections of the counter-revolutionary camp, were so deep that even the armed uprising of the working class was unable to unite the bourgeoisie, is a sure proof that one

important element of a revolutionary situation was present at the moment of the uprising—namely, the split in the camp of counter revolution and the inability of the bourgeoisie to overcome its contradictions. But this proves something more. It appears that the famous "Realpolitik" of Austrian social-democracy, based on the arguments of Otto Bauer: "We must, above all, beware of driving together the blacks and the browns, the clerico-fascists and the national-socialists," the argument that the working class, in order to avoid this "great evil", must "practice restraint and self-control"—this "Realpolitik" of Austro-Marxism has shown itself to be nothing more nor less than a cowardly adventurist policy. It is an adventurist policy when masses, classes, their relations of forces and moods are not taken into account.

The presence of the second important element of the revolutionary situation, which results from the internal conditions, may be established with no less certainty: the bankruptcy of democracy in Austria.

The social-democratic leaders themselves testify to this. They have declared more than once that no one but social-democracy upholds the bourgeois republic in Austria. They were right. Almost all petty-bourgeois organizations, which in their party adherence showed a highly variegated confusion, have taken a stand in one form or another for the abolition of bourgeois democracy and for the Staendeverfassung.\* They have only made "democratic" reservations. They only wanted the introduction of the Staendeordnung to be achieved by constitutional methods. It was none other than Otto Bauer who, as the representative of the "Left" Wing of this petty-bourgeois democracy, advocated concessions to the Staendeverfassung, provided the latter was based on universal suffrage and was introduced in a constitutional way.

"It is precisely in the struggle for economic democracy" [declared Otto Bauer] "that the working class meets the professional aspirations of the petty bourgeoisie and peasantry on a common plane, upon which an understanding is possible." (Kampf, January, 1934.)

Neither the Nazis nor the Heimwehr fascists—this was clearly shown at the time of the armed uprising—had any broad, active masses from the camp of

---

\* A constitution based on the medieval division of Society into estates.

petty-bourgeois democracy behind them. But petty-bourgeois democracy

compromised itself completely in the eyes of the masses. The experiences of the Hitler dictatorship mobilized the broadest masses of the working class against fascism and roused the great masses of the urban petty bourgeoisie and the poor peasants against it. The democratic illusions, the chimera of constitutional methods—these bulwarks of the tactic of the "lesser evil", these democratic obstacles to the revolutionary struggle—were quickly disappearing. The cannons of the counter revolution and the machine guns of the insurrectionists shot these democratic illusions to pieces on the very first day of the uprising. And the disappearance of democratic illusions, of democratic deception, represented the most vital element of the immediate revolutionary situation in Austria.

## **The Masses Wanted the Armed Struggle**

Fascist counter revolution on the one hand, marching forward but not yet thoroughly organized, unable to overcome its inner contradictions; and on the other hand, the isolation of the social-democratic leaders who lost their heads and began by their policy to alienate themselves from the masses—these two factors brought about the development of a third essential element of the revolutionary situation: the mass desire for armed resistance to fascism, the readiness of the working masses for the struggle for power.

That this element of the revolutionary situation was present was proved by the workers in Vienna, in Linz, in Steyr, in Bruck-an-der-Mur, and in other industrial centers. They proved this under gunfire, in the rattle of machine-gun fire, to the bursting of hand grenades. And if still larger masses did not fight with arms in the uprising, that was only because the social-democratic leaders prevented the distribution of the great stores of arms and munitions among the workers who wanted to fight, because the trade union leaders prevented the workers from being drawn into a political mass strike, and finally because the lack of political and strategical leadership in the uprising made it impossible for the masses who stood aloof, but who were sympathetic or wavering, to be won over to the side of the uprising by a vigorous offensive policy.

All these elements of a revolutionary situation—determined by the internal and external situation—were present. The degree of maturity of these elements of the revolutionary situation was different. But the combination of all these elements gave every worker the right, made it the duty of every worker, to take up arms in order to prevent the completion of the fascization of Austria, to prevent naked terror against the working class, the dissolution of the organizations of the workers, and their disarming for the benefit of the fascist

gangs, by a life-and-death struggle for power.

The further maturing of the situation depended upon the armed uprising itself, upon the political-strategical leadership of the uprising, upon the tactical victories of the revolutionary fighting forces over the troops of the counter revolution, upon the attainment of military preponderance by the revolting workers over the soldiery of the fascist gangs-which, as we have seen, could without doubt have been achieved.

The beaten social-democratic leaders are trying to persuade the unbeaten Austrian workers that they, the workers, did not choose the right moment for the uprising, that they allowed the moment of armed struggles to be forced upon them by the counter revolution.

If the moment of the uprising could have been chosen more correctly, then it would not have been later, as the social-democratic leaders assert, but, if anything, sooner.

During the uprising on February 14, International Information, the bulletin of the Second International, forwarded an article by an unnamed leader of Austrian social-democracy to its party press. This unnamed leader wrote as follows in regard to the outbreak of the struggles:

"If the Party leaders had succeeded in asserting their line [i.e., the line of not joining battle] up to the last moment, even then the struggle would probably not have been avoided. For the enemy was bent on committing acts which would in any case have compelled the workers to fight, if they did not want to surrender to fascist dictatorship without a struggle. But the struggle would probably have been better understood by the broad masses of the people, if it had not been begun until after an open fascist coup d'etat."

From the illegal journal of the Social-Democratic Party of Austria, Der Ruf, on January 8, we may guess how the leaders of Austrian social-democracy wanted "to determine the moment of struggle". The article of the party executive refers to the strategy of the Russian tsarist commander-in-chief against Napoleon I. The Austrian workers are recommended to adopt this strategy which, as is well known, was to avoid a struggle until Napoleon had conquered Moscow and not till then to take the offensive and defeat Napoleon's armies.

## Putting It Off Till-Doomsday

In the spring of 1919, at a time when Austria was wedged in between two Soviet Republics—the Hungarian and the Bavarian—the leaders of Austrian social-democracy fixed one date for the beginning of the struggle against the bourgeoisie, for the power of the working class. According to this strategic plan, the struggle was to be begun on the day after which proletarian governments in the countries most remote from Austria would be able to provide Austria with coal and food. Until this time the Austrian workers should prefer to continue along the "safe path" of democracy as "well-fed" slaves of the Allies, instead of overthrowing the power of their own bourgeoisie and becoming masters of their own fate. The Austrian workers have remained slaves of their own bourgeoisie and of the foreign imperialists, have remained starving wage slaves of their own bourgeoisie and of the foreign finance capital. Meanwhile, however, the "safe path" of democracy has proved instead to be the path to fascism.

Almost fifteen years have passed since then. New times a new date fixed. Austria, still a republic but no longer a democratic republic, is wedged in under fascist government between the fascist countries of Germany, Hungary and Italy. Austro-Marxism wants to fix a new date for the working class for the beginning of the struggle for power. Now the struggle is to begin on the day on which the capital of their own country, the center of Austria, the main bulwark of social-democracy, is occupied by fascist troops. Until then the Austrian workers should prefer to surrender step by step the last remnants of bourgeois democracy, to keep their weapons stored away instead of using them themselves, in order that the fascists can then take them more easily.

This was how Austrian social-democracy, on the basis of Austro-Marxism, prescribed the moment which the workers should choose for the beginning of the struggle.

This strategic recipe for the choice of the moment for struggle is the best proof that the workers in Austria did their duty when they took up arms. The allegations of the Second International and of its bankrupt leaders that there was not a revolutionary situation in Austria at the moment of the uprising, that the workers chose the wrong moment for the uprising, are not only a slander against the insurrectionists but also a direct continuation of the attempts to hold back the Austrian workers from the struggle, which they have not relinquished. It is a continuation of the attempts of the social-democratic leaders to find allies in the fascist camp at a time when the workers were calling for arms against the fascist

attacks, in order wholly to subject the Austrian workers to fascism. It is an attempt to restrain the brothers of the Austrian workers in all countries from solidarity and active aid, to restrain them from revolutionary struggle against fascism.

It is hypocrisy, it is betrayal of the heroism of the revolting workers, when the social-democrats on the one hand express admiration of the insurrectionists, both living and dead, and at the same time—whether openly or in veiled language—say: It was wrong to take up arms. It was right, it was a duty, it was a necessity to take up arms.



## VIII. TOWARDS NEW STRUGGLES

In the February uprising the Austrian proletariat has fought one of the greatest revolutionary battles of the post-war period. The significance of these struggles extends far beyond the borders of Austria, far beyond the bounds of its history. The lessons of the uprising must be studied not only by the Austrian working class but by the proletariat of the whole world. The uprising meant not only the rising of the Austrian workers against fascism. It is a prelude to further revolutionary struggles, which are ushering in the new round of revolutions and wars. The uprising signified a mighty rebellion against social-democracy, against its program and tactics, and moreover, against the most "Left" edition of social-democracy in the Second International.

### **What Has Collapsed in Austria?**

Before and during the uprising—not merely after the uprising—the Social-Democratic Party of Austria collapsed.

It is not yet destroyed: the destruction of social-democracy, as a form of bourgeois ideology in the working class, will not be the work of fascism, but the work of the revolutionary working class and its vanguard, the Communist Party.

The collapse of Austrian social-democracy, however, became a fact when one part of its adherents began to take the path of armed uprising against the will of the party leaders while another part—the size of which it is as yet difficult to estimate—has openly taken the path of fascism.

This latter part of social-democracy consisted of a group of leaders of the railwaymen's trade union, of members of the Lower Austrian provincial party executive, headed by Schneidmadl, the social-democratic provincial councillor and member of the party Central Committee, and the leaders of the party organizations of Carinthia, headed by deputy provincial governor Zeinitzer, and Mayor Pichler. The social-democratic vice-mayor of Salzburg and the leaders of the social-democratic organization in Vorarlberg also belonged to this group. These elements have openly supported Austro-fascism and are still continuing to do so. They have for months past possessed, and they still possess now, their organizations which are openly financed by the Dollfuss government.

It was with these elements that the Social-Democratic Party leaders, headed by Otto Bauer, Julius Deutsch and Karl Seitz, maintained unity! The Austro-Marxist leaders did not sound the alarm in order to mobilize the workers

against this fascist clique. Nay, it was precisely these elements who were the real mediators between the "Left" Austro-Marxists and the Dollfuss government up to the time when, at the beginning of the uprising, they openly called upon the workers to take the side of the government against the insurrectionists.

However, the main cause of the collapse is not that these elements have left the Social-Democratic Party, not that they have thrown aside the hitherto carefully preserved mask of socialism and democracy. The collapse inevitably came to pass as a result of the fact that the Social-Democratic Party at the beginning of the uprising, during its course and afterwards disintegrated into a number of groups. This split cannot be cemented together by any artificial pastes or plasters. It was brought about by the Social-Democratic Party leaders, who held back large sections of their members from the struggle, while other sections of the membership were fighting in a united front with the Communists, fighting with arms in their hands in the fire of civil war against the fascists.

The collapse of Austrian social-democracy is a fact which possesses extraordinarily great international importance. This collapse has occurred in a country where the Social-Democratic Party not only had the great majority of the working class behind it but had embraced it in its organizations.

The Annual of the Austrian Labor Movement for 1932 (published by the party committee of the Social-Democratic Labor Party of German Austria, Vienna 1933) boasts of the fact that "every sixth adult person in Austria is a member of our party" and that "now as before, every fourth man and every tenth woman. . . and in Vienna, almost every second man and every fifth woman" is a member of the Social-Democratic Party. In the center of the state, in Vienna, the municipal administration was under social-democratic leadership, while in the provincial governments there were 24 social-democrats beside 34 Christian-Social officials. Out of 11 deputy provincial governors, five were social-democrats. Three hundred and sixty-nine municipalities had social-democratic mayors, while in 337 municipalities the social-democrats had the majority. They had the Labor Chamber in their hands, social insurance was administered by social-democratic functionaries, the trade unions were dominated by a powerful social-democratic bureaucracy.

Even after the coup d'etat of March 7, 1933, the Social-Democratic Party leaders rejected the proposals of the Communist Party of Austria for a united front on the basis of concrete proposals for struggle against fascism and against the offensive of capital, for the alleged reason that the working class in Austria

was not split as was the case in other countries; the unity of the proletariat, they alleged, was embodied in the Social-Democratic Party of Austria and in the free trade unions.

In the whole of the Second International, Austrian social-democracy had the reputation of being "social-democracy of a special sort". It was the "Left" Wing in the Labor and Socialist International. Its so-called Austro-Marxism signified that it put forward special pretensions in that Second International which has long ago openly thrown Marxism into the dustbin. It aspired to be a "better" brand of social-democracy than the German one. It wanted to be the living proof of the fact that the Communists are "slanderers" when they describe the Social-Democratic Parties as social-fascist because of their behavior in regard to fascism.

Nay, more! The Social-Democratic Party of Austria came to be known in the whole Second International as the party of the other path. "Red Vienna" with its social-democratic city government, with its municipal policy, was lauded as the realization of the "democratic way to Socialism". The policy of Austrian social-democracy was proclaimed as the embodiment of the path which leads the workers to Socialism without sacrifice, without civil war. The Austrian path was supposed to be the "path of the highly developed European industrial countries to Socialism," as opposed to the Bolshevik path with its dictatorship of the proletariat, Soviet Power and civil war. Austrian social-democracy was the embodiment of democratic socialism.

What then is it that has collapsed in Austria? What does the collapse of the most "Left" party of the Second International mean?

This collapse of Austrian social-democracy means, first of all, the collapse of a considerable part of the illusions among the workers to the effect that the Social-Democratic Parties, if only they have the majority of the working class behind them, have realized or might be able to realize the unity of the working class. The conduct of the Social-Democratic Parties at the beginning and during the course of the imperialist world war was an eloquent proof of the fact that the unity of the working class behind social-democracy means unity with the bourgeoisie. The history of Austrian social-democracy before and during the uprising shows that the historical role of social-democracy is to split the working class at all costs, as soon as the unity with the bourgeoisie, which social-democracy upholds, is endangered. The "mighty unshakable unity" of Austrian social-democracy was shattered to pieces at the moment when it became clear

that the Austrian workers would no longer stomach unity with the bandits of the Fatherland Front.

Another illusion has likewise collapsed—the illusion to the effect that any organization of the working class is a weapon in the class struggle. When it came to a fight, to real class war against the bourgeoisie, the organizations of social-democracy, all their executive committees, were proved to be not weapons but hindrances in the class struggle. The trade union leaders directly prevented the railwaymen's strike. The leaders of social-democracy and of the trade unions did not issue the call for a general strike. During the uprising the trade unions closed the treasuries against the fighting workers and allowed the tremendous sums of trade union money to be attached by the police. The cooperatives did not supply any food to the insurrectionists. The Schutzbund leaders did not give the signal for armed struggle, they prevented the distribution of arms among the workers who were eager to fight. Only an organization which is guided by revolutionary policy is a weapon in the class struggle. The Communist Party of Austria comprised only a fraction of the number of members which social-democracy had behind it. Despite this, it was this Party which called upon the workers for a general strike, despite this it was its secret printshops, its hectograph machines, which alone made it possible to carry on political agitation among the masses during the struggle. The Communist Party does not possess any great military organization with ex-officers at its head; nevertheless it was the Communist workers who, immediately after the uprising, tried to convert the naive defensive tactics of the military leaders of the Schutzbund into offensive tactics which were correct both from the political and from the military standpoint. Many Austrian workers let themselves be blinded by the size of the social-democratic organizations and let themselves be kept from joining the Communist organizations by the fact that they were numerically small. The uprising has shown that even a small revolutionary organization is a weapon in the hands of the working class, whereas a large, non-revolutionary, reformist, opportunist organization is only so much dead weight on the shoulders of the workers.

Yet a third illusion has melted away to nothing in the fire of the uprising—the illusion to the effect that some "third path" is possible between revolutionary and reformist tactics, between Bolshevism and social-democracy, between dictatorship of the proletariat and dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. Many Austrian workers, and perhaps also many social-democrats in other countries, well-

meaningly thought that Austrian social-democracy with its Austro-Marxism really did represent some "third path" between Bolshevism and social-democracy of the usual sort, that it represented something "special", something "better" in the Second International. However comical it may have sounded to those who knew the Soviet Union and the municipal policy of Vienna when the "municipal enterprises" of Vienna and the Vienna arsenal were compared, as "communal" undertakings of coming Socialism, to the giants of the Soviet Union—which really are the property of the proletariat—when the Viennese truck gardens were compared to the Socialist agricultural policy, nevertheless there were many workers who well-meaningly held the view that this democratic path would nevertheless really lead them more cheaply to Socialism, as Otto Bauer has assured us. Social-democracy of the "special sort", "better" social-democracy, cost the Austrian workers fifteen years of a hard path of sacrifices—a path which has finally led to fascism. Even if fascism will be short-lived—as we hope, as we wish, and as we are fighting to make it—nevertheless it will cost many more bloody sacrifices than a civil war of the ruling working class against the overthrown bourgeoisie. For fifteen years the Austrian workers starved in the hope of a democratic path to Socialism; fifteen years of sacrifices under the leadership of social-democracy have borne "fruits" such as Dollfuss, Fey and Starhemberg.

Let the bankrupt social-democratic leaders plaintively croon the old Vienna street song, "Ach, Du lieber Augustin, alles ist hin!" Before the workers who hoped to reach Socialism by the democratic path, the broad highway of another path lies open—the path of struggle for proletarian dictatorship, for Soviet Power, the path of the Soviet Union, of the Communist International, of the Communist Party of Austria. This path will mean sacrifices, this path costs pains, work, endurance and blood. But this path leads to the rule of the working class and through the dictatorship of the proletariat, through Soviet Power, it leads to Socialism.

The situation after the suppression of the uprising in Austria is not similar in every respect to the situation after the suppression of the Moscow uprising of 1905, for in the period of the general crisis of capitalism, in the time of the direct transition to a new round of revolutions and wars, the dates set by history are shorter than they then were; nevertheless the Austrian workers who are entering upon the new path, the path of struggle for Soviet Power, must have before their eyes the words which Lenin wrote on the results of the Moscow uprising:

"The reaction cannot do more than bombard barricades, houses and street crowds. But the revolution can develop on a scale ever so much greater than the battle of Moscow fighting units, it can grow ever so much wider and deeper. . . . The base of the revolutionary crisis has become immeasurably broader—the blade must now be sharpened to a keener edge." (The Revolution of 1905.)

The Austrian workers, who have hitherto followed social-democracy, have gained something in the struggles and through the struggles which fifteen years of revolutionary propaganda, of revolutionary agitation could not explain to them clearly enough; they have gained their own political experience of what social-democracy and the "Left" edition of its policy mean. They have experienced in their own persons the meaning of democratic socialism, of the social-democratic "Real-politik". The broad working masses' own experience is a sure foundation for the work of the Communist Party of Austria.

### **"But Suppose They Have Learned Something After All..."**

But if the most harmful illusions which Austrian social-democracy has disseminated among the workers with supreme cunning for many long years have been torn to pieces by the bullets of the armed forces of the insurrectionists and of fascism, nevertheless the hope may still arise in the minds of many social-democratic workers: "But suppose after all—Suppose the leaders of social-democracy despite everything have learned something from the events, suppose our leaders have been taught to be wiser by experience?"

What have the leaders of Austrian social-democracy learned from the events?

One part as we have seen—has learned fascism. Another part—there are reliable reports to hand in regard to this—is still trying, from prison, to convince Dollfuss that it would be the better policy of Austro-fascism to rely upon the social-democratic workers against the Nazis, and declares itself ready to help Austro-fascism in this respect. What has the "Left" Otto Bauer learned from the events?

We have not yet been able to obtain Otto Bauer's pamphlet, *The Uprising of the Austrian Workers*. We have only read parts of it in the social-democratic press and reviews by the social-democratic newspapers on the pamphlet itself.

Otto Bauer engages in "self-criticism". He takes the responsibility for the events, for the tactics of social-democracy, upon himself, for his reputation among the masses is that of the theoretician and political leader of the "Lefts".

As a "Left", he takes the blame upon himself in order to prove that his colleagues Renner, Seitz, Danneberg and others, who are considered "Rights", wanted to pursue a correct policy, and that it was he alone, the "Left", who forced incorrect tactics upon them. This artful maneuver means that he is attempting to explain to the social-democratic workers that "I, Otto Bauer, as a 'Left', voiced your impatience as against Renner, Seitz and the other members of the central committee. Through me, you forced a 'Left' tactic upon them. Your distaste for the policy of coalition with the Christian-Socialists led to disaster."

Of the three "tactical" mistakes to which Otto Bauer confesses in his pamphlet (one chapter of which has been reprinted in the *Neue Vorwaerts*), he describes two as "Left deviations".

These two "Left" mistakes, he alleges, consisted in the fact that Austrian social-democracy refused to tolerate the Christian-Social Buresch government in April 1932, the result of which was that the Christian-Socialists allied themselves with the Heimwehr and Dollfuss formed his coalition government with the Heimwehr. Further, that Renner, on account of a dispute with the Christian-Socialists, on the advice of Otto Bauer, resigned from his post as chairman of the parliament, in order to procure for the social-democrats the one vote more which was wanting against the government majority in order to protect the railway-men, against whom measures were being taken.

Hence it follows that the two tactical mistakes of social-democracy which led to disaster consisted in the fact that social-democracy did not "tolerate" the Buresch government and later the Dollfuss-Fey government.

Otto Bauer has taken a dose of parliamentary cretinism big enough to last him his whole life long. However, it must be said that his parliamentary cretinism is not so great as to prevent him from knowing that toleration does not consist of such parliamentary juggling as he would like to pretend. Toleration consists above all in holding back the working class from mass actions.

This form of toleration was practised by Austrian social-democracy with no less success than by its German brother party, which is a worthy rival to it.

But where there are "Left" deviations there are also "Right" ones. Otto Bauer was bound to have "Right" deviations as well, otherwise there would be no "two sides to every question"—this supreme virtue of the genuine petty bourgeois. So he writes that his "Right" mistake consisted in the fact that after the elimination of parliament, after the convocation of parliament had been

prevented by Dollfuss, this attack was not answered by a general strike. He writes:

"At that time we would perhaps have been able to win. But at that time we shrank back from the struggle. . . We avoided the struggle, because we wanted to spare the country the disaster of a bloody civil war. The civil war broke out eleven months later despite this, but under conditions which were much less favorable for us."

If Otto Bauer's recognition of his "Left" mistakes is designed to make the workers responsible for the disaster on account of their will to struggle, he confesses to his "Right" deviation in order to put the idea into the workers' heads that they were really fools for forcing on a general strike not at the right moment but at the wrong one. This is also intended as a blow against those oppositionist elements within the ranks of beaten social-democracy who are unwilling to recognize the bankrupt party leaders of the "Left" and the Right. In the foregoing chapters we have already explained how Austrian social-democracy wanted to determine the moment of a revolution, how it wanted to put off the revolution till doomsday. Now another maneuver has come to light—a maneuver, however, which has this feature in common with the previous maneuvers, namely, that it wants to fix the date either earlier or later, only not at the moment when the workers want to fight.

In regard to the Hapsburgs, the saying was current in Austria that they learned nothing and forgot nothing. This good quality of the Hapsburgs has been retained by the leaders of Austrian social-democracy, who for many years have been trained in this Hapsburg school. All hopes of an "improvement" are in vain. Come what may, whether the policy is "Left" or "Right", the defeat of the working class, according to Otto Bauer, is inevitable. He declares in his pamphlet that German social-democracy led the working class to defeat because it pursued a Right policy. In Hungary and Italy the policy of the "Left" social-democrats—the "policy akin to Communism"—ended in disaster.

This is not a mood of pessimism after a suppressed uprising; this is a political conception which has its foundations in a definite ideology—a conception whose basis is as follows: Capitalism is continuing on its path, towards a new recovery, to overcome its general crisis.



## **"The Causes of the Defeat of the Working Class Lie Deeper Than in the Tactics" (Otto Bauer)**

However, to comfort the Austrian workers, Otto Bauer says further that the deeper causes of defeat are not the tactical mistakes of social-democracy but the elemental occurrence of the urban and rural petty bourgeoisie turning away from social-democracy towards fascism. The "Left" and the "Right" mistakes could still have been avoided. But the turning of the middle strata towards fascism, he alleges, is an inevitable consequence of the advent of the "epoch of fascism". Thus it is not Otto Bauer, not the Social-Democratic Party leaders, who are responsible for this, but rather God Almighty, who failed to hear the prayers of the religious socialists so beloved by Austrian social-democracy. The turning of the urban and rural petty bourgeoisie towards fascism is a sign of the bankruptcy of democratic socialism. Austrian social-democracy proclaimed the necessity of a democratic policy instead of that of the struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat, for the alleged reason that democratic socialism would win over the middle strata to the side of the working class and thus prevent the isolation of the latter.

They pursued a petty-bourgeois policy in the working class, and by this petty-bourgeois policy, which has really only served the cause of the big bourgeoisie, they have set the petty bourgeoisie against the workers. This fact found its expression in the whole municipal policy of Vienna, in particular in the taxation policy of Breitner, the celebrated financial genius of the Vienna municipal administration. Democratic socialism could not, of course, get at the sources of capitalist exploitation, could not attack unearned income. The celebrated progressive taxes were nothing but a swindle. Rothschild, whose bank was subsidized at the taxpayers' expense, was less affected by Breitner's taxation policy than the smaller man—the innkeeper, the small trader, the small handicraftsman and the small coupon clipper. It was not the big capitalist who suffered from the competition of the municipal enterprises. This policy, which was a petty-bourgeois policy, since it could not and would not touch capitalist private property, was the real source of the turning of the petty bourgeoisie towards fascism in the towns. The agrarian policy of Austrian social-democracy, programmatically buttressed by Otto Bauer, was aimed at the protection of the rich peasants without any decisive line towards the expropriation of the big landowners. This policy was bound to alienate from the workers all strata of the rural population who wanted land, who wanted a taxation and credit policy directed against the rich peasants and big landowners. If, despite this, this

alienation has not taken on such dimensions as Otto Bauer would have us believe, that is only to be ascribed to the circumstance that one section of the small peasants, despite the policy of social-democracy, pinned their hopes on the working class and on the struggle against large land-ownership.

The example of the Bolsheviks, the example of the Soviet Union, shows that the great broad masses of petty bourgeoisie and small peasants can be successfully won over to the side of the working class only if the workers' Party carries through a really revolutionary proletarian policy, relentlessly crushes finance capital, the banks, the cartels, the big landowners. These great reserves of the proletarian revolution can be secured, their vacillations can be overcome, only if the proletarian Party cuts off the connection of these middle strata with large-scale capital by means of a really revolutionary policy, if the bourgeoisie is destroyed.

The turning of the middle strata towards fascism is not an elemental occurrence. It is the consequence of the social-democratic policy, of reformism, of petty-bourgeois influences in the ranks of the working class. Let the social-democratic workers decide what constitutes a true Realpolitik for the proletariat—social-democratic cringing before the bourgeoisie, or the unswerving proletarian class struggle.

## **No Hesitation in Deciding!**

The times demand a decision. The uprising in Austria has been suppressed, but not the working class! During the five days of the uprising a great part of the working class went through long years of revolutionary schooling.

The workers who have not surrendered their arms. have passed the first test of this revolutionary schooling. The workers who have turned their backs on social-democracy have given a still clearer proof of the fact that they know how to learn their lesson. The workers who have grasped that the unity of the working class can only be realized under the leadership of the Communist Party have shown that they have graduated from a veritable higher school of revolution during the five days of struggle. The suppression of the armed uprising has not solved a single problem of the revolutionary crisis in Austria. The feud in the bourgeois camp is greater than before the uprising and still continues to grow. The division of the spoils in the bourgeois apparatus of power splitting the Fatherland Front in two even more than before. The Heimwehr and the

Ostmaerkische Sturmscharen reproach one another with cowardice and marauding during the fighting. The striving for the restoration of the Hapsburg dynasty of bloody memory, which the Heimwehr, the aristocracy and the generals are pursuing, sharpens the contradictions in the fascist camp and causes an intensification of the foreign political pressure upon Austria. The national-socialists have come forward out of the reserved neutrality which they maintained during the uprising. Italy presents its bill, Hungary likewise. French imperialism exerts pressure on Dollfuss against his allies from the Heimwehr, who would like to barter away Austria wholesale to Italy for a restoration of the Hapsburgs. The dissolution of the trade unions, the fascization of the collective agreements, the courts-martial, the arrest of more than 6,000 workers, the driving of thousands of workers' families from house and home, have caused a wave of embitterment among the masses, who did not content themselves for long with smouldering indignation but immediately found vent in actions of protest against fascist terror.

The uprising was not only a school in the general sense. It was a school of the struggle for power. The slogans of the Communist Party of Austria for the struggle for proletarian dictatorship and Soviet Power are falling upon a soil within the proletariat which has been ploughed up by the motorized artillery.

All forms of the struggle which can make a breach on Austro-fascism's not yet consolidated apparatus of power, which can bring about a mobilization of the masses and call forth mass actions, which can organizationally consolidate the effects of the smallest action in the working class in favor of the sole revolutionary Party of Austria—the Communist Party—are paving the way for the renewed use of the rifles and machine-guns, which have not only remained in the possession of the workers but have also been freed from social-democratic commanders.

The legalism, which Otto Bauer lauded so highly during the time of the fascist advance, as though it could bring benefit to the workers and kill the bourgeoisie, will not induce the Austrian workers to take the dissolution of the trade unions lying down. They must and will keep together as organized trade unionists, take the fate of their own organizations into their own hands. The flight of a great number of trade union leaders into the camp of fascism has partially freed the trade unions from these bureaucrats. It will be the task of the revolutionary groups in the trade unions to drive out the rest of these elements.

The Austrian working class has its vanguard, the Communist Party of

Austria, which marched in the front ranks of the armed uprising. It was not yet able to lead the working class to victory. But a victory was impossible without a complete ideological and political victory over the opportunism of social-democracy, which was still haunting many minds. The Communist Party of Austria has proved, and will prove to a still greater degree, its ability to lead on the masses to revolutionary positions. It has proved itself a Party of the working class, the only Party which has the will to act in a revolutionary manner up to the last.

All attempts to gather up the scattered troops of the uprising—the masses who are turning away from social-democracy, outside the ranks of the Communist Party—are attempts to set up a barrier to hold back the workers from the revolutionary path, in the hope that they will later come back to the bosom of social-democracy. The Communist Party of Austria, a Section of the Communist International, has already been through the school of illegality. It will be able to train the cadres who will always march in the masses, with the masses, and at the head of the masses.

The Austrian workers, who, taking part in the armed uprising or supporting it, have taken the first step towards liberation from the swamp of the mental slavery of social-democracy, should remember what Marx and Engels wrote in laying the foundations of their doctrine:

"The revolution is necessary not only because the ruling class cannot be overthrown in any other way, but also because only in a revolution can the overthrowing class get rid of all the old filth and become capable of laying new foundations of society."

**The Communist Party of Austria alone is the leader of this revolution—the revolution for the dictatorship of the proletariat and Soviet Power, for Socialism.**



