

# Austria's 'New Beginning'

By LUDWIG LORE

**I**F ever a Social Democracy proved that it can fight, it was that of Austria. It is true that its leaders waited too long because they hoped that the final conflict might be avoided, true that this gave the Christian Social fascist government the opportunity to arrest the important functionaries in charge of the workers' arms deposits before it struck its final blow against the party and ordered its soldiers and Heimwehr troops to smash the labor movement. But despite the mistakes of its leaders the world will never forget that the workers of Austria and the men at their head put up a fight which embued the proletariat of every other country with new courage and did much to restore the faith they had almost lost in the mission and future of the labor movement.

Austria's Social Democrats, always on the Left Wing of the Socialist Labor International, have learned from what happened in Austria, Germany and in other countries.

## Questions Old Guard

A letter sent by the Vienna Central Committee of Revolutionary Socialists to the Executive of the International when it met in Brussels at the end of May shows this clearly. This committee is the representative of the Party's underground movement in Austria and recognizes the authority and publications of the Social Democracy. But it is dissatisfied with its program. The Austrian comrades are realists enough to know that, in the present situation, it would profit the Social Democracy of Austria little to adopt revolutionary precepts while the International persists in its "Old Guard" stand.

For that reason it turns to the Executive of the Socialist Labor International in a letter which, after expressing its appreciation of the financial assistance rendered by the affiliated parties to the Austrian comrades continues as follows:

## For Armed Uprising

"But Austria's Socialists expect from the International ideological as well as practical help in the form of a serious consideration of their particular problems. The fascist dictatorship has destroyed whatever democratic or reformist illusions the Austrian masses may have cherished in the past. Today they know that fascist oppression can only be broken by the power of labor, by an armed uprising of the proletariat: To prepare for this revolution of the people is the task of the Austrian Social Democracy. Its work can have but one aim: conquest of the power of the state and the erection of a proletarian dictatorship which must destroy the political and economic foundations of capitalist society to achieve the classless state, the socialist democracy."

"Undoubtedly", the letter continues, "the International accepts these precepts as the common property of those who have gone through the inferno of fascist dictatorship. But it will bring the world nearer to a socialist future if the International and its affiliated parties will make these precepts their own as well."

## Appeals For Unity

The letter closes with a warm appeal for unity of the proletariat:

"In the fight against fascist dictatorship nothing distinguishes the Socialist worker from his Communist class comrade. Both endure the same persecution and suffering, as they always worked for the same ultimate aim. Under a fascist dictatorship there is nothing in their tactics which divides them. We do not underestimate the difficulties which stand in the way of an understanding between the SLI and the CI on both sides; nevertheless we demand that on the side of the Social Democracy everything be done that is humanly possible to bring about a union of our forces. As a minimum we demand that the SLI approach the CI with proposals for an honest non-aggression pact, at least for all fascist countries."