

Valorous Austrian Workers

**Battle Murderous Fascist
Forces with Heroic
Defiance**

FOR FOUR DAYS

**Brings New Hope and Life
To the Despairing
Working-Class**

By LUDWIG LORE

To the world's despairing and discouraged working class, the heroic struggle of Austria's proletariat brings new hopes and resolution. For the men and women who braved the fascist dictatorship with such heroic defiance, knowing from the first moment to the last that they were fighting a lost cause, braving machine guns and cannon for four endless days without flinching and even then refusing the treacherous compromise of a hypocritical government which accused their leaders of having fled from the country with gold-filled pockets, we have an admiration and reverence that no words can adequately express.

Dollfuss Lies

Nothing is more typical of the deceitfulness of the Dollfuss coterie than its efforts to minimize the number of dead and wounded before the world. In his radio address to America last Sunday, the Austrian Chancellor stated that 241 were killed and 658 seriously wounded. The Viennese correspondents of American newspapers, all of them, speak of more than a thousand killed and many thousands wounded. Where the truth lies between these two is not hard to decide.

In every phase of their dealings with Austria's labor movement in the past Dollfuss and his henchmen have so brazenly perverted the truth that their whining appeal for the sympathy of the world should fall on deaf ears. They present themselves as the innocent victims of social democratic plotters who, for years had planned the attack on the existing government. They speak of "armed provocation on the part of labor," although the facts show that the Social Democracy bore the aggressions of the Heimwehr and its government with an all-too-pious fortitude until the Dollfuss terrorists invaded the

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Austrian Workers Fight Dollfuss Gov't Troops

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homes of the workers and suppressed the Wiener "Arbeiter Zeitung," the best-edited Social Democratic newspaper in the world, to provoke it to resistance. Even then the party leadership tried to prevent open hostilities, but nothing could check the honest resentment of the rank and file, once it had taken matters into its own hands.

Socialist Leader Gives Story

In an interview given by Dr. Otto Bauer, the outstanding leader of the Austrian Social Democracy to a New York "Times" correspondent we find a chronological presentation of the efforts made by the Austrian Socialist Party to come to an understanding with the Dollfuss government that would prevent an open rupture and undermine the growing influence of the German Nazis.

"In the first days of March, our leaders were still in close personal contact with Dollfuss," says Dr. Bauer, "and frequently tried to get him to agree to a constitutional solution. At the end of March he promised personally that at the beginning of April he would open negotiations with us for the reform of the Constitution. This promise he never fulfilled, for at the beginning of April he passed over definitely to the Fascist camp and refused to speak to any of the Socialists. . . . As we could not see him again we tried to negotiate through other people. Honestly, we left no stone unturned. We approached President Miklas. . . . Then we tried the clerical politicians. . . . A group of religious Socialists got together with a group of Catholic democrats. . . . This also failed and finally the Cardinal Archbishop of Vienna, Dr. Innitzer, was approached. . . . 'but he could do nothing. . . .'"

Further than that, surely, no socialist labor party could or should go, not even to avoid the bloody reckoning that had to come. But the Austrian Social Democracy did more. "It offered," in the words of Otto Bauer, "to make the greatest concession that a democratic and socialistic party had ever made.

"We let Dollfuss know that if he would only pass a bill through Parliament we would accept a measure authorizing the government to govern by decree without Parliament for two years, on two conditions only—that a small parliamentary committee in which the government had a majority, should be able to criticize decrees and that a constitutional court, the only protection against breaches of the Constitution, should be resored. Dollfuss refused."

Repeat Mistakes of German SDP

In other words the Austrian party was prepared to exceed in its toleration policy the German Party which Bauer and the others had so vehemently criticized not long before. They were willing to grant Dollfuss unrestricted control of the government for the fascization of Austria since they knew—again we quote Dr. Bauer—"That he (Dollfuss) at the beginning of April passed definitely to the Fascist camp." The parliamentary commission was to have a Dollfuss majority while the constitutional court was to consist of Dollfuss appointees. . . . They were willing, in short, to concede everything to the Dollfuss regime, to deliver the working class bound and gagged into its hands, in the hope that by so doing they might prevent the Nazis from carrying out the fascist program to which Dollfuss and his Heimwehr backers were already committed.

No less tragic than Otto Bauer's unconscious self-mortification is the realization that Austria's labor movement repeated the mistakes of its German brethren in believing that its support of Dollfuss would keep Frauenfeld-Hitler from coming to power. Had not the German Social Democracy been shipwrecked after issuing the parole: "A vote for Hindenburg is a vote against Hitler!"? Yet with the fate of the SPG still fresh in their memory, the Austrian comrades repeated the same mistake, and suffered the same disappointment. For a Dollfuss-Starhemberg coalition under existing conditions in Austria must inevitably follow the logic of German events and arrive at the same conclusion. Fascism can have a concrete meaning and can present economic advantages only if it offers the possibility of an organizational union between the two na-

tions. Its present alliance with Italy may bear within it certain immediate advantages, political rather than economic, but Austria would still be unable to exist by its own strength, would still continue to live on the charity of its more powerful neighbors.

Best Socialist Movement in World

The best-disciplined and relatively strongest Social Democratic movement in the world has gone the way of the German movement before it. Had it ventured to strike the blow ten or even six months ago, when Austria's working class cried out for action and demanded that its leaders challenge the government and its fascist supporters, the outcome would have been doubtful but the outlook under all circumstances would have been much more favorable than in February 1934.

Fight Heroically

The men and women in the Austrian movement have tried to atone for the omissions of their leaders. They stood firm against the hirelings of capitalism in their native land and chose death to a life under fascist rule. Their leaders, Dr. Deutsch, Otto Bauer and Karl Seitz, stood to their guns. Those other men and women at the head of the Austrian movement, though unmentioned in the excited dispatches that reach us in these first hectic days, insofar as they were not already behind prison bars, will not have shown less courage and feeling for their great responsibility in this terrible crisis than these three.

The greatness of the Austrian tragedy lies not in the fact that a thousand and more working men, women and children died for the cause they loved, for the class they knew as their own, for the achievements to which they had dedicated their lives. It lies above all in the realization by those who remain that fascism has won a new victory, that another army in the great international labor movement lies crushed and beaten.

Local 3 Wins Fight To Sentence Racketeer

New York.—A victory for the membership of Local 3 of the electrical workers union was scored on February 8, when Harry Van Arsdale, Jr., business manager, appointed by the executive committee of the union, together with a gangster supporter by the name of Max Rosenberg were convicted in criminal court by a jury and sentenced to from 6 to 12 years in Sing Sing prison for the shooting several months ago of two members of the local.

The shooting was part of the terroristic tactics used against the opposition group within the union which has been combating the tyrannical rulings of ex-President H. H. Broach against the membership for more than four years.

During the course of this struggle against the autocratic Broach machine one member, Henry Godel, has been murdered, another member, Adelbert Letcher, has had acid thrown in his face, and many others were brutally beaten and disfigured.

Through a series of open letters issued in the name of the New Deal Group, having the active support of the Conference for Progressive Labor Action, the opposition at the last general election succeeded in overthrowing former President Broach's chief lieutenant, William A. Hogan, as financial secretary.

Hogan, convicted in 1923 for robbing the union treasury and stealing the beneficiary moneys from widows of deceased members is the instructor of Van Arsdale. It is these two whom the members of local 3 hold responsible for most of the brutalities and violence committed upon the members.

However, the fight of the members of local 3 against their corrupt and autocratic officials is far from ended. For ironically enough, now the same above-mentioned Hogan becomes business manager of the local.

The Conference for Progressive Labor Action calls upon the members of Local 3 to continue their brave fight for a clean union, and pledges its full support in the future as it has given it in the past to this effort.