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Austrian Socialist Minority Issue Secret Manifesto

Many of Them Pay the Supreme Sacrifice for International Socialism --- Court-Martialled and Shot for Having Manifesto in Their Possession.

(This manifesto is the work of a minority group of international Socialists in Austria. The issuance is secret, no signatures are attached, and its circulation in Austria is prohibited.)

The truth is stifled in Austria. The people are deprived of every opportunity of giving vent to their desperation at the ever-growing poverty and oppression, while being kept in ignorance of the real conditions. Liberty was never "at home" in Austria, but during the war conditions have developed such as only blood-stained Czarism has on its conscience. Not a vestige of the Constitution remains; freedom of speech is abolished, and the hangman is at work unhampered. The civilized world will some day learn with horror how political reaction in Austria is degrading the law into a tool of the war machine. Any and every attempt at political criticism is stifled by arbitrary secret methods, which in turn are justified on the pretext of military necessity. A whole army of censors is let loose against the press. They have organized themselves into secret tribunals, because from the lowest to the highest official they are too cowardly to accept the personal responsibility for their perfidious actions.

The raving against the press is supplemented by threats of the gallows and prison. Judicial murder has become a daily occurrence. We will not speak of the many death sentences pronounced on Techech citizens for the "crime" of having in their possession copies of the ludicrous "Liberation Manifesto" of the Czar. We simply want to show to what despotism the most harmless expression of political criticism is subjected. A German Socialist in Freiwaldau had some copies printed of a peace poem, which had appeared in the Austrian "Buergerzeitung," and sent same to a few friends. He was condemned to death for this offence, but his sentence was commuted to five years' hard labor. Such is the Austria which feels called upon to fight Czarism.

The voice of truth is stifled in Austria, and has not been able to make itself heard outside of the country. But there is a limit to all humiliation and degradation, and we, who are still international Socialists, now call to our brothers in all countries to tell them how we are deprived of the right to speak and the power to act. We want to assure them that we are firmly determined to utilize every opportunity in the interest of the Proletarian struggle for emancipation; that we shall remain true to our ideal, which was and always will be: **FIGHTING THE CLASS STRUGGLE OF THE PROLETARIAT.**

We know that in all places and directions there are comrades who feel as we do; but we do not over-estimate the

class consciousness of the masses. Notwithstanding that everyone despises the Government and that every official scorns and scoffs at the system while permitting himself to be used as its tool, we know to our sorrow how the multitude submits in passive helplessness to the powers that be.

The Austrians have become used to absolutism, and as is the case with all slaves, they have become accustomed to the loss of much of their self-respect. In fact, anything can be done with them nowadays. "Patriotic Enthusiasm" is manufactured a la Potemkin. From the Ministry down to the police, all departments of the Government have joined forces for co-operative extortion. Bohemia in particular is their field of activity; they extort expressions of loyalty and patriotic demonstrations in the papers; they extort expressions advertising the success of the war loan; they even force the hoisting of **BLACK AND YELLOW** flags on all houses. The infamy of this camarilla is only exceeded by the stupidity which believes that this infamy can remain undiscovered and go unavenged.

They have enforced the silence of the grave in Austria. But the time will come when not only the whole civilized world, but the people of Austria-Hungary as well, will brand this despicable "Art of Statesmanship" as it deserves. Though we are powerless to-day, the time will come when we will be able to fulfil the task designated by Marx: "One must emphasize the real pressure by adding more pressure, and in this way convey to the consciousness, the pressure itself—emphasizing the shame and disgrace by making it public."

We hate blood-stained Czarism with all our hearts, but we bear the same hatred to the Black-Yellow barbarism. We know that with the troops of the Czar the white terror would enter our country, but we also know that if the Austrian powers of to-day are victorious in this war, we would face a period of horror hitherto unknown. The ruling classes are full of the wildest schemes. They who left for the front crying "Down with Czarism" are planning to force on Austria the stigma of Absolutism. They started to "free Poland," but now openly discuss the fact that Poland which has come under Hapsburgian control, is to be subjected to the mailed fist of military dictatorship. The Poles will be "freed" from sending their representatives to the Duma, and they must indeed be happy in the thought that the Poles of Galicia, like the Poles of Russia, are robbed of their rights. Furthermore, the Slavs of the North, as well as those of the South, are also to enjoy the blessings of Austrian "kultur" in the shape of military dictatorship. This conjuncture of affairs is propitious to German despotism in Austria and to the des-

potism of the Magyars in Hungary. The Techechs, the Ruthenians, the Italians, and the Slovaks, whose "patriotism" was not great enough, are to be stimulated by the mailed fist to a deeper love of the fatherland.

In contrast to the monstrous plans of the present, and the still more monstrous plans for the future, we adhere to our conviction, which the Social Democrats have always tried to bring to the realization of those in power that Austria will become a democratic State, based on autonomous nationalities or it will cease to exist.

The Yellow-Black camarilla may revel in the idea that the same whip which is held over the people during the war will be used in times of peace. The bourgeoisie may cherish the delusion that the time is ripe to subject the ambitious nations of this country to their ever-grasping power, with the aid of their German ally. The governing classes in Austria never learned anything from the past, nor do they want to learn anything now. This is proved by their plans to make of Austria a "dynastic domain" instead of a home for its people. Austria can only be helped by a complete overthrow of the prevailing system, by a decisive victory of the national autonomy and the democratic right of choice.

We Austrians have been robbed of the most elemental rights. We have nothing to say in domestic affairs, and even less in foreign affairs. The shameful ultimatum to Serbia, fabricated with such unscrupulous cynicism, would never have been possible under the control of a Parliament. In spite of all the disappointment that we have lived through, we are still convinced that such a decision could only have been arrived at over the dead bodies of the Social Democratic deputies.

We Austrians no longer have any constitution, but we must not forget that the rest of Europe has only half a one. Everywhere we are confronted with the ignominious fact that foreign politics are barred from constitutional control. Vital questions pertaining to the destiny of the people, the decisions as to war and peace, are left to a camarilla of irresponsible diplomats.

Unfortunately, this absolutism escaped detection at the beginning of the war. The parliamentary farce to which the people are admitted, succeeded brilliantly. The representatives of the working classes took part in this farce in most countries. Instead of placing the responsibility where it belonged, and refusing to co-operate in Parliament, when "accomplished facts" were placed before them, they joined forces with the ruling classes, thereby strengthening absolutism. It never occurred to them that there was in reality no Parliament, and that from the beginning of the war it was simply a demon-

stration meeting in the service of the absolute regime.

In the domestic affairs of many countries the Parliament has deteriorated into an empty form, while in foreign affairs it is the mightiest stronghold of absolutism. The uncompromising struggle for the democratic republic is the imperative political duty of international Socialism. In all our future actions the following demands must be first and foremost: Democratic control over foreign politics; decision for war or peace by the people.

In foreign as well as in domestic politics the watchword must be: No solidarity with the ruling system in Austria. And yet the intellectual leaders of the Austrian social democratic party were not able to rouse themselves to this conclusion. But to take sides with the ruling class was only possible by ignoring the interests of the working class. They thus had to shut their eyes to the realities of the Austrian situation. They ignored the Czarism in their own country, so as to fight Russia with enthusiasm, they deadened their consciousness of the fact that their Government had incited a war so as to be able to speak all the more of the "self-defence of the Teutonic people."

Politically there is no unity in the Austrian Social Democracy. It is full of patriots of various degrees, from rabid German nationalists to dyed-in-the-wool reactionaries. The "Arbeiterzeitung" was the forum where this mixture of tendencies found expression. But after a war intoxication of short duration, the policy of the paper changed, and gave expression to a longing for peace. A guerilla warfare was still carried on with the censors, but remained within the limits of a friendly opposition. You cannot be in favor of war and carry on a policy against it at the same time. However, for the paper, patriotism proved stronger than Socialism.

The war had become a party matter, the party problem consisting in holding out to the end, or "holding through," as the Germans term it. Out of the political party there developed a philanthropic society on a big scale. We do not misjudge the success of this charitable activity, but it cannot take the place of the political function of the Social Democracy. Instead of exposing the present system by militant opposition in principle and holding it responsible, all efforts were directed towards palliative "intervention" in concrete cases.

The constitutional limitations contained in paragraph 14 saved the Social Democratic deputies from the embarrassment of voting the war credits. We do not know whether they would have disgraced themselves in the face of the outrageous provocation by Austria. We do know that very many were enthusiastic over the Social Democratic group in the Reichstag. The Austrian Social Democrats renounced their own policy and were taken in tow by the Germans. And thus they identified themselves with the tragedy of the German Social Democracy on and after August 4.

We are neither pacifists nor militarists, but something different. We Socialists do not seek the method of force, neither do we exclude it. Our method calls not for war, but revolution.

(Continued on page three.)