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These lines are in tender memoriam of John Most, who died in Cincinnati, five years ago, on the seventeenth of March, 19o6.

In the year 1882 Most came to America, as an exile, and continued the publication of the *Freiheit*, whose existence had been made impossible in England. After the execution of Alexander II, on the thirteenth of March, 1881, Most voiced his hope in a leading article in the Freiheit\ that all tyrants may thus be served. That article proved too much for the much-boasted-of British freedom. Prussian and Russian spies and diplomats intrigued an interpellation in the British Parliament, as a result of which Most was indicted for "inciting to kill the reigning sovereigns." The court sentenced our comrade to sixteen months at hard labor, and life in the prison of free England proved a veritable hell.

Most had previously been incarcerated in German and Austrian prisons, and his treatment there was always that of a political prisoner. In free England, however, he found himself treated even more brutally than the ordinary thief or murderer. His complaints

against the barbaric methods elicited the sole reply thatthere were no political prisoners in a f ree country like England.

When he had paid the penalty for the free expression of his opinions, John Most was invited, immediately upon his discharge from prison, to come to America, there to begin an energetic propaganda along revolutionary Anarchist lines. This comradely invitation was signed, among others, by Justus Schwab, whom most of our old-time comrades no doubt still remember.

Most followed the call. An enthusiastic reception meeting in Cooper Union, in which thousands participated, was his greeting in the new land. A tour of agitation followed, during which Most succeeded in organizing a large number of propaganda groups among the German-speaking workingmen.

Most was the first to initiate, on a comparatively extensive scale, the propaganda of Communist Anarchism in America.

The German element in this country was at that time far more mentally alert and energetic than it is to-day: the Bismarckian muzzle-law, the expulsion of hundreds of socialistically inclined proletarians, the suppression of Socialist literature, and the brutal police persecution made the thinking workers rebellious. The lines between governmental and revolutionary Socialism, and between the latter and Anarchism were not so sharply drawn at the time when Most, the fiery agitator of the social revolution, arrived in America. He was an orator of convincing power, his methods direct, his language concise and popular, and he possessed the genius for glowing word-portrayal which had f ar more effect upon his auditors than long theoretic argumentation. He lived and felt entirely with the people, the men of toil. The great tragedy of his latter years was that the very people he loved so well turned from him, many of them even joining the general howl of the capitalistic press, which never abated its denunciations of Most as a veritable monster of degradation and blood-thirstiness.

In the meantime there widened the breach between the ballot-box Socialists on the one hand, and the revolutionary Socialists and

Anarchists on the other. Many of those who bad so enthusiastically welcomed Most on his arrival in America, joined the ballot-box party andnow even denounced our comrade because he persisted in warning the people against the game of deception called politics. In this respect hespoke from personal experience: as former member of the Reichstag he felt convinced that parliamentarism could never serve as an aid in the emancipation of the working class.

The American labor movement followed its course. It was- able to stand a Powderly, and it has not even now grown strong enough to rid itself of men like Gompers and Mitchell. Naturally there was no room in it for a Most, a Parsons, a Spies, or a Dyer D. Lum. Gompers, a rising star on the labor firmament, may indeed not have been averse to making use of Lum's superior intellect and experience, even to the extent of signing his articles, it is said. But after he had attained bureaucratic power, he found it more politic to withdraw from such compromising associates.

The German movement, in particular, gradually grew weaker. The atmosphere of this country is not very conducive to the mental development of the Germans; as a rule, they lose here all incentive to intellectual pursuit. They either conserve the ideas they have brought over with them, till these become petrified, or they entirely throw idealism overboard and become "successful business men," philistines who are far more concerned with their little house and property than with the great events of the world.

Under these circumstances his exile was growing more and more unbearable for Most, his hounding ever more severe and base, the indifference and apathy of the Germans more impenetrable.

His friends had told Most, upon his arrival: "Here, at least, you are secure against imprisonment." Most had waived the remark aside, as altogether too optimistic, saying that it was only a question of time when he would come in conflict with the sham liberties of the Republic. He was only too justified in this view. When, in the eighties, the waves of the labor movement rose to exceptional height, and the proletariat began preparations for a general

strike to secure the eight-hour day, the plutocrats and financiers grew alarmed. "Order"that is, profits-seemed in danger. The lackeys of the press were mobilized to denounce to the police and the courts every expression of rebellious independence on the part of the working people.

In April, 1886, there took place in New York a large meeting, addressed, among others, by Most, who called upon the audience to prepare and arm themselves for the coming great struggle. The speech was taken down stenographically and submitted to the grand jury, which found indictments against John Most, Braunschweig, and Schenk. On the second of July, judge Smyth condemned Most to one year's imprisonment in the penitentiary and five hundred dollars fine, while the other two comrades were doomed to nine months' prison and two hundred and fifty dollars fine.

It was the old wretched method. The police of various cities had systematically interfered with the numerous strikes and committed repeated assaults upon the workingmen, establishing "order" in the most brutal manner. The violence of the police naturally resulted in bitterness, riots, and killings. But instead of calling the uniformed ruffians to account, the authorities fell upon the spokesmen of the movement, marking them as their victims. The crimes of the guardians of the law were "legally" laid at the door of the Anarchists: in New York, upon Most; in Chicago, upon Spies and comrades, who-eighteen months later-paid for their love of humanity with their lives.

It became evident that freedom of speech and press was not tolerated in the Republic and that it was as severely persecuted in "free" America as in Germany, Austria, and England.

That was not Most's only conviction. He was repeatedly condemned to serve at Blackwell's Island. The press had so systematically lied about and misrepresented his ideals and personality that the "desirable citizen" came to regard our comrade as a veritable Satan. Especially were the German papers venomous in their

denunciations and ceaselessly active in the manhunt against one who had sacrificed everything for his ideals.

When McKinley was shot at Buffalo, the *Freiheit* happened to reprint an article from the then longdeceased radical writer, Karl Heinzen. The article had no bearing whatever upon American conditions, and it was the greatest outrage and travesty upon the most elementary principles of justice that Most was condemned to serve nine months inprison-for reprinting an article written decades before. The New York *Staatszeitung*, "leading organ of the German intelligence," bravely assisted in this shameful proceeding by the most infamous denunciation.

Yet all this persecution and suffering Most could have borne much better than the growing apathy of the very elements to whom he was appealing. He found himself more and more isolated. The struggle for existence of the *Freiheit*, and his family-grew more difficult. He had dreamed beautiful dreams of the masses who would march side by side with him against the bulwarks of tyranny. And now he discovered himself a revolutionary free lance, standing almost alone. With grim humor he wrote in the *Freiheit*: "Henceforth I shall no more say 'we,' but 'I.'" In spite of it all, however, he fought bravely to the very end. His courage and Rabellaisian humor never forsook him. In the latter years there was even a noticeable improvement in his literary originality. After all, in the words of the Chantecler, "it is beautiful to behold the light when everything around is enveloped in darkness."