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AMERICA'S ROLE IN
GERMANY

BY HUGO OEHLER

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PREFACE

This pamphlet is the first of a series to be issued by the Philadelphia Branch of the C. L. of A. (O.) consisting of writings pertinent to current issues of the class struggle.

Hugo Oehler was the representative of the National Textile Workers' Union, organizer, in the South during the Gastonia struggle. He was organizer of the Kansas district of the Communist Party and during the Colorado Coal miners strike directed the Party's work in that field.

The analysis of America's role in Germany by Oehler is reprinted from the MILITANT of Feb. 17, 20, 22. Events in Germany are progressing in accelerated tempo. Hitlerism, the stomach pump of German capitalism is being utilized to eliminate the vanguard of the German working class.

After many unsuccessful attempts to

the Left Opposition to influence the Comintern to form an aggressive United Front, the Communist International has finally made a definite turn in the manner indicated by Leon Trotsky and the International Left Opposition.

MEYER HIRSH

Phila., March 1933.

I

AMERICA AND THE FASCIST DANGER

CLASS RELATIONS IN GERMANY

The sharpening class relations in Germany have reached the point of civil war. This is posing in the most acute fashion the analyses and programs of the factions of the Communist International. This analysis must flow from the fact that the weight of the contradictions of world capitalism finds their most difficult relationship in Germany, revealing it as the weakest link in the world capitalist chain. Our victory over Fascism in this situation depends upon the ability and action of the Communists in presenting the correct program for the situation in Germany.

The gigantic antagonisms between imperialism, which have been intensified since the last world war, finds their deepest expression in Germany. The interests of the world imperialists are bound up with the interests of the German bourgeoisie in their struggle against the proletariat. If American and other

imperialists leave Germany to her own fate in the German extension of the October revolution, the door would be left open for the deepening of internal difficulties and convulsions at home. Across this contradiction between the imperialist powers themselves runs the contradiction between world imperialism and Soviet Union. These contradictions are tied up in one knot in the present German situation.

PROPER UNITED FRONT TACTIC NECESSARY

To untie this knot means to answer the burning question of class relations in the interest of the working class. Hitler and Fascism answers this question in the most clear cut manner for the bourgeoisie, even though they show great signs of weakness and confusion. For this Fascist shortcoming, the errors of Stalinism have more than compensated. Fascism has already one foot over the threshold of state power and the Stalinist straitjacket is hindering the free action of the vanguard of the working class. Hitler dissolves the Reichstag, the Prussian Diet and calls for elections March 5. Between now and elections he will see to it that the

Communists and all other workers' organizations are not able to participate according to their parliamentary strength and thereby insure a "legal" victory of Fascism.

Social Democracy has not outlived its usefulness for the ruling class, it cannot adequately serve the interest of the capitalists in the immediate acute situation but it can constitute an active reserve force ready to serve its master at a moment's notice. Social democracy can only be shattered by a proper united front tactics in order to win the worker socialist from the leaders, thereby the base upon which the social chauvinist and "Iron Front" fighters rest can be torn away.

THE DOLLAR PROPS UP HITLER

One force that is at present in the background, but which has weight of first magnitude in Germany, is American imperialism. During and since the last world war it has been the stabilizing center of world capitalism against the revolutionary struggles for power of the proletariat. A working agreement between German Fascism and American imperialism is necessary for capitalism

to utilize Fascist hordes against the working class and Soviet Union.

America's participation in the last world war on the side of the imperialist rivals of Germany was of decisive importance in the defeat of Germany. It was second in importance only to the effects of the October revolution upon the German working class in the 1918 revolution which overthrew the Kaiser. American capital, in the form of war loans and war equipment, gave the necessary impetus to tired and shattered armies fighting Germany. American post war loans continued this necessary prop of decaying European capitalism in order to insure foreign markets for American production.

II

WALL STREET'S STAKE IN GERMANY

UNITED STATES AND EUROPE

"The problem of the mutual relations between the United States and Europe was very intimately bound up with the question of Fascism and social democracy. Only the defeat of the German revolution of 1923 made it possible for American capital to begin the realization of its plans for the (mentarily) peaceful subjugation of Europe. Under these circumstances, the American problem should have been considered in its full magnitude. Instead, the leadership of the Fifth Congress simply passed it by." (Trotsky—"Strategy of the World Revolution").

Such an analysis as early as the Fifth Congress would have enabled the Comintern to consider properly the role of American imperialism, and also the changing and developing new class relationships in Germany ---both of which problems are not understood

by the Comintern even to this day.

The defeat of the German revolution in 1923 made possible the "Americanization" of Europe through the Dawes plan, the Young plan, etc. Upon this defeat and the triumph of Stalinism in the Comintern, the necessary base for a new alignment of class relations in Germany was established. The propping up of the structure with American capital laid the objective base for capitalist stabilization. The triumph of Stalinism, upon the wave of revolutionary regress, laid the subjective base for the "return" of social democracy as a crutch for crippled German capitalism. Meanwhile capitalism nurtured the Fascist force for the coming showdown with the "Marxian swine".

INTERNAL SITUATION

In this period, while capitalist Germany was walking on the crutches of social democracy and the American dollar, the main task of American imperialism was the problem of preventing the extension of the October revolution, of propping up decaying capitalism, and of maintaining thereby the dominating imperialist position and all

super-profits that go with it.

Around Germany and its reparation problem in this post war period revolves the complex of capitalist contradictions. Today around Germany and its Fascist hordes, the same thing is seen in a higher form. The key to the international situation, as Trotsky has said, is Germany. American investments in Germany are tremendous.

Their protection is a major concern of our imperialists. In the past, every mark Germany paid in reparations was more than equalled by loans from American imperialism. But to keep this up indefinitely is not possible for American profits. From this flowed the new problem of the Hoover moratorium, the reparation "settlement" and the war debt question.

The moratorium and reparation settlement were frantic attempts to hold in check the inevitable civil war in Germany. These moves were not successful. But they were able to strengthen the reactionary forces of Fascism against the proletarian. Between the

contradictory problem of profits and the prevention of the extension of the October revolution, the American imperialists have been jumping, in the hope that a parallel line of march can be obtained for these two factors in the decay of capitalism.

Normal bourgeois rule in Germany is desired. But American imperialism knows enough to change its attitude when the time demands it. The German capitalists were slow and by no means unanimous in changing from social democracy, to coalition, to Bonapartism and now—to Fascism. The American imperialists will show these same contradictions in their change of position, and a slower tempo. Already a growing section of the American capitalists are in favor of "Hitler and Hindenburg—since the Bonpartist attempts have been dislodged by the sharpening class relations."

In South America, American imperialism has supported in turn reactionary, liberal, and "revolutionary" governments and has resorted to armed intervention—depending in each case upon the class relations and imperialists relations, according

to the profit interest of America Germany will be no exception. The difference is that the explosive conditions in Germany are at a far more advanced stage than in South America, and the flames of revolt can be far easier to check. Therefore, far more precise has been shown by ruthless American imperialism.

ent. Social democracy drags the proletariat. Fascism annihilates its organizations. Italian Fascism has the most agreeable relations with American imperialism. Italian Fascism does not rest upon the same economic base that a victorious German Fascism would have. The White Terror government of Hungary after the Hungarian revolution, as well as other White Terror governments of the Balkans, have the best of relations with the American imperialists. But Fascist Italy and all of these White Terror Governments cannot disorganize the world working class to the same degree that German Fascism in the event of victory, could. The economic base below these forces is different.

The Stalinists consider Mussolini in Italy or Pilsudsky in Poland as just another form of bourgeois rule, and then conclude that Fascism in Germany would be similar. Such governments are indeed a form of bourgeois rule.

But from the class point of view there is a vast difference between social democracy and Fascism. And one must add to

III

THE THREAT OF IMPERIALIST WAR

FASCISM AND THE WAR DANGER

A Fascist victory and the defeat of the German proletariat would lay the basis for ironing out the most pressing contradictions standing in the way of the imperialist war on the Soviet Union. Fascist Germany and American capital, with the other imperialists, would transform their economic war into a military war against the Soviet Union, using Fascism as the spearhead of attack. In the post-war period, defeated Germany stood in the way of a well organized military operation and direct attack upon the Soviet Union. A Fascist Germany eliminates the sharpest expression of this contradiction. This does not mean that social democracy is just that many degrees better when it rules. It means that the position of class relations is to that degree different. The position of the working class and its party is differ-

this, that with the Fascist variety of bourgeois rule there are differences and more pressing dangers. Fascism in Germany would make Fascism in Italy look like child's play. Because **WORLD CAPITALISM** is in a more critical situation, Fascism takes root in a more developed country--as the expression of **INTERNATIONAL** relations.

The danger of an imperialist war between Japan and America in the Orient must be kept on the proletarian order of business, but cannot be separated from the imperialists' contradictions and the key situation in Germany. The contradictions between the imperialist powers on the one hand and the Soviet Union on the other finds expression in Germany and in China. Both situations must be approached from the international point of view and the proper connection of their economic and class relationships obtained.

In these preliminary struggles of the imperialists for the redivision of the earth these two danger points reveal Germany as the weakest link and America as the

dominating imperialist power.

Japan has advantages at the present in its present position in the Orient in this struggle for the redivision of the earth but the American imperialism's hold upon the European imperialists, through war debts and the billions invested in Germany, and America's economic weight, gives her a lever far greater than that held by Japan, for world struggles in general and struggles in the Orient against Japan.

American imperialism is watching with vulture anxiety the gains of German Fascism. If Fascism triumphs in Germany reaction will be strengthened throughout the world. The American workers will be confronted by a wave of reaction. Greater capitalist prospects for a way out of the world crisis will be obtained.

A united front of reaction against the Soviet Union will alter, even though it intensifies the antagonisms between the imperialists. And America on top of the decay heap of world capitalism has far more to gain than to lose in such a new alignment for the coming imperialist war.

America's Role in Germany

All of this providing—Fascism is victorious in Germany. But this is not yet a settled question. The time is not yet too late to turn the tide into a successful proletarian revolution, thereby smashing Fascism—and the pillars of American imperialism.

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