

# Background Digest

## US European Policy Causes Pacific War

### ... Hitler Blames Treaty

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Hitler has attributed this war to the settlement drafted 24 years ago at Versailles. With the fall of France he dramatically staged on the scene of the former armistice a German version of the European order.

The comparison of the two procedures indicates that the victors in the first war were mild and gentle men. No one can doubt that Hitler and a large part of the German people have devoted their entire being to the destruction and utter obliteration of the treaty of Versailles.

Was the treaty of Versailles a bad treaty? It applied the democratic principle of self-determination of peoples, it liberated conquered peoples, it made some effort to make Germany pay reparations to millions of homeless refugees whose homesteads were rendered a no man's land by ruthless bosche invaders.

#### Knew Freedom.

The treaty turned colonies into mandates and set up a League of Nations. The peoples of Central Europe knew freedom that they had only read of in the promised land of America.

Why did settlement fail? First it was rejected by the United States through the action of our senate. The United States government through its secretary of state in the 1920's went out of its way to express its complete disassociation with the affairs of Europe, and to make it disagreeably obvious that no European problem could possibly interest us. We treated the requests for guarantees of the settlement and the security of France against German invasion with the greatest disdain.

In the face of his disdain of Europe and the League of Nations we invited first British and Japan and (after feelings were ruffled) we were forced to include all told nine powers at Washington conference on limitation of arms and the settlement of Asiatic and Pacific problems.

Three important treaties were

signed, but despite the high praise heaped upon this conference it is doubtful if it was conducive to the peace and goodwill of nations. The conference defied the League of Nations principles of collective security and incensed the nations that were relying upon it.

The conference provided no means of causing Japan to perform her promises, too many of which stood unperformed and mocked the very words that statesmen were pronouncing. The United States and Britain denied themselves naval bases by which they might expect to exert any naval and military power to even defend their own possession in the Orient, to say nothing of enforcing their guarantees to China.

#### No Definite Policy.

The fatal weakness of the United States Oriental policy was their lack of an effective European policy. Our Oriental policy was undermined by the guarantees of the leading European crisis. But since we took no measures to provide against European crisis and refused to support any machinery for settling them, it was finally evident that European powers would never dare to divert their power to the Orient to assist



—Courtesy Lincoln Journal.

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in settling a Pacific crisis.

Many people could foresee that our one direction diplomacy of the 1920's was bound to net us disaster. The reliance upon our former allies to sustain us in Asia, but our refusal to co-operate with them in Europe left them too weak to enforce the peace settlement. When war came in Europe our guarantors were occupied and helpless.

Our new definition of neutrality, contained in several neutrality acts from 1936 to 1939, was a heavy yoke upon the necks of

(See U. S. Policy, page 6.)

## Decline of Power Leads Reich to War

### ... According to 'Mein Kampf'

BY PROF. H. C. VEDELER.  
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Origins of the European part of the Second World War stem very largely from the inability of the highly nationalistic element in Germany to accept the fact that Germany is becoming a decadent power.

This is not to say that the individual Germans are losing their vigor; it does mean that Germany since the end of the First World War is declining in terms of power relative to the super-states of the world, namely, the British Empire, the Soviet Union, the United States, and China. Just as Spain and Sweden have had their day as first-class powers, so Germany is ceasing to enjoy the position it had from 1870 to 1918. Influence in the world at large has been passing from Germany to the United States and the Soviet Union, and even China with its great area and man power is potentially stronger than Germany.

#### Population Stationary.

An index to Germany's retrogression is its virtually stationary population as compared with the irresistible fecundity of the

Russians, who increase in normal times at the rate of three millions each year. The loss of the First World War produced a terrific impact on the German mind, which was due in part at least to the realization during the post-war period that Germany was sinking down into the second rank of powers. The pages of Mein Kampf—the mouthpiece of the extreme nationalist Germany—clearly express this dawning anxiety.

In the face of this growing inferiority, several choices lay before the Germans.

They could accept it gracefully and live as a first-class secondary state in good, neighborly relations among the circle of nations, winning esteem for themselves by their contributions to the scientific, artistic, literary, economic, and social sides of civilization.

Or they could hope to escape the destiny that threatened them by assuming the leadership in the voluntary unification of continental Europe west of the Soviet Union.

#### Units An Anachronism.

The states of Europe have been reluctant to surrender any bit of their sovereignty, yet it was a common observation that Europeans west of Russia on the eve of the Second World War were more inclined than at any previous time to recognize that the division of Europe into small political units was an anachronism.

The progress in creating such a union under German leadership would have been slow; Germany would have had to work patiently with the methods of negotiation and mutual consent; and Germany could never have subordinated the interests of the separate parts to those of the Teutonic center. But such a union might have been the most durable way in the long run for Germany to retain its political importance.

The third course was to make a desperate effort to build a vast military machine with which to conquer the continent.

#### Provide Base.

A subdued Europe under German domination would provide a base for gaining the Eurasian heartland, then the world island of Europe, Asia, and Africa, and finally the world. So the geopolitical dream went, and as we know this course was chosen by the Nazis. The long tradition of Prussian militarism and the German cult of the state as power dictated the selection.

The Nazis accordingly set to work to create what they considered the most favorable conditions possible for achieving their end. With methodical zeal they endeavored to prevent the mistakes which they considered Germany had made in the First World War. A new, streamlined version of the army-state was evolved with electrifying swiftness. And any opposition at home to this state and its policies was ruthlessly crushed.

#### Launch Program.

Having laid the foundations of the Nazi new order in Germany, Hitler launched his program of aggression. He proceeded with a masterly tactic of gradualism, of the limited objective for the time being, in order not to arouse general apprehension and the formation of a coalition opposing Germany. He could confidently expect that his diplomacy of aggression based on Germany's big battalions would encounter for some time nothing more than resistance short of war. Such was the lesson the Japanese had taught him when they invaded Manchuria to defy the League of Nations with impunity. The Italian conquest of Ethiopia re-enforced the point.

Astute enough to gauge accurately the non-resisting temper of the powers, Hitler tore up Versailles and Locarno. He sent a German army marching into the Rhineland, and the building of the West Wall commenced at once.

(See Decline, page 6.)

## Set Stage for Recent Events ... War Result of Treaties of 1919

BY PROF. NORMAN HILL.  
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The invasion of Poland in 1939 was the culmination of a series of events dating back to the peace settlement of 1919. This is not to say that the shortcoming of that settlement were the sole or even the main cause of the present war. Indeed the iniquities of that settlement are often given too much stress and its constructive features overlooked.

In two ways the treaties of 1919 set the stage for the 20 years

which followed. In the covenant of the League of Nations there was a proclamation of a new international morality which would substitute reason in the place of power.

#### Other Causes.

But in the economic and political clauses of the treaties were provisions which, however justifiable some of them may have been, created an order unacceptable to Germany, Italy and some of the smaller states of Europe. The international relations of the 1920's

and the 1930's were the manifestations of the two conflicting tendencies which were thus set at work.

During the first post-war decade the League of Nations made promising strides, in spite of the absence of this country from its meetings: the relations of France and Germany became more friendly; disarmament conferences became the order of the day; and there was signed the Pact of Paris renouncing war. These evidences that reason had come to prevail over power would have been more convincing were it not for the alliances that came to include much of Europe, the fascist revolution in Italy, and the growing prominence of Hitler in German politics.

#### Confusing Events.

Such events were confusing to laymen and to statesmen as well. They required positive policies and decisive action on the part of the nations which had written the peace and assumed responsibility for world order. Instead of responding to this challenge, the democracies entered the 1930's distraught, quibbling among themselves, and too busy with internal politics to give heed to the prevention of war.

#### Failed Twice.

They failed, on the one hand, to develop the possibilities of the League of Nations and on the other, to make use of the power which was theirs. There was vacillation everywhere. The Japanese invaded Manchuria in 1931, Italy seized Ethiopia in 1935, while Germany armed herself and set out on her program of conquest—all over the feeble protests of the democracies.

Most of the lessons to be learned from the events of the past 20 years are sufficiently obvious. There are a few, however, which may need special emphasis.

#### Peace Settlement Not All.

To state them briefly, enduring peace cannot be guaranteed by any settlement, however wise it may be. Alert statesmanship in the years to come will be even more important than the provisions of the next treaty of peace. Aggression can be prevented more effectively than it can be arrested.

The existence of machinery to prevent aggression has little significance without the will to use it, and it is the will of the people that matters, for their opinions are the necessary basis for all effective political action.

## Voluntary Censorship Controls Press, Radio News Releases

BY HAROLD HAMIL.

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The real censors in this war are the men and women who write and edit the news for local newspapers and radio stations. In my opin-



—Courtesy Lincoln Journal.

HAROLD HAMIL.

ion, they assume a greater day-to-day responsibility than does the staff of the office of censorship at Washington.

Press censorship in America is a voluntary matter. True, certain facts are withheld from the public by orders of the army, navy, state department

and other service and governmental branches, but these are held up at the sources and their control is relatively simple.

#### Not Easy to Censor.

A lot of vital information, however, is not controllable at the source and there is where voluntary censorship comes in. Vital information as such is not easily tagged or classified. New situations arise daily. Some of them are mishandled, no doubt, but by and large the editors and newscasters have a good record for keeping out of public news channels the kind of information that might be helpful to the enemy.

The office of censorship in Washington is primarily an advisory organization. It has set up broad general rules by which the press is asked—not ordered—to keep certain information out of general circulation. The office will rule on specific cases for any newspaper or radio station which does not wish to rely on its own interpretation.

#### Few Violations.

Wishes of the censorship office have been violated on occasions and journalists naturally resent some of the regulations, but there have been few reported instances of out-and-out violation of the voluntary code.

A local newspaper is given considerable leeway in the handling of news about a nearby military establishment or defense plant. But the censorship office is very critical of a newspaper of national circulation which takes the same liberty. The theory is that if the

big papers of national circulation published any and all news about military establishments throughout the country, enemy agents would have a ready-made handbook for sabotage plans, computations of military strength and so forth.

#### Certain Facts Omitted.

Movements of troops, ammunition and supplies are not discussed specifically. Sizes of training detachments are not made public. Men wounded or evacuated from battle zones are not identified by the units to which they are attached. The idea is that such information can aid an enemy agent in following the movements of individual units and in computing the strength of American forces in specified areas.

The local editor-censor is confronted daily with questions raised by letters from men in the services, by unwitting remarks made by soldiers and sailors on furlough or by troop train and convoy movements he sees with his own eyes. Real news crops up continually in these areas completely out of the control of army and navy public relations officers or representatives of the office of censorship. The decision to report or not to report must be made locally by reporters, editors and newscasters.

And in my opinion American journalists have done a good job of giving the public a fair report of the war without giving our enemies much that could be termed "aid and comfort."