

Recipe for future war

HISTORIANS will quarrel for a long time over the causes of the Second World War, but the problem may not be quite as intractable as some of them suggest.

The initial difficulty relates to the question of why the German people voted Adolf Hitler into power in the first place.

It is insufficient to say that the Weimar Republic failed to provide people with a secure social and economic environment, and that it was this climate of uncertainty (and economic hardship after the Wall Street Crash of 1929) which worked in Hitler's favour.

● **WHY** was the mighty German industrial machine unable to generate full employment?

● **WHY** was the construction industry unable to provide sufficient houses to meet the needs of the people?

These are some of the fundamental economic questions that have to be resolved if we are to explain the origins of the Nazi rise to power. And since economists today cannot satisfactorily explain the deep-seated slump of the 1930s, we should not be surprised that they cannot explain the causes of the depression of 1929-33!

ONCE in power, however, there can be no doubt about Hitler's intentions.

The cause of the Second World War, seen from the years after 1933, is easily explained.

Hitler was going to go on a land-grabbing spree.

By PAUL KNIGHT

He told us all about his plans in Chapter 14 of *Mein Kampf*, in which he states:

"The foreign policy of a People's State must first of all bear in mind the duty of securing the existence of the race which is incorporated in this State. And this must be done by establishing a healthy and natural proportion between the number and growth of the population on the one hand and the extent and resources of the territory they inhabit, on the other. That balance must be such that it accords with the vital necessities of the people."¹

But Hitler's theory of proportion was not developed in the interests of scientific understanding: he was out to mobilise Germans behind his ideology.

He condemned previous leaders for allowing the country to lose out in the quest for political power. As far as he was concerned, the size of the nation's territory – which dictated the size of the population – was proportionate to its power in the world.

So Hitler decreed the need to expand eastwards, forcing back the Slavonic peoples and re-settling the pure Aryans, the better to breed a larger population of superior people.

Territorial expansion, he explained, was not dictated by current exigencies or agricultural productivity in relation to the size of the population, "but also from the political and military standpoints."

Frontiers, in his view, were not determined by biological or ecological considerations. "The German frontiers are the outcome of chance and are only temporary frontiers that have been established as the result of political struggles which took place at various times."

GIVEN the history of the formation of the other European States, few leaders could argue against this logic from a standpoint of political superiority. The ensuing conflict arising from Hitler's ideological perspective could not be settled in the debating arena, but –

'We continue to recreate conditions that could give rise to another Hitler'

following the logic of Western political history – had to be resolved militarily.

It was all going to boil down to a simple test: might is right.

Hitler also wrote:

"Never consider the Reich secure unless, for centuries to come, it is in a position to give every descendant of our race a piece of ground and soil that he can call his own. Never forget that the most sacred of all rights in this world is man's right to the earth which he wishes to cultivate for himself and that the holiest of all sacrifices is that of the blood poured out for it!"²

Hitler's theory of property, alas, would not have enabled the Third Reich to achieve this goal – even if it had lasted for 1,000 years.

But are we, today, any nearer the goal of defining a system whereby the rights of access to natural resources can be equally secured for all men and women on the basis of both economic efficiency and social justice?

I fear not; which is why we continue to recreate the conditions that one day might permit the rise of another Adolph Hitler.

1. English translation published by Hurst and Blackett, London, 1939, p.523.
2. *Ibid.*, p.541.

