

**DER ZWEITE WELTKRIEG: URSACHEN UND ANLASS**  
**[THE SECOND WORLD WAR: ORIGINS AND CAUSES]**  
 by Georg Franz-Willing, Leoni am Starnberger See: Druffel Verlag, 1979,  
 310pp, DM 29,50, ISBN 3-8061-0960-5.

Reviewed by *Russ Granata*



It is no secret that the bombardment of Germans has merely changed in form and intensity since the 1940s. Moscow and Washington both have seen to it that the whole world, not just "East" and "West" Germany, keeps getting a steady barrage of *anti-German/anti-Nazi* incendiary missiles.

By the year 1983, the German people especially were being overwhelmed by waves of electronic media, as well as avalanches of paper, called "volkspaedagogischen Bemuehungen" "public educational efforts." The reason: the 50th anniversary of what is termed "der Machtergreifung," the power-seizure of 1933. The themes: Hitler, National Socialism, the Third Reich, the Second World War. One thing all these "public education" endeavors had in common was that they were presentations from the 1945 victors' perspectives against the German people this people not only firebombed, truncated and divided, but for all these years still without a formal peace treaty, and still militarily occupied in *toto* by foreign forces, some from the East, some from the West.

The post-1945 bombardment about the Third Reich and the war via the victors' media, in America as well as in Germany, has been boringly repetitious. We do, after all, know how it comes out, who the "winners" were and are, and who has to carry the blame. In the meantime, however, has come by fits and starts a refreshing, if yet relatively unsung, free spirit of debate within a movement of historical revisionism. This impetus toward debate and open inquiry, though often obstructed and victimized by organized suppression, nevertheless continues courageously to proceed throughout the world, as though it was inevitably willed, or at least somehow forced, by history. In the vanguard of this most worthy contemporary development are those relatively few heroic historians from Germany of the latter half of the twentieth century. Georg Franz-Willing is one of these honored few.

Unlike many other contemporary German historians, whose interpretations of recent history are merely themes played upon the victors' harps, Georg Franz-Willing in *Der Zweite Weltkrieg: Ursachen und Anlass* lays bare the victors' culpability both in the war

of 1914 and its horrendous aftermath, and in the war of 1939 and thereafter. It is no surprise that the general "established" press in occupied Germany, still dominated by a regrettable and false collective guilt complex, has given his book the silent treatment. In spite of the suppression of this book, however, reviews of previous works of the author have been given; Armin Moehler wrote a piece on him which was allowed to appear in Germany's respected Criticon (No. 75, of January-February 1983). Franz-Willing indeed is or was a name to be reckoned with in German historiography as it treats the Hitler era. His books on the early years of the National Socialist movement, *Ursprung der Hitlerbewegung 1919-1922*, *Krisenjahr der Hitlerbewegung*, and *Putsch und Verbotszeit der Hitlerbewegung 1923-1925*, have attained critical respect and lasting places in all serious bibliographies.

In the present volume, Franz-Willing describes World War II as an extension of Anglo-American anti-German Great War policy; he refers to the era of the world wars as a "second Thirty Years War" within the unfoldment of the West. Both world wars are seen as comprising essentially a single, unitary conflict: phases of global revolution deriving from the crises caused by modernization and industrialization in the West. The British Empire, as traditional dominating economic world power, saw its position threatened by a rising and united Germany. Although Britain was able to maintain economic control right after World War I, it was unable to stop the social changes some revolutionary, some evolutionary which were sweeping the continent, uncorked by that great conflict but long-simmering. Franz-Willing sees Great Britain and its daughter nation, the United States of America, as essentially representing the liberalistic, capitalistic, and reactionary forces against the new order(s) of the twentieth century. The Russian Revolution and the rise of Fascism were struggles to find a place in a changing social order.

The author presents a vast panorama of the ideological, political, and economic power-struggles which, like Fates in a Greek tragedy, seemed inevitably to invoke the gods of war. He evades neither the "Guilt Question" of the Second World War nor the Jewish Question within and without Germany which latter he shows as having a most fateful place in the drama. Great pro-Zionist and Jewish influence in America is demonstrated to have contributed to the clearing of the warpath. While taking the devious Roosevelt-Churchill axis to task, he devotes a full page to photographs of Chaim Weizmann, Felix Frankfurter, Henry Morgenthau, Jr., and Bernard Baruch, focusing on this Jewish quartet prominently in his chapter revealing the forces that impelled America's economic and military intervention into what had theretofore been a limited and essentially European affair.

Finding Germany *not* singularly guilty as charged, either in the first or the second phase of the "second Thirty Years War," Franz-Willing by his archival and secondary research unravels the many devious and quite consequential discussions on the "good guys" side

which managed to plunge the world into a contest for power which is still going on. Like David L. Hoggan, among other fellow historians whom he cites, the author finds Hitler striving to continue the remarkable and essentially bloodless pre-1939 effort to revise Versailles, but being refused peaceful accommodation and finally forced into a war he did not desire or plan. In Franz- Willing's view, the conflict engendered thereby is not in fact over: the world revolution continues, allies-then now foes, some contending parties of today created by 1945, the many attendant struggles sometimes flaring into full and frightening view, sometimes masked and subtle, withal perilous.

As an honest and objective explication of the background to and circumstances surrounding the great flare-up of 1939-45, *Der Zweite Weltkrieg: Ursachen und Anlass* serves very well indeed as an introduction to what historian Charles A. Beard aptly called the world's for it is hardly now just the West's "new and dangerous age."

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Reprinted from *The Journal of Historical Review*, P.O. Box 2739, Newport Beach, CA 92659, USA.  
Subscriptions: \$40 per year (domestic).

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