

Was 'Mein Kampf' a blueprint for future aggression

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Although we can find the shape of things to come in Mein Kampf (the attack against the Soviet Union and France) it was not taken too seriously by most European politicians. It is no wonder, since the book itself is a real mess, a third-rate incoherent mishmash, which could not be improved much either by the editing of Rudolf Hess. Even the Nazi-supporters, who were looking forward with great expectations to the Fuhrer's book at the time, were utterly disappointed with the results.

On the one hand, the simple fact that Hitler eventually tried to carry out the action he was proposing in his early work does not mean that we can take Mein Kampf as an unchangeable plan for future aggression. It is quite probable that he had come up with many different plans as the war proceeded and did not stick to a blueprint that had been created under completely different political circumstances. Mein Kampf is a work of a demagogue who wanted to come up with something that sounded elevated and romantic and caught people's attention but it is questionable whether he really meant every word of what he had said. He was gambling all the way and would have changed his tactics if his enemies had reacted more strongly against him when he invaded Austria or the Sudeten-land.

On the other hand, his terrible hatred against Jews and Bolsheviks is unquestionable, and he was probably convinced about the justice of his Lebensraum-theory. This excerpt proves that Hitler deeply believed that the Germans were the best people in the world and that they had the right to take away other people's land. The largest inhabited lands were to be found in Russia and it was also home to the bitterest opponents of Fascism so it seems quite logical that he did not see his ultimate enemies in the weak bourgeois democracies but in the Soviet Union. However, he did not hesitate to sign the Nazi-Soviet Pact when he had to secure his rear, even if it meant suspending anti-Bolshevism for a while. This could

mean he was ready to make compromises in order to achieve his long-term goal, but could also mean that he was always flexible enough to change his policy according to the current situation.

In my opinion, although Hitler was playing around with the idea of attacking Russia in Mein Kampf, he was not determined to really do it at the time he wrote his book. It was only after his Western success when he really made up his mind and decided to invade the Soviet Union. I think we have to distinguish between the plans he made when there was no power in his hands and his policy when he could control Germany, even if we can find the beginnings of his political thinking in this excerpt.

2. What are Hitler's basic ideas contained in this extract?

The author defines the essence of the National Socialist's foreign policy in the very first line, it is nothing else but 'to secure for the German people the land and soil to which they are entitled on this earth.' This quote suggests a strong, confident feeling of German superiority, which was probably based on the literature circulating in German nationalist circles. Hitler believed in it to such an extent that he thought Germany had a right to conquer areas to colonize for its surplus population in order to have a healthy and thriving race.

As it turns out from the first two paragraphs, Hitler viewed world history as a constant struggle between races and cultures. Unlike the 'folkish pen-pushers' he refers to in the second paragraph, Hitler did not have any moral problems concerning attacking other nations and taking away their land. He thought war was inevitable, and he believed that Darwin's 'survival if the fittest'-theory pertained to peoples as well. These are the most important ideas he wants to get through by stating 'state boundaries are made by man and changed by man.'

He makes it clear that a 'reckoning with France' is necessary, but its importance lies in the fact that it should secure the real task: obtaining larger territories in the East. He wants to go back six hundred years in time to the era of the Drang Nach Osten, when Germans were pushing Slavs eastwards. He claims that

becoming a world power is crucial concerning the existence of Germany and this could be achieved only by 'enhancing the area of the mother country', not by colonizing territories outside Europe. According to Hitler the German nation was doomed unless it could acquire more land, to which the Germans were entitled because of their cultural significance. (And most especially when not some little nigger nation or other is involved, but the Germanic mother of life, which has given the present-day world its cultural picture.)

'We stop the endless German movement to the South and West and turn our gaze towards the land in the East.' As the slogan suggests, Hitler thought that the huge territories of the Soviet Union could serve the best for the enhancement of Germany. He was convinced that the inferior Russians had only been able to found their state with the help of the superior Aryans and that the Bolshevik State meant Jewish Power, which would inevitably cause the destruction of the country. Since the Soviet Union is bound to disappear the Germans have a right to conquer their land - concludes the Fuhrer at the end of the extract. According to him the vast uncultivated lands need to be given to the German plough even by force of arms.

Hitler had a vision of Germany as a super-power, morally renewed, economically powerful, military revived, whose destiny was to carve out a vast Eurasian empire to provide a living space for its people.