

THE SPECTRE OF THE 22 MILLIONS

Europe or Far East?

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Special reprint for the A. E. F.

I have just returned from a tour of the German front in the course of which I visited the Aachen sector as well as spending some time in and around the Luxemburg area.

Doubtless I will be expected to give you a sensational report of my adventures, but I shall disappoint you, for I am about to discuss a subject which in my opinion is far more sensational than all the adventures on the front put together.

And here it is: WHY IS IT IMPOSSIBLE - FOR DIVISIONAL COMMANDERS AND RIGHT DOWN THE RANKS TO THE MEN IN THE TRENCHES - TO GIVE AN ANSWER TO: "WHY, WHEN ALL IS SAID AND DONE, ARE WE FIGHTING IN EUROPE?" -

I have experienced this wonderful "town conquering" and it is now clear to me why even the more thoughtful soldiers under the intoxicating influence of such an advance does not give much thought to these fundamental questions. For this reason, I find it necessary to examine anew the activating motives why the U.S. entered the war at all.

In 1937 it was already self-evident to the farsighted American that only through initiating a huge war materials campaign would it be possible to alleviate the most pressing social and economic problems - if only on a transitory basis. Consequently, one was then already certain that it was only a matter of time before America must engage in a large scale war, if this plan was to have any justification.

I greeted this development with open heart since the war in the offing would unquestionably be directed against Japan where real important U.S. interests were and are at stake.

Further-more England's war with Germany offered us a magnificent opportunity, to produce large quantities of arms and war materials whose consumption did not

require the sacrifice of American soldiers. The same goes for the large deliveries to Russia. These two instances were without question extraordinary favorable circumstances for us.

But we dare not loose sight of the one important fact and I have every reason after my contact with the men on our frontlines to point out again with utmost emphasis: *At the close of this war we will have to reckon with at least 22 million unemployed! We are conducting this war - looking at it with brutal reality to gain export markets that will enable us to put these 22 million people to work. This point of view must determine the course of U. S. strategy.*

In this connection the occupation of North Africa was an important step forward. The military occupation of vast British territory in the Far East will also be of considerable magnitude for our post war economy. All this has and will require but a minimum sacrifice of life. *The only theater of war that is about to cost us the greatest losses, is Europe - just there, where the U. S. hasn't any interests worth mentioning. Europe is already a heap of ruins and consequently will hardly be able to finance reconstruction, let alone buy American goods.*

The supporting of Britain with American Divisions was justifiable as long as the possibility of smashing Germany speedily and with presumably small losses seemed evident.

However, this supposition turned out to be a great blunder.

In my capacity as war correspondent and being well acquainted with Nazi-Germany, I had warned, even long before the Invasion, against the light-hearted optimism of certain Ballyhoo Patriots — unfortunately some of them high military officials — who maintained that German morale was broken and that Germany would fall apart from within like a house of cards. In the meantime the accuracy of my warnings has been confirmed. Had their frivolous predictions the slightest authenticity, then the Nazis would never have withstood the General's revolt of July 20th

Now we are suddenly forced to dig in for the winter.

One asks what the coming spring has in store for us, and one receives rather indefinite replies. Further-more there are ominous indications that Germany will shortly launch new and probably very unpleasant weapons with which we will have to contend.

Therefore the U. S. are confronted with the solution of a problem that undoubtedly will be decisive for the success of this war. We have to realize that every man, now on the European front, is urgently required to fight our real enemies, the Japs. Needless to mention, the knowledge of this fact undermines the morale of our troops in Europe.

Shall we concentrate our might there, where really vital and important American interests can be served, or, should we risk the gamble of continuing the European war on more or less idealistic grounds at the cost of a burning necessity in the Far East?

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