



Signs of the Times - History as a Teacher

Is it possible to learn from history? - Let's be honest - the signs of the times are stormy. And it doesn't matter from which political perspective we observe events that will not let the world rest.

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Introduction

Let's be honest - the signs of the times are heading for a storm. And it doesn't matter from which political perspective the events that are keeping the world from calming down are viewed.

Ukraine conflict. Israel's political and thus in perspective state suicide through more and more war against its neighboring countries. Only possible thanks to the support of AIPAC in the US, the American and not least the German government. The US's military ego trip together with Great Britain in the Middle East against Yemen and its efforts to extend it to Iran. The permanent fuelling of the possibility of military conflicts around Taiwan and China, also by the US, with the "friendly" support of a country that has believed for centuries that it can represent and enforce its interests through intrigue and war, but which passed its zenith over a hundred years ago and is neither economically nor militarily capable of underpinning or recognizing its own hubris, namely Great Britain.

France does not want to be inferior to this trio infernale of world politics either, even if the loss of economic, commercial and political power, not only in Africa, is difficult to reconcile with the national self-image of the Grande Nation and certainly not with the ego of its president.

Last but not least, under Chancellor Merz, German megalomania, coupled with a resurgence of aggressive militaristic ideas in the parliaments and governments of this country and an orgy of rearmament unprecedented since the end of the last world war, is celebrating unjustifiable triumphs.

A look back

So it smells like a major war again. And the parallels with the emergence of the wars, from which the West has drawn all the necessary conclusions according to its own account, are real and very worrying.

Just over 100 years ago, the major European powers of the time were certain that the accumulated contradictions between them could be resolved victoriously in a short military conflict and that they would be back home for Christmas, celebrating their own heroic deeds over roast goose with dumplings and red cabbage or, on the other side, turkey stuffed with chestnuts or dried fruit.

This madness was believed in France, Great Britain, Germany, Austria-Hungary and Russia in equal measure. And all these powers contributed in their own way to the outbreak of war.

So let us try to recall the realities of this ancient catastrophe of the 20th century in Europe. Henri Barbusse dealt with his own traumas of this first global battle in his novel "The Fire". He, who volunteered for the infantry in August 1914 at the age of forty, finished this first ever anti-war book about the First World War in December 1915, which deals with the reality of being at war from the perspective of an ordinary soldier. It is highly recommended to members of parliament and government - especially to conscientious objectors among the ministers and parliamentarians who demand rearmament without limits - as well as war lobbyists such as Ms. Strack-Zimmermann, to broaden their horizons.

The three world wars

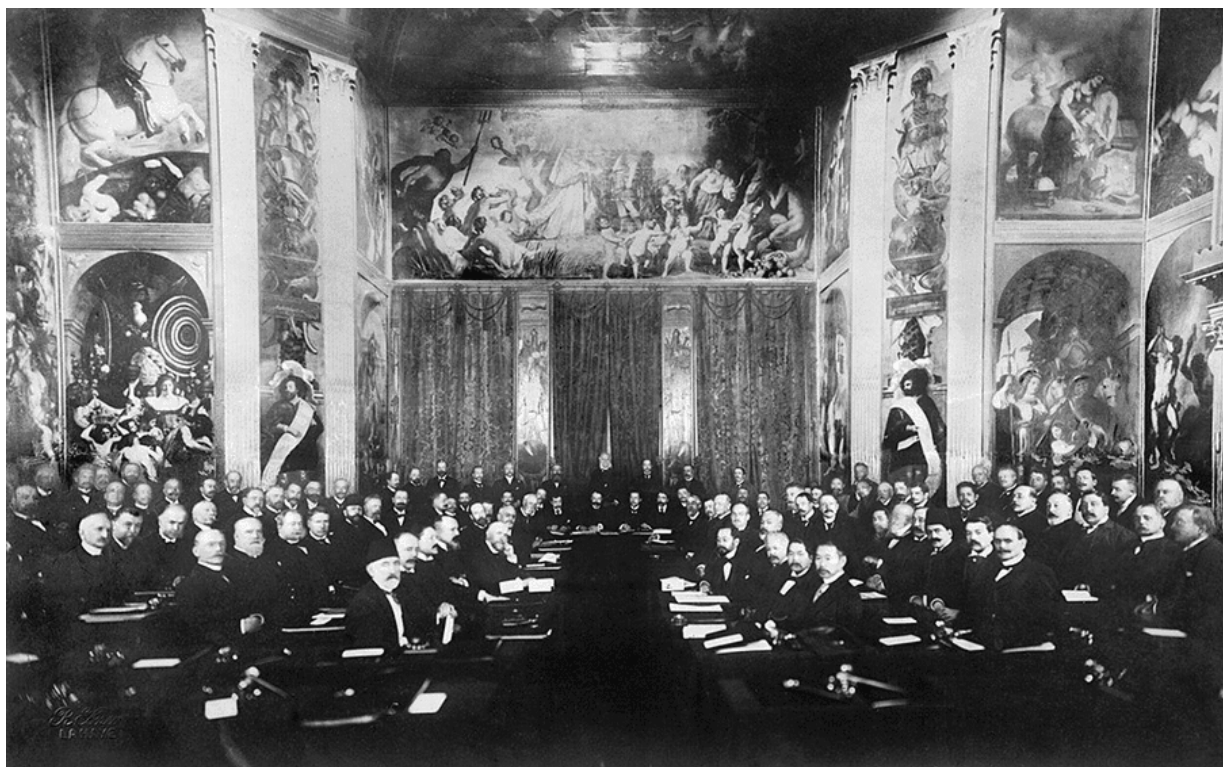
Today's global political situation is reminiscent of Brecht:

"The great Carthage waged three wars. It was still powerful after the first, still habitable after the second. It was untraceable after the third."

BERTOLT BRECHT

With "Hurray!" into the First World War

The years leading up to the First World War were characterized by a constant increase in war hysteria. The glorification of the military and weapons reached unprecedented levels.



The Hague Peace Conference

All the powers felt strong and in the right and were just waiting for the right opportunity to strike. Forget the Hague Peace Conference, which met in The Hague in 1899 and 1907 at the instigation of the Russian Tsar Nicholas II and discussed fundamental questions of disarmament and the peaceful settlement of international conflicts for the first time. Only seven years later, everyone gave priority to war over diplomacy. The only strategy and ultimate goal on all sides was victory. There was no such thing as diplomacy or a plan B.

The balance of power at the end of the First World War was reflected in the most important post-war treaties: The Treaty of Trianon as well as the better-known Treaty of Versailles, to name just the most important. In their own way, they demonstrate the understanding of history and politics at the time. And so the US, France and above all Great Britain did not use the historical moment to clarify the deep-seated causes of the first global war in history. Their aim was to consolidate their own position and maximize profits by eliminating powerful competitors: Germany was forced to acknowledge sole responsibility for the war, which cleared the way for reparations payments. The Habsburg monarchy and the Ottoman Empire fell.

To this day, there is no scientific consensus on the question of guilt for the First World War.



Losses of the German Reich as a result of the Treaty of Versailles in a contemporary graphic.

The path to the Second World War

The political and economic humiliations imposed by treaty on Germany and on Austria-Hungary in particular were so brutal that Germany was unable to find political peace. The establishment of Nazi rule in Germany in the early 1930s was in many ways a consequence of the Treaty of Versailles.

The League of Nations, created after the First World War as an international organization to settle disputes between states and prevent a new war, was only partially able to find solutions to the existing problems. The reasons for this can be found above all in the rigid link to the Treaty of Versailles. With the outbreak of the Second World War, the League of Nations finally lost its legitimacy.

While the First World War was considered the most terrible to date, the devastation of the second global war could no longer be adequately described. The technologies for destroying the enemy reached an incredible acceleration and stopped at nothing: neither before the first biological weapons nor before the first atomic bomb, nor before the targeted systematic extermination of the civilian population, which was also practiced for the first time in this form in terms of scale and scope.

As 25 years earlier, this new war was also due to the failure of diplomacy. While megalomania, which was rampant on all sides, was the driving force in 1914, the deliberate misuse of diplomacy played a major role before the Second World War. Alongside Germany, France and Great Britain were particularly prominent in this respect, deliberately not fulfilling their alliance obligations towards Czechoslovakia and Poland, as well as Finland, despite the treaties in force. On the other hand, they refused to conclude a mutual assistance treaty with the Soviet Union. This was virtually an unspoken invitation to Hitler's Germany to wage war in the east.

The abuse and subsequent destruction of the post-war order as the seeds of a third world war?

The treaties of Tehran, Yalta and Potsdam between the US, Great Britain and the Soviet Union laid the foundation for the political reorganization of the world after the end of the Second World War.

The founding of the UN and its many sub-organizations can also be traced back to the joint efforts of the Allies with the aim of creating a viable international order to maintain peace and stability.

In retrospect, however, the Potsdam resolutions did not have the impact they could have had. This is because the Western Allies, the US and Great Britain - which also included France - were primarily concerned with implementing their own political goals through the way in which the agreements were implemented.

The introduction of the Deutschmark in the three western occupation zones, for example, was an obvious breach of the Potsdam Agreements, which demanded the preservation of a unified German economic area. This created the economic conditions for the foundation of a West German state in 1949, which had far-reaching consequences for post-war Europe.

The founding of NATO and the admission of the FRG, which took place on May 9, 1955 of all days, followed this pattern.

Over the decades, almost all of the international organizations created as a result of the Second World War were gradually undermined by the Western states. Today, these organizations are an extension of the policies of the US, EU and NATO. The actions of the OSCE, international sports organizations, the IMF, the World Bank, the Council of Europe, UNESCO, the WHO and all the others now lack any autonomy and independence. They have become instruments of Western policy, even weapons, through the targeted influence of the US in particular.

A calming of international relations through comprehensive, equal cooperation in a wide variety of areas - that was once upon a time. It seems as if the world is regressing.

Germany 2025

Eighty years ago, the last world war ended. Not much remains of the "Never again!", the promises and oaths of that time. The generation of those who took part in the war has all but disappeared, as have the victims of the war. Both groups only have a very limited influence, limited to the testimonies of their actions that have been left behind. The immediacy of personal experience on politicians is missing. Listening to the latter, one is shocked by their ignorance, indeed their intellectual poverty.

So what remains? It should be the knowledge of the complexity of history, our own and that of others. Wilhelm von Humboldt once said: "Those who do not know their own history have no future."

In view of the current, history-forgotten state of politics not only in Germany but throughout the EU, indeed throughout Western Europe, it seems downright bizarre that the then German Chancellor [Helmut Kohl](#) verbally borrowed from Humboldt [on June 1, 1995](#), when he said in the Bundestag:

"Those who do not know the past cannot understand the present and cannot shape the future."

HELMUT KOHL ON JUNE 1, 1995

In 2025, the parliament, government and president of the Federal Republic of Germany are infinitely far removed from such insights. The speeches of two German presidents on the same occasion show just how far.

Ten years before Helmut Kohl's speech above, the then Federal President Richard von Weizsäcker gave a speech in the German Bundestag on the occasion of the commemoration of the 40th anniversary of the end of the Second World War in Europe. [This speech by Richard von Weizsäcker](#) is considered one of his most impressive, balanced and politically important.

Cold War Analysis Merz, Friedrich Barbusse, Henri Brecht, Bertolt Kohl, Helmut
Weizsäcker, Richard von France Germany Great Britain Russia Ukraine US