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# Washington

By Helen Essary

## ATTACK ON FINLAND QUITE ALL RIGHT, SAYS GERMANY'S THOMSEN

**R**USSIA'S attack on Finland should neither distress nor surprise the United States, in the opinion of Dr. Hans Thomsen, German charge d'affaires.

"The conquest is part of the Soviet plan to redeem its own, to take back what it lost in the World War," said Dr. Thomsen. "As a military triumph actually it is unimportant. Merely an expedition. Russia must have a seaport in the Baltic. There is the coast line of Finland close at hand and very convenient for Russian shipping. The result is inevitable."

"But why shouldn't the United States be greatly outraged at this attack on perfectly harmless people?" I asked.

**D**R. THOMSEN replied calmly. "Such an attitude," he said, "should be understood by the people of the United States. When your Government wanted the land that is now Texas in 1848, it merely moved in and took it from Mexico. It isn't recorded in the history books that the citizens of your country were horrified."

"At least they have never yet given back the land. To some of us in Europe, it seems both necessary and simple procedure to rearrange the map of Europe in the same way, though on larger scale. Let me show you."

Dr. Thomsen moved out of the small office adjacent to what was the drawing-room, when Ambassador Hans Luther had lived at the embassy. "Look at this globe of the world. Russia has but one logical course. Her objective, a port on the Black Sea, is understandable. She will move down the Continent through Rumania, taking back Bessarabia, which belongs to her, as she goes. There are many Russians in Bessarabia."

"It would still be Russian land were it not for the mistakes of the Versailles Treaty. Turkey is the real Soviet objective. All of Turkey? No. But full control of the Bosphorus."

**I**F Rumania had not "foolishly enlarged herself" after the World War, she would not now be in danger from Russia and also from Hungary. Hungary wants her part of Rumania back, Dr. Thomsen said. As the German charge spoke so dispassionately about the Russian plan of conquest, with which Germany must be sympathetic, I found myself shivering with horror. And said so, emphatically, to Dr. Thomsen.

"But why does it disturb you?" he replied. "It is history repeating itself as it always will."

"About Germany's plans," I asked. "What becomes of Bulgaria in this switching about?"

"Bulgaria will not be disturbed," he said.

"And Denmark?" I continued. Dr. Thomsen evidently did not hear. For he did not answer.

**N**ORWAY and Sweden," he said "are not in the Russian path. They are geographically inaccessible, with bad roads from Russia and a seacoast almost impossible to conquer." Unemotionally, he went on with the conversation. It was fantastic to be discussing in words of one syllable the destruction of hundreds of thousands of people as though the evil deed had been done. Next I brought up colonies.



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No rubber nor manganese there now. The colonies could be developed, however, by Germany. Yet they are important as trading points.

**W**E will also find them useful spots to send German youth to blow off steam. You know, of course, that England sends her younger sons to the far-away places she has conquered when the boys are difficult at home. We can do the same with German youth.

"Surely the exchange of colonies could not be very important. I read somewhere recently that an Indian tribe wants the United States and Canada to give back Niagara Falls. Niagara originally belonged to Indians, didn't it?"

**I** ASKED Dr. Thomsen another question. "Do you honestly think that this destruction and murder that you are carrying on can actually profit any government or any people?"

"Who can be certain," answered Dr. Thomsen, "that the historians will condemn a hundred years from now what Germany and Russia are doing? As I told you, the day before Germany invaded Poland, the honest European knows war is almost everlasting for him."

"When the World War began, there had been peace in Europe for 40 years. The longest time in its history. The people had got accustomed to peace. This was both fortunate and unfortunate, because again I say everyone knows eternal peace in Europe is impossible."

"Too much blood has been shed over the boundaries. Racial characteristics will always prevail and will not permit any country, big or little, to long endure rule by outsiders. This is why the German National Socialist government did not have to wait long for Czechoslovakia, Poland and Austria. These were really German countries with many thousands of Germans already there."

**D**O you think this will be a long war," I asked Dr. Thomsen. He, naturally, could not say definitely, but he did not think it would be short.

"It will be a cautious war, however. Both sides have learned that it is stupid to sacrifice a hundred thousand young men for a spectacular attack that will have no particular results. Each side will move warily."

"Now England can do nothing. Not at the moment. She has set up her flag on French soil and moved her armies in. But that is all."

We were talking of war as casually as if we were discussing a new play. Such blithe ignoring of the human element, the bodies and souls of the men who would be murdered, almost kept me from thinking the conversation had reality. It was also incredible that Dr. Thomsen did not seem to feel there was a remote chance of Russia and Germany failing to conquer Europe. And I got the distinct idea that they conquer together according to a fixed plan.

Skipping over the certainty that Hitler and Stalin, leaders of this ruthless conquest, must some day come face to face and then what, was one question I did not ask Dr. Thomsen.

**W**HAT he thought about the attitude of the United States was yet to be mentioned. "While Germany and Russia are running amuck, what do you suppose the United States will be doing meanwhile?" I said.

Dr. Thomsen looked squarely at me and answered, "She will be staying at home and looking after her own big country and be thanking heaven."

"The United States has enough to do governing her own people. Europe never has and never will be any proper concern of hers. When people say that some day the Nazis will cross the ocean and invade the United States, I laugh."