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The Drift to War, 1922-1939

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Lamb, Richard. *The Drift to War, 1922-1939*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991. 372pp. \$24.95

This historical work, originally published in 1989, consists of previously unpublished material and expands the revisionist study of the origins of World War II. While Lamb details the diplomatic, social, economic, and military events which culminated in a world at war, he also provides new historical explanations for its cause. He offers a new and sobering look at how politicians, military leaders, and the public at large failed to pursue peace and drove the world to war.

Richard Lamb is a journalist, historian, and BBC radio commentator who has combined all three talents into his latest work. Although the reader knows how the book ends, Lamb has managed to spin his tale like a suspense novel; each chapter is filled with many opportunities to avert world war.

Of the book's two sections, the first discusses 1922-1933, before Hitler came to power. A culmination of mistakes, poor policy decisions, and untimely personnel changes in various governments slowly forced Germany to the point where its democratic government lost the faith of its people. Through the vindictiveness and shortsightedness of several governments, Germany's economic situation demanded a change in the state's governing party. This resulted in the increase in power of the Nazis.

The second section examines the successes and failures of French and British diplomacy when dealing with the fascist regimes of Italy and Germany. Their former hardline approach to Germany was replaced by appeasement and conciliation. Numerous opportunities to prevent Hitler's political and military aggression were missed due to overinflated egos, gross political misunderstandings, and personal biases. The actions of those few individuals responsible for the tragic results are no more palatable now than they were fifty years ago.

The American reader may have trouble with the syntax and acronyms, plus the many typographical errors, but the lessons Lamb offers on politics and diplomacy make these distractions minor.

All serious students of World War II will benefit from this detailed and enlightening work.

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Mrazek, James E. *The Fall of Eben Emael*. Novato, Calif.: Presidio, 1991. 192pp. \$19.95

Belgian fortresses have played an interesting but ultimately treacherous role in the opening moves of both world wars. In 1914 and 1940, Joffre and Gamelin respectively were lulled into the belief that the strength of Belgian fortresses at Liege or along the Albert Canal would buy them enough time to put their plans into action. In both cases, these key positions proved remarkably easy to seize.