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**NEW NOVEL PROBES TROUBLING QUESTION:
COULD WORLD WAR II HAVE BEEN EASILY AVOIDED?
--Arnold Simon's "A Break in the Storm" blends history with fiction
to stir new debate**

Hitler's persecution of millions and his hunger for world domination are well documented, but a far less scrutinized issue is one that could have made Hitler a brief footnote in history: Could World War II have been avoided?

It was March 7, 1936; the date of perhaps the most tragic of the twentieth century's many tragic events. On that day, Hitler reoccupied the demilitarized buffer zone between Germany and France known as the Rhineland, thus violating the post-World War I Locarno Pact. Had the Allies at that moment met their solemn obligation under that treaty to expel Hitler's small symbolic force from that zone, this event could have prevented future aggression and ended a war before it began.. Instead, the Allies defaulted on their obligation, foreclosing the last chance to prevent another war, and thus making World War II a certainty.

Author and World War II veteran, Arnold Simon delves deeply into this question by painting a personal picture of the prelude to World War II through love, deceit, betrayal and revenge in his carefully researched and highly-charged historical novel, *A Break in the Storm*.

The turmoil in Europe on the brink of war is the backdrop to *A Break in the Storm*. The story involves Erich Behrndt, an idealistic 23-year-old German government worker and Nazi-sympathizer, the people who touch his life, and the decisions they make that will change their lives forever. Haunted by the death of his mother and father, Behrndt has pledged undying loyalty to Hitler and the Nazi Party only to discover too late that his loyalty would cost him a horrific price. His encounters with a young, beautiful woman named Lise Hermann, Josef Steeg – his brutal government supervisor – a persecuted Jewish scientist named Stefan Mueller and André Laroche, a Belgian man out for revenge, make for a thrilling story where the last chance to prevent the next war hung in the balance.

“It is against the background of historic events that the drama in the lives of this novel’s characters unfolds,” Simon explains. “In one way or another, they are all victims of World War I, the Great War. All of the tensions and suspense, the victories and tragedies that grip their lives, result from that war, and the novel’s resolution is tied to these events.”

Simon cleverly entwines strong, resilient, fictional characters with factual events and presents fascinating themes throughout the book, which still resonate in today’s socio-political climate:

- ◆ **How World War II could have been easily avoided.**
- ◆ **Reasons tyrants can arise and flourish.**
- ◆ **The unending perpetuation of the cycle of hatred and revenge as a cause of war.**
- ◆ **The mix of innocence, idealism, false hope, and deception, and its consequences.**

“When I started to think about writing this novel,” Simon explains, “I found the themes and ideas that undergird and run through *A Break in the Storm* to be important to our world history. They raise some very interesting questions which have perplexed our world’s citizens for decades.”

Arnold Simon was born in New York City but his family traces its roots to the region where the events that form the background of this story occurred, and he lived in Europe at the time before World War II when they were unfolding. Simon returned to the United States on the eve of the war. He enlisted in the United States Navy and served during World War II. After graduating from Yale, he was an aerospace engineer and eventually entered law school at age thirty-nine. He has studied creative writing at UCLA. He and his wife live in Los Angeles.

Website: www.aBreakintheStorm.com

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