BRITISH DIPLOMACY

AT THE MUNICH CONFERENCE

1938

by

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MANSOUR

In gratitude and affection, I dedicate this piece of work to those whose moral support and urgent insistence made the writing of it possible.

ABSTRACT

A multitude of authors, of various backgrounds, have devoted endless hours and pages to the study and analysis of British policy in Munich. The result is an impressive pile of works which reflect different reactions to the Munich Agreement.

The study of British policy in Munich and its consequences is appealing. What is more, it admits of differences in approaches and conclusions and as a result there is always room for further attempts. In writing this thesis, I hope to shed some light on Britain's motives and considerations which underlied her attitude towards the Czech problem and her decision to agree to the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia in the Munich Conference.

Fortunately for the students of history and political science, the documents which reveal the backstage activities in the Munich Conference were made available to the public. The publication of these documents makes it possible for the students of the subject to acquaint themselves with its various aspects. They are thus better equipped to put to the test the assumptions and conclusions of the leading participants in the Munich Conference.

Hence, this present study has been conducted on the basis of original documents comprising texts of speeches, minutes of conferences, texts of agreements and memoranda, directives as well as memoirs, with

the hope of attaining as great a degree of originality as possible. Secondary sources which deal with the background of the Nazi regime in Germany and the conditions of the leading powers in Europe in the period under consideration are used as supplementary material.

The present writer recognizes with due respect the opinions, views and conclusions of the authors whose works he made use of. But he will endeavor to formulate his own, based on his understanding of the subject, and in the light of the original material which he consulted.

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INTRODUCTION

".....this is the second time in our history that there has come back from Germany to Downing Street peace with honor. I believe it is peace in our time",[1] stated Chamberlain to the crowds that came to hail him upon his 'victorious' return from Munich. To the crowds these words conveyed relief. The people of Britain and of Europe and even Germany herself,[2] wanted peace at any cost and hence were eager to hear the comforting words of the Prime Minister.

Chamberlain's optimism, however, was not shared by all. Winston Churchill's reaction to the Munich Agreement was diametrically opposed to Chamberlain's.

> "We have sustained a total and unmitigated defeat", he declared. "We are in the midst of a disaster of the first magnitude. The road down the Danube... has been opened. All countries of Mittel Europa and the Danube Valley, one after another, will be drawn in the vast system of Nazi politics....and do not suppose that this is the end. It is only the beginning."[3]

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1 Neville Chamberlain, Struggle for Peace, (London: Hutchinson & Co., undated), p. 302. (Reference to Disraeli's return from the Congress of Berlin, 1878.)

2 W.L. Shirer wrote in his diary on September 27, 1938 about the parade of the motorized division to stir the war fever among the Berliners: "I went out to the corner of the Linden where the column (of troops) was turning down the Wilhemstrasse, expecting to see a tremendous demonstration. I pictured the scenes I had read of in 1914 when cheering throngs on this same street tossed flowers at the marching soldiers, and the girls ran up and kissed them....but today they ducked into subways, refused to look on, and the handful that did stood at the curb in utter silence...It was the most striking demonstration against war I've seen". (Shirer, The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1960, p. 397.)

3 Speech in the House of Commons, Oct. 5, 1938. (Ibid., p. 423).

Nor, in the light of German ambitions, was optimism warranted. Germany's expansionist intentions were not a secret, even as far back as 1937. On November 5, 1937 a group of German policy makers met in Berlin under Hitler to decide the future policy of the Reich. "Their purpose was to expand the frontiers of the German Reich, if possible by peaceful means, if need be by war. To them war is a mere continuation of policy by other means."[4] What is more, a serious perusal of Hitler's Mein Kampf would have convinced any intelligent person that the frustrated ambitions manifested in the book would undoubtedly force themselves into existence as soon as the opportunity arose. By 1938 Hitler had had ample opportunity.

But no matter how controversial opinions were, the Munich Agreement remains as a turning point in European relations, which were soon to involve Europe, and the rest of the world, in a second world war.

The Munich Agreement dismembered a whole nation, Czechoslovakia, and eventually caused its total disappearance as an independent state. Hitler, for the second time in less than a year, was able to expand the Reich frontiers without the loss of a single German soul. "He (Hitler) had invented and used with staggering success a new strategy and technique of political warfare, which made actual war unnecessary."[5]

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4 John W. Wheeler-Benett, Munich, Prologue to Tragedy, (London: Macmillan and Co. Ltd., 1948), p. 11.
5 Ibid., p. 422.

The French and the English publics, especially the latter, welcomed the Munich Agreement on the belief that war was avoided and peace established without sacrifice of power and prestige. That was only momentarily true. Later events proved that the peace established by the Munich Agreement was illusory. Munich, as it turned out, had paved the road for the Second World War.

The line of policy which Britain pursued in the Munich Conference had had far reaching consequences in shaping the course of later events. Britain's policy in Munich was described as a policy of appeasement. It was a continuation of the policy of pacification pursued by previous governments in the later twenties and the early thirties, the years that preceded the rise of Hitler. "Appeasement came to mean not only a willingness to make concessions and to favor pacification, but a readiness to bow to the 'fait accompli' or even to the threat of war".[6]

The policy of appeasement and its motivating causes had been treated with painstaking efforts by several writers. Hardly a historian writing about the Second World War and the preceding era that had not devoted his attentions to a great extent to the discussion of Britain's policy towards Hitler's Germany in the thirties.

This policy is the heart of our discussion in this dissertation, and will be discussed in greater detail in later sections.

Mention is to be made here that the discussion of this policy admits of no sharp-cut generalizations as to its merits and demerits.

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6 Arnold Wolfers, Britain and France Between Two Wars, (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1940), p. 251.

One should always remember that this policy was the outcome of the interplay of several factors each of which had its influence upon the behavior of British foreign-policy makers.

One major factor was the economic difficulties which Britain faced after the First World War; unemployment, devaluation of the Sterling and the depression of the thirties, which "tremendously influenced her reaction to the dictatorship".[7]

Another factor was that the political structure of Britain was undergoing a significant change whereby the Labor party was replacing the Liberals. This change introduced the necessity of compromise in shaping Britain's foreign policy and left her without a strong and united leadership.

Still another factor was Britain's traditional policy of 'Balance of Power' on the Continent. This policy prompted her to undertake an unsympathetic attitude towards the French policy of 'permanent superiority' over Germany which was in line with the spirit and clauses of the Treaty of Versailles.

Several other factors were also instrumental in shaping Britain's policy and will be discussed at the proper place. But one further aspect of this policy deserves mention here. What Britain was seeking to achieve was a happy compromise on the continent which would permit Germany to regain sufficient power so as to stand as a balancing force in the face of both France's desires to attain

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7 Glenn Dunke, 'Democracy off Guard' of the Book Origin and Consequences of World War II, by Cave Floyd, (New York: Dryden Press Inc., 1948), p. 336.

supremacy and the Communist threat, while at the same time keeping Germany's power at a level which would not threaten Britain's own safety. Through this policy Britain hoped to maintain a leading role in continental politics and to preserve peace. Several historians and political scientists are of the opinion that this was a 'miscalculation' that amounted to naivete on the part of Britain and that British politicians should have realized that there was no guarantee that Germany will be satisfied by the role assigned to her, especially when a man as outspokenly and pronouncedly ambitious as Hitler had assumed power on the strength of the resentment created by the humiliating Treaty of Versailles.

This raises the question of how far Britain's policy of appeasement, after the rise of Hitler and in the Munich Conference, was responsible for the outbreak of the Second World War.

This question will also be discussed fully in later sections. But one remark is relevant here. It did not take Hitler long to gain the initiative in the play of power politics on the continent. No sooner had he been assured of his strength than he assumed the aggressive and dominant role while the other powers were finding it increasingly difficult to catch up with him. It is to be remembered that Britain's benevolent attitude towards Germany has helped the latter to rearm and hence was partially responsible for its power.

One further question that will receive due interest is the consideration, in attempting to evaluate Britain's policy, of whether

it was possible for her to pursue another and different line of policy and whether this shift would have ultimately brought about different results. While this sounds more like an intellectual exercise motivated by intellectual curiosity, it is of extreme importance and relevance to the discussion in so far as Britain's policy, in the final analysis, was an influencial element in continental politics and in so far as it is the purpose of this study to analyse Britain's policy.

CHAPTER I

THE BACKGROUND OF THE MUNICH CONFERENCE

A. THE CONTINENT.

1. The German Scene.

Germany emerged from the First World War with an enormous heritage of political, economic and military distress.

Politically, Germany was a divided house. The Weimar Republic, under Hindenburg was trying desperately to rectify the situation. But the elements of disintegration were overwhelming. The peace treaty of Versailles was resented generally and had created hostility towards the republic that ratified it. The conservatives showed open hostility towards the Republic. The Nationalists detested the loss of German territories in Alsace-Lorraine, Saar, Schlesweig and Silesia, which was imposed upon Germany by the Versailles Treaty. The army resented the imposition of military restrictions. And while it maintained its old Prussian traditions, it became an influencial political body, a new phenomenon in the political life of Germany. "The army became a state within a state, exerting an increasing influence on the nation's foreign and domestic policies until a point was reached where the Republic's continued existence depended on the will of the officer corps."[1] The monarchists and anti-republicans infested the army and the administration, and this was an added weakness. The conflicts

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1 Shirer, op.cit., p. 60.

and strife of these various groups led to the gradual deterioration of the political life in Germany.

The economic situation was no less gloomy. Germany's industrial machinery was operating at half capacity. The value of the Mark was deteriorating rapidly.[2] War reparations, which Germany had to pay in accordance with the Versailles treaty, constituted a heavy drain on her resources, especially as her exports were diminished. The depression of the thirties dealt the final blow to the German economy, and the Germans passed a period of economic misery never known to them before.

Militarily Germany was reduced to the status of a small nation. The treaty of Versailles virtually disarmed Germany[3] and her strategic position was weakened by the demilitarization of the Rhineland Zone.

This gloomy situation paved the way for Hitler's assumption of power.

a. Hitler Assumes Power.

In the elections of 1932, the National Socialist (Nazi) party won a plurality in the Reichstag. And on the 30th of January, 1933 Adolf Hitler, the 'Fuhrer' of the party, was invited to become the Chancellor of Germany.

Hitler's opinions of the best form of government were inclined towards the rule of the 'One Man'. Earlier, in 'Mein Kampf', he had

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2 At one time the exchange rate of the Mark was four billion to the U.S. dollar.

3 The treaty restricted the army to 100,000, with no planes and tanks and a token naval power.

exposed these opinions clearly. He wrote: "There must be no majority decisions, but only responsible persons....Surely every man will have advisers by his side, but the decision will be made by one man.... only he alone may possess the authority and right to command."[4]

It was not long before the opportunity for the assumption of dictatorial powers presented itself to Hitler. On August 2, 1934, President Hindenburg died. Instead of electing a new president a new law was promulgated and it stipulated that the office of the President will be combined with that of the Chancellor of the Reich. As a result, the functions, therefore, exercised by the President of the Republic were transformed to the Chancellor of the Reich, Adolf Hitler.

This law marked the end of the Republic. And Hitler lost no time in consolidating his position and putting into effect his ideas of future Germany which he visualized in 'Mein Kampf'. His whole career, from then on, can best be described as a series of defiances and violations of international laws and treaties. This course of action brought Germany to the height of her power in the years that preceded the Second World War and during the first two years of the war.

b. Germany Under Hitler.

The course of action which Hitler followed during the first four years of his Chancellorship was directed towards the rebuilding of a strong Germany under his Nazi regime. His lust for power was

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4 Adolf Hitler, Mein Kampf, (Boston: 1943), (name of publisher not stated), pp. 449-50.

unlimited and he always contemplated the objective of a 'Great Germany' supreme in Europe.

"In Mein Kampf," says Shirer, "he expanded his views and applied them specifically to the problem of not only restoring a defeated chaotic Germany to a place in the sun greater than it had ever had before but making a new kind of state, one which would be based on race and would include all Germans then living outside the Reich's frontiers, and in which would be established the absolute dictatorship of the Leader - himself - with an array of smaller leaders taking orders from above and giving them to those below."[5]

The materialization of this ultimate objective required a strong unified, and psychologically prepared Germany. But there were major problems to be faced first; settling disputes in the Nazi party itself, achieving economic recovery and rearming without risking war. These problems dictated Hitler's policies and tactics in the early period of his Chancellorship, because he could not pursue his long term objective and policy without first settling these problems.

By the end of 1934 Hitler's position in Germany was greatly bolstered. Opposition had subsided and any possible threat from within the party vanished after the liquidation of Roehm and the S.A. troops in June. And so he was able to concentrate on the major problem of building up Germany's tattered strength.

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5 Shirer, op.cit., p. 82.

On October 14, 1933 Hitler announced, unexpectedly, that Germany had withdrawn from the Disarmament Conference in Geneva and from the League of Nations. This was the first act of defiance against the former allies. But any fear of military action against him soon evaporated. Protests were made, but no move was made to force Hitler back. It was an easy victory. "In consequence," writes Kirpatrick, "Hitler's move strengthened his position at home. It was the first in a long series of open acts of defiance. In each case they brought no retribution on Germany, satisfied the ordinary Germans longing to recover Germany's position in the world and increased the proportion of those who favoured a forward foreign policy."[6] Wheeler-Benett also comments on the event. "More important however," he says, "is that this date (October 14, 1933) marks the first trial of strength between Hitler and the former Allied Powers, a contest in which, to his intense surprise, he won an easy victory."[7]

With the success of his first act of defiance the Fuhrer had taken the measure of his opponents and forewith conducted his policy accordingly.

No other major events took place in 1933. In the next two years Hitler's tactics were "to talk peace, to prepare secretly for war and to proceed with enough caution in foreign policy and clandestine rearmament to avoid any premature military action against Germany by the Versailles powers."[8]

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6 Ivone Kirpatrick, The Inner Circle, (London: Macmillan & Co.Ltd., 1959), p. 50.
7 Wheeler-Benett, op.cit., p. 213-14.
8 Shirer, op.cit., p. 279.

In breach of the Versailles Treaty Hitler was energetically pursuing a program of building up the amred forces of Germany. In October 1934 he ordered the army to increase its numerical strength to 300,000, three times the limit allowed him by the Treaty. He also established the 'General Staff' of the army which the Treaty also forbade.

The Navy was also being built up. Two battle cruisers of 26,000 tons were being constructed (the Versailles limit was 10,000 tons), and submarines were being built. The naval power was tripled. The Air Force as well as being busily established. Designs of war planes were being made and military pilots trained.

Hitler had ordered that utmost secrecy of those armament activities be maintained. But actually it was impossible"to move around the country without noticing with what energy the nation was driven. New barracks and airfields were springing up everywhere. So public were the preparations that they became a topic of conversation."[9]

To cover up these preparations for war, Hitler launched a policy of reassuring his people and the rest of the world of his peaceful intentions. "He lulled the Western powers into a sense of false security with promises and pledges and pacts...."[10] He also launched the policy of 'peace offensive'. He approached Poland, Czechoslovakia, France and Britain with proposals to solve their

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9 Kirpatrick, op.cit., pp. 64-65.
10 Wheeler-Benett, op.cit., p. 217.

mutual problems through negotiations. Meanwhile Germany's military preparations never ceased.

The success of the armament scheme required a strong stable economy. Hitler's regime succeeded miraculously in reviving the German economy. Unemployment was reduced considerably and the national product was more than doubled in five years. But all the economic resources of the country were directed towards war effort. "The whole German economy came to be known in Nazi parlance as Wehrwirtschaft, or war economy and it was designed to function not only in time of war but during the peace that lead to war."[11]

Not only the German economy, but the whole German society was geared for the war preparations and for the rebuilding of the new Nazi Germany. All means of communication fell under the domination of the regime. The press, the radio and films were directly controlled by party officials. "Every morning the editors of the Berlin daily newspapers and the correspondents of those published elsewhere in the Reich gathered at the Propaganda Ministry to be told by Dr. Goebbles or one of his aides what news to print and suppress, how to write the news and headline it, what campaigns to call off or institute and what editorials were desired for the day."[12] Soon conformity in the nation's press prevailed and the steady diet of falsified and distorted information left its impression on the minds of the people.

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11 Shirer, op.cit., p. 259.
12 Ibid., pp. 244-45.

The radio and motion pictures were also utilized for propaganda purposes. Propaganda agencies of the party controlled completely the broadcasting stations. The film industry was also controlled by the Propaganda Ministry.

The strongest tool, however, which the Nazis utilized was education. The ultimate ambition of the Party was to Nazify the whole German people, and education was the best means for achieving this end. "The German schools, from first grade through universities, were quickly nazified. Textbooks were hastily rewritten, curricula were changed, Mein Kampf was made - in the words of Der Deutsche Erzieher, official organ of the educators - 'our infallible pedagogical guiding star' and teachers who failed to see the new light were cast out. Most instructors had been more or less Nazi in sentiment when not outright party members. To strengthen their ideology they were dispatched to special schools for intensive training in National Socialist principles, emphasis being put on Hitler's racial doctrines."[13]

German public schools were brought under the rule of the Reich Ministry of Education. The Minister appointed the deans and the rectors of the universities and every person engaged in the teaching profession was compelled to join the National Socialist Teachers' League which was entrusted with the task of co-ordinating the teachers in accordance with the National Socialist doctrines. Even the subjects taught were Nazified. History was rewritten to comply with the Nazi

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13 Ibid., p. 249.

doctrines, and new subjects such as 'racial sciences' and 'German physics' were introduced. To complete the domination of the youth all young men and women were conscribted into the Hitler Youth, a semi-military organization which undertook the training and indoctrination of the nation's youth.

All these efforts prepared the German nation psychologically to accept Hitler's regime and policy and to follow his lead.

c. The Eventful Years, 1934-37.

On January 30, 1937 Hitler proclaimed that Germany had withdrawn her signature from the Versailles Treaty. That was a gesture which reflected Hitler's attitude at that time. By then he felt he was powerful enough to defy openly the Versailles Treaty and risk hostilities with the Versailles powers. A record of brilliant achievements during the preceding four years justified this attitude. "He had....abolished unemployment, created a boom in business, built up a powerful Army, Navy and Air Force, provided them with considerable armaments and the promise of more on a massive scale. He had single-handedly broken the fetters of Versailles and bluffed his way into occupying the Rhineland. Completely isolated at first, he had detached Poland from France. Most important of all, perhaps, he had released the dynamic energy of the German people, reawakening their confidence in the nation and their sense of its mission as a great and expanding world powers."[14]

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14 Ibid., p. 299.

We have seen in the previous section how Hitler had subjected the whole of the nation's resources to the requirements of his war schemes and how he was able to effect the economic and moral recovery of the country and to build up the German military forces. But in addition to these achievements the four years since his assumption of power were full of major events, the credit for which goes mainly to him.

On July 25, 1934, Austrian Nazis murdered the Austrian Chancellor Dollfuss in Vienna. Austrian Nazis were directly controlled by the party in Germany and were receiving from Germany weapons and ammunitions with which they had instituted a reign of terror. The reunion of Austria and Germany was one of Hitler's main ambitions, and as soon as he became Chancellor he started taking steps towards its realization. But the Nazi 'putsch' failed and Hitler hastened to deny his participation in the event and to declare his peaceful intentions towards Austria.

Two other major events took place in 1934 and ended favorably for Hitler. On June 30 Roehm, the leader of the S. A. troops and several other S.A. chiefs were liquidated on the alleged charge of attempting a 'coup d'etat' against the regime. The fact was that Roehm had become too strong for the liking of the army generals and Hitler in order to maintain their support had to dispose of him.

The second event was the death of President Hindenberg on August 2, and the merger of the two offices of President and Chancellor under Hitler.

The year 1935 witnessed two major events. On January 23, a plebiscite under the supervision of the League of Nations was carried out in the Saar. The majority of this small, coal-rich region voted for reunion with Germany. The results of the plebiscite were not only a victory for Hitler but a triumph.

On March 16, Hitler declared universal military service with the goal of providing the armed forces with 36 divisions. This act ended the military restrictions of Versailles and restored to Germany her freedom to rearm openly.

The main event in 1936 was the reoccupation of the dimilitarized Rhineland. Hitler had been preparing for this coup since May 1935 and plans for the reoccupation had been drawn since then. On March, 1936 German troops occupied the Rhineland in a 'surprise move'. This was in defiance of the Locarno Pact and the territorial clauses of Versailles. But no military action was taken against Germany. The year 1936 also witnessed the birth of the Rome-Berlin Axis.

1937 brought no surprises. But by the end of that year Germany's preparations for war were completed, so that "The time had come to begin the realization of that dream conceived twelve years before in the fortress of Landsberg, and in this spirit Hitler summoned his political and military lieutenants to the secret conclave of November 5, 1937, at which time he declared to them the new policy for Germany; a policy which must be carried through even at the risk of a second world war; a policy which envisaged the annexation of Austria, the subjugation of Czechoslovakia, the destruction of Poland,

the conquest of Lebensraum in Russia and - ultimately - a Germany paramount in the arbitrament of the world's destiny."[15]

2. The Other Side of the Picture.

This bustling activity in Germany was not matched in the rest of Europe. The approach of the European powers to the current events and the shaping of their internal and foreign policies contrasted sharply with those of Germany. A review of the situation in the major European powers is essential to the understanding of the events that led to the Munich Conference and ultimately to the Second World War.

a. France.

Since the end of the First World War, France was preoccupied mainly with the fear of future German aggression. Security became the key word of the French policy at Versailles and later on. At Versailles France did her utmost to obtain guarantees against this menace. Later on she entered into a multitude of treaties, pacts and alliances with the purpose of surrounding Germany with a unified front. So the French policy during the period "was....directed not merely toward the defence and enforcement of the Treaty of Versailles (which was regarded as the minimum requirement for French security), but also toward the creation of still more safeguards against Germany."[16]

This quest for safety could be explained by the fact that, although Germany was vanquished at the end of the war, she was potentially stronger than France. She outnumbered France in population, and although her resources were not richer than those of France, her

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15 Wheeler-Benett, op.cit., p. 228.
16 Wolfers, op.cit., p. 11.

industrial machinery and skills were superior.

Besides, France had her internal troubles and her relations with England, whose support she cherished, were not at their best. "In January 1933," says Wheeler-Benett, "neither Britain nor France was equipped materially or spiritually to confront a world climateric, such as the advent of Adolf Hitler to Power in Germany.... The great depression of 1930-31 had rocked the economic structure of both countries upon its foundations, and in the process, had brought little to improve the Anglo-French relations."[17]

The economic position of France was worse than any of the European powers. Economic recovery, which had begun in Britain, Germany and the United States, had not started in France. On the contrary, the French economy was going backwards. Inflation and the devaluation of the Franc were disasterous to the whole nation and especially to the middle class and fixed income groups.

This economic distress was accompanied by a noticeable drift towards the extreme left. That explains why the Bourgois and Right groups listened with sympathy to the attacks of Hitler upon Communism. This sympathy lulled the fears aroused by German aggressive tendencies. "French conservatism was beginning to waver between class interest and national security. And with the birth of this uncertainty, Hitler had achieved his first victory over France in political warfare."[18] Among the political leaders at that time in France many contemplated the possibility of reaching an understanding with the Nazi regime. This understanding it was hoped, would free France from the threat of invasion and relieve her of the danger of the Communist movement.

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17 Wheeler-Benett, op.cit., p. 229.
18 Ibid., p. 235.

Nevertheless, the general line of policy was antagonistic to Germany. It should be kept in mind, however, that the political life in France at that period was very unstable and no specific line of policy was adhered to for long.

France's foreign policy at that time was running on five major broad lines:

1. To defend the Versailles Treaty.
2. To enter into alliances with the Central European countries.
3. To undertake a defensive form of armament.
4. To enlist Britain's assistance.
5. To seek additional support from the League of Nations.

The last three are of special interest. France sought to maintain superiority in armament over Germany. And in spite of the great economic burden that scheme entailed, France was able to keep the balance. "Certainly France cannot be accused of failing to keep her armament up to the requirements of the task or of underestimating... the extent of the preparations on the opposing side."[19]

But the weak point was that instead of developing an offensive spirit and military machinery, to be able to meet her pledges, France directed her efforts towards defensive measures, typified by the Maginot Line. This had an important psychological effect. It created a false feeling of security which prevented the creation of offensive policies.

As to Britain's assistance, "If there was one conviction which all Frenchmen shared, it was the belief that outside of their military

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19 Wolfers, op.cit., p. 74.

preparadness, an entente with Britain must become the corner stone of France's system of security."[20]

But as long as there was no immediate threat of war, Britain's policy vis-a-vis Germany diverged with that of France. France's expectations of Britain's backing were frustrated.

Also, France's hopes for support from the League of Nations were unjustified. Wolfers summarises the situation ably when he says:

> "From France's dilemma may be drawn a general conclusion. Even if for some reason the feeling of solidarity among nations should grow to the point where the nations would be willing in principle to participate in collective action against any 'aggressor', no nation even then could rely on the assistance of the League unless it could convince the other members of the justice of its cause. The effectiveness of the League as an instrument of coercion would therefore, depend not only on the existence of an adequate sense of solidarity among its members, but also on the justice of the law which was to be enforced."[21]

b. Russia.

Russia was more than any other European nation, concerned about the danger of the Nazi Germany. "Perhaps it was because of the extreme Russian sensibility to the problem of security, perhaps because of the acute ideological antithesis which existed between National Socialism and Marxism, that the government of the Soviet Union was more vividly aware of the menace of the Third Reich than were the majority of the Western Powers."[22]

But Russia saw also in this danger an advantage to herself.

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20 Ibid., p. 76.
21 Ibid., p. 298.
22 Wheeler-Benett, op.cit., p. 273.

It would force the Western Powers to invite her back into the European family. And in fact the result of the advent of the Nazi regime was an additional crop of treaties concluded by Russia with France, Poland, Estonia and Latvia.

But later developments in Europe, and especially the indifferent reaction of Britain and France to the German defiance of the Versailles Treaty aroused Russia's suspicions as to their true intentions. The ideological differences also helped to create hostilities between Russia and the European democracies.

B . Britain.

Britain's policy vis-a-vis Germany differed fundamentally from that of France. While, as we have seen, France's fears of future German aggression left her insecure and, consequently, she had directed her policy towards peace based upon preparation for war, Britain's policy aimed at achieving peace through economic stability and maintaining normal conditions.

In trying to understand the foundations of this basic difference one should always bear in mind that Britain's geographical position gave her security against attack from the continent as long as she was superior in naval and air forces. While France, due to her geographical proximity to Germany, always felt, and justifiably, unsafe except by keeping Germany in an inferior position. So the fact that Britain felt relatively safe in the fifteen years that followed the First World War explains partially why she adopted a benevolent attitude towards Germany and Hitler. But there were other major factors that were instrumental in shaping Britain's policy.

1. The Political Life in Britain After the First World War.

Britain's policy after the First World War was characterized by a high degree of inconsistency. Different schools of thought sought to gain control over Britain's foreign policy producing, thereby, conflicts in attitude and policy.

The major political development at that time was the rise of the Labor party and its growing influence over Britain's political life. Outside the working class, the social doctrines preached by the Labor Party did not carry much appeal to the English people. The party however was growing steadily in power and could no more be ignored. So, in spite of the fact that the Conservatives were the dominating force in British policy at the period, they had to recognize the existence of other political groups and go into coalition with them. This deprived Britain of a strong government able to pursue consistently any line of policy which it thought would best preserve Britain's interests, and this came at a time when Britain needed a strong government most.

The Conservatives were the champions of the traditional policy whose approach to foreign questions was through the concept of 'National Interest".

National Interest was conceived by the conservatives covered a wide geographical region which included the British Isles, the British dominions, territories and possessions. The vital interest for the traditional policy was the protection and defence of this region as well as the protection of its economic and trade activities.

The Labor party was inclined towards a 'collectivist foreign policy which approached foreign problems with an attitude based upon regard for international security rather than just British interest.

It is obvious that conflict was bound to arise between the two trends. This however did not result in any sharp distinctions in foreign policy. It did nevertheless emphasize the element of compromise, so that there was no one line of policy which was adhered to and followed exclusively. "There was no policy, from isolationalism to the most extreme form of collective security that did not at a time find a spokesman in high quarters; no orientation toward other countries, from a hard-and-fast military alignment with the Soviet Union to a clear-cut alliance with Germany, that failed to fine its influential exponents."[23]

2. Britain and the Balance of Power on the Continent.

Britain was indirectly assisting Germany all through. She was not unaware of the extent of Germany's potential power. But as long as Germany constituted no direct menace to Britain's safety, it was to her interest to create a more powerful Germany. This was in accordance with her traditional 'Balance of Power' thesis to which Britain had adhered for centuries. A powerful Germany would act as a check to France. France's predominance on the continent would run contrary to Britain's wishes and interests. So while wanting to maintain friendly relations with France she sought to curb her influence.

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23 Wolfers, op.cit., p. 225.

"The British had a paramount interest in remaining on friendly terms with their neighbor and 'buffer' across the Channel..... Yet everything seemed to point to an instinctive, if not intentional, desire to create a more even balance on the Rhine."[24]

3. Economic Conditions.

Britain's economy depends heavily on foreign trade. Her trade relations with her empire and the rest of the world are essential to her livelihood. Her preoccupation with peace and 'Normalcy' was dictated to a large extent by her desire to promote her economic interests, or, as Baldwin, the British Prime Minister had put it: "The interests of the British Empire in foreign countries are first of all economic and commercial. When we speak of peace being the greatest British interest, we mean that British trade and commerce, which are essential to the life of our people, flourish best in conditions of peace."[25]

MacDonald, another British Prime Minister, also comments on the same topic by saying: "One of the reasons why we go to Geneva again and again for the purposes of getting agreements, getting tranquility, getting international confidence upon which we can base a fabric of peace, is that we want security for the working classes and for the economic interest of this country."[26]

Britain considered it her most urgent duty to promote the revival of her shattered economy. This required the reduction of expenditures on war preparations in order to direct as much of her

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24 Ibid., pp. 247-48.
25 Stanely Baldwin, speech in London, November 9, 1923, (Ibid., p.209)
26 J. Ramsay MacDonald, November 20, 1934, (Ibid., p. 209).

resources as possible to the task of economic recovery. So the preservation of peace became imperative. After the war Britain reduced her armed forces by the half and did not take up armament on a serious scale until 1936 when she found that she was facing a worsening situation on the Continent.

4. The Guilt Complex.

Britishers misunderstood Hitler's intentions. The British government contributed to this misunderstanding by not acquainting her people with the true state of things. The Britishers were taken by Hitler's peace approaches and the Nazi propaganda which was directed towards convincing them of the peaceful intentions of the Nazi regime. They felt guilty at the harsh treatment which Germany received at Versailles and sympathized with Hitler's efforts to reunite the German people. "In Britain the old 'guilt complex' again became apparent; it was said that really Hitler had a 'pretty good right' to occupy German territory if he wanted to, and there was a general inclination to take the Fuhrer's peace offer of March 7,[27] at its face value."[28]

5. Desire for Peace.

Another psychological element which also influenced Britain's outlook towards Germany was the Britishers' expressed desire for peace and their vehement objections to any policy which threatened them with another war. Public opinion brought pressure in this respect upon the

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27 On March 7, 1936, Hitler summoned the Reichstag and announced the occupation of the demilitarized areas of the Rhineland by German troops. In the same meeting, he offered a twenty-five years' nonaggression pact, to France and Belgium, with Britain and Italy as guarantors.

28 Wheeler-Benett, op.cit., p. 253.

government which had to recognize the popular wish. The ultimate result was a disinclination for war on the part of Britain.

The British attitude towards Nazi Germany was a continuation of the policy of pacification and reconciliation which Britain adopted towards Germany since the end of the First World War with the hope of bringing her back into the European family as a constructive element.

At the advent of the Nazi regime there developed a feeling in Britain that it is inherently aggressive and should be opposed by force. Nevertheless, the general attitude was that if Germany's demands for a reconsideration of the Treaty of Versailles and for regaining her position as a world power were met, then, not withstanding the totalitarian regime established in the country, Germany might still be gained to the side of a general policy in Europe. Hence, the rise of Hitler did not alter the British general attitude towards Germany.

One thing should be clarified at this juncture. The policy of appeasement has been usually associated with the policy of Chamberlain and Lord Halifax, especially in the Munich Conference in September 1938. While the attitude of the two could be considered as the culmination of this policy, it should be kept in mind that "appeasement" characterized Britain's policy since the establishment of the Third Reich, and so the blame or credit for it should be shared by the predecessors of Chamberlain and Lord Halifax. In fact during the four years that followed Hitler's advent to power this policy was manifested clearly on several occasions when Hitler defied openly the clauses of the Treaty of Versailles and its signatories as well as in Britain's general dealings with Germany.

6. Britain's Reaction to Germany's Rearmament.

Germany's position at the Geneva Disarmament Conference, even before the rise of Hitler to power, had been the claim for an equal status with the other powers. Equal status was interpreted to mean one of two things: either that the military restrictions imposed on Germany by the Treaty of Versailles would be extended to all the Versailles signatories or Germany would be relieved of those restrictions. This claim was met with sympathy from Britain. Britain's role in the Conference became that of a mediator. She attempted to convince the other members of the wisdom of reaching an agreement, which, while differing from the terms of the Treaty of Versailles, would enable them to regulate Germany's rearmament.

Hitler's withdrawal from the Conference created anxiety in every European capital. Statesmen of the European powers were waiting for the lead from Britain and France.

But "no penalty was exacted from Germany for her open defiance of the Allied Powers. Britain and France, while regretting the necessity set about humouring Hitler on the ground that the more agreements the Fuhrer was persuaded to sign, the more difficult it would be for him to break any of them."[29]

On the occasion Sir J. Simon, British Secretary of Foreign Affairs wrote to Sir Eric Phillips, Britain's Ambassador to Germany: "When you see the Chancellor tomorrow you should take the opportunity

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29 Ibid., p. 238.

of saying how sincerely we deplore Germany's position to withdraw from Geneva."[30] That was the extent of Britain's reaction to this first act of defiance on the part of Hitler.

In fact Britain's attitude towards the question of Germany's rearmament was in no way characterized by the recognition of the terms of the Versailles Treaty. True, Britain's objective was to regulate Germany's rearmament but she also sought to legalize whatever scale of rearmament was allowed to Germany.

In the "Memorandum on Germany's Illegal Rearmament and Its Effect on British Foreign Policy" the Foreign Office declared in reference to the Fifth Clause of the Treaty of Versailles which is concerned with Germany's Disarmament that "Part V is, for practical purposes, dead and it would become a putrifying corpse which if left unburied, would soon poison the political atmosphere of all Europe. Moreover, if there is to be a funeral, it is dearly better to arrange it while Hitler is still in a mood to pay the undertakers for their services. For these reasons, an early convention for legalizing Germany's illegal armaments is certainly to be desired."[31]

It was also characteristic that the Anglo-German Naval Agreement of June 18, 1935 was arrived at by direct initiation from Britain and not from Germany. The agreement allowed Germany a total naval strength in the proportion of 35:100 of the total aggregate strength of the members of the British Commonwealth of Nations. This was in line with Britain's efforts to legalize Germany's rearmament. But

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30 Correspondence from Sir J. Simon to Sir E. Phillips, Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919-1939, Second Series, Vol. IV, (London: His Majesty's Stationary Office, 1949), p. 317.

31 Memorandum on Germany's Illegal Rearmament and Its Effects on British Foreign Policy (Ibid., p. 319).

perhaps nothing shows more clearly Britain's attitude than her reaction to the occupation of the Rhineland by Hitler in 1936. This act was a straightforeward violation of the Treaty of Versailles and the Locarno Pact, and should have served as a warning of what to be expected in the future. Britain chose not to act and waited for France to take the lead. When France declined from any foreceful opposition, Britain let the event pass.

One point should be stressed here. The events that took place between 1933 and 1937 were undertaken when Germany was still militarily weak and Hitler was in no position to risk war. From 1937 onwards, the situation changed. The threat of war would not inhibit Hitler any more.

CHAPTER II

LEBENSRAUM VS. APPEASEMENT

It is worthwhile at this juncture, and after the historical review in the first chapter, to lay down the main lines of thought along which will run our analysis of the British diplomacy in the Munich Conference.

As has been mentioned earlier Britain's policy vis-a-vis the 'German Question' and other related problems was designated by the term 'Appeasement'. And as also has been indicated, appeasement came to mean the willingness on the part of the British Government to submit to the acts on the part of Germany in violation of the Treaty of Versailles and other international agreements.

It has become a popular tradition among those who wrote about this period to accuse the British politicians of gravely misinterpreting Hitler's intentions, an error, it is implied, which should not have occurred. People who hold this belief are fond of directing the attention to the ingenuity of Hitler's acting talents and techniques by which he was able to inspire those who came in contact with him or with his propaganda with the conviction of the sincerity of his intentions. We are told by Bullock:

> "Hitler, in fact, was a consummate actor, with the actor's facility for absorbing himself in a role and convincing himself of the truth of what he was saying at the time he said it. In his early years he was often awkward and unconvincing, but with practice the part became second nature to him, and

> with the immense prestige of success behind him, and the resources of a powerful state at his command, there were few who could resist the impression of the piercing eyes, the Napoleonic pose and the 'historic' personality."[1]

It is not the intention of the present writer to ignore Hitler's innate abilities and talents, be they related to the acting profession or otherwise; nor to underestimate the effect of Hitler's peace overtures on the British leaders and public who were desirous of establishing and maintaining peace. But it is hardly reasonable to accept the thesis that the British foreign policy makers were so much taken by Hitler's tactics as to permit this factor to dominate their outlook towards the problems on the Continent.

It is the contention of this writer that any analysis of Britain's policy at that period which places the question of 'misinterpreting Hitler's intentions' a basic determinant of that policy, is itself 'misinterpreting' the circumstances that led Britain to adopt that policy.

In the preceding chapter the motives underlying the policy of appeasement were outlined. We have seen how economic as well as political and military considerations influenced Britain's policy in such a way as to make it follow the course which it took. One significant conclusion emerges. The psychological influences were a blend of a desire for peace and a feeling of guilt that made Britain prepared to give in to Hitler's demands and advances.

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1 Alan Bullock, Hitler, A Study in Tyranny, (London: Odhams Press Ltd., 1952), p. 345.

One could, for analytical purposes, conceive of the British policy towards Hitler's Germany as having passed through two phases. The first phase was that in which Britain, by appeasing Hitler, was hoping to regulate Hitler's ambitions for the purpose of maintaining peace.

The second phase starts, when Britain, realizing its failure in achieving this end, kept on appeasing Hitler for the sake of gaining time for rearming herself.

It is the belief of this writer that in both phases Britain was not unaware of Hitler's expansionist intentions.

It should be remembered that Britain's ultimate objective was to maintain peace as long as possible for the sake of protecting her own economic interests, which, depending greatly on international trade, flourish only under peaceful circumstances. Economic reconstruction was regarded as the immediate and most urgent need. And hence it was essential for Britian to avoid any situation that would lead to war. Add to this the various political considerations in Britain herself and on the Continent, and the picture could be seen in its right perspective.

British policy, as will be demonstrated, had four objectives related to the main purpose of maintaining peace:

1. To maintain the balance of power on the Continents in a way that would prevent the dominance of any one Continental power. Such dominance would threaten British interests.
2. To allow Germany to rearm within regulated and defined limits.

3. Not to offer more than a token resistance to Germany's demands for the unification of the German race in Central Europe, i.e. Austria and Czechoslovakia.
4. And through all these, to regain Germany for the European community.

To achieve these objectives, Britain undertook the role of the mediator on the Continent. This role was possible mainly because the critical issues on the Continent were of no direct interest, or threat, to Britain herself.

Two questions come to mind in relation to Britain's role on the Continent. The first refers to the amount of influence which Britain did really have over the European powers, and the second refers to the degree of success that Britain had in achieving the objectives mentioned above.

For Britain to be able to influence the political life of Europe, it was necessary that she have a considerable influence over the European powers themselves. It will be shown later how Britain was in a position to exert pressure, directly or indirectly, on the countries concerned whenever occasion arose, and how consequently she was able to influence the direction of political events. It should be remembered that Britain was involved deeply in Continental politics.

The question of the degree of success which Britain attained in achieving the ultimate objective of maintaining peace and the associated objectives will constitute the core of the forthcoming discussion. Only one remark will be made here. Britain's policy

postponed war. But at the same time it had generated circumstances which made war inevitable. This will be discussed in greater detail at the proper place.

It was our purpose in making these statements in this section to lay down the hypothetical foundation for our analysis of Britain's 'appeasement policy'. Having done so, we will now proceed with that analysis.

A. Lebensraum - Living Space.

Living space was a subject that obsessed Hitler all his life. In the first volume of 'Mein Kampf' written in prison in 1924 and in the second volume finished in 1926, he refers to this subject often and again, and discourses at length on it. When Hitler came to power the desire for achieving this objective dominated his foreign policy, which led to the Munich Conference and eventually to the Second World War.

Living space as conceived by Hitler had three basic underlying principles:

1. The creation of a 'Greater Germany' based on racial considerations which will unite all groups of German origin.

2. The acquisition of land space in Europe itself sufficient to support the growing population of the 'Greater Germany'.

3. The creation of a strong German state which will justify his claims of the superiority of the German race.

In 'Mein Kampf' he wrote:

> "Only an adequate large space on this Earth assures a nation of freedom of existence....without consideration of traditions and prejudices the National Socialist Movement must find the courage to gather our people and their strength for an advance along the road that will lead this people from its restricted living space to new land and soil....The National Socialist Movement must strive to eliminate the disproportion between our population and our area.....to secure for the German people the land and soil to which they are entitled."[2]

Again in the Conference in the Reich Chancellery on November 5, 1937 which was attended by Hitler's top lieutenants, he expounded his views on the subject:

> "The aim of German policy was to make secure and to preserve the racial community and to enlarge it. It was therefore a question of space.
>
> "The German racial community comprised over 85 million people, and because of their number and the narrow limits of habitable space in Europe, constituted a tightly packed racial core such as was not to be met in any other country and such as implied the right to a greater living space than in the case of other peoples. If, territorially speaking, there existed no political result corresponding to this German racial core, that was a consequence of centuries of historical development, and in continuance of these political conditions lay the greatest danger to the preservation of the German race at its present peak....Germany's future was therefore wholly conditional upon the solving of the need for space...."[3]

Evidently the lands claimed by Germany belonged to other countries. But Hitler had the answer, "Nature has not reserved this

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2 Hitler, op.cit., p. 140.

3 Minutes of the Conference in the Reich Chancellery, November 5, 1937, Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1919-1945, Series D, Vol. I (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1949), pp. 29-30.

soil for the future possession of any particular nation or race; on the contrary, this soil exists for the people which possessed the force to take it."[4]

What happens when the present possessors refuse to acknowledge Germany's claims? In Mein Kampf Hitler answers ".... the law of self-preservation goes into effect; and what is refused to amicable methods, it is up to the fist to take."[5]

And again according to the November Five Conference: "Germany's problem could only be solved by means of force and this was never without attendent risk."[6]

The next question that arises is how large is the living space that Hitler demanded.

While basically Hitler had in mind a reunion of the German race with proportional space, his living space, was directed to the East and included lands inhabited by non-Germans. In Mein Kampf he worte:

> "The demand for restoration of the frontiers of 1914 is a political absurdity....Quite aside from the fact that the Reich frontiers in 1914 were anything but logical. For in reality they were neither complete in the sense of embracing the people of German nationality nor sensible with regard to geomilitary expediency.....With equal right and in many cases with more right, some other sample year of German history could be picked up."[7]

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4 Hitler, op.cit., p. 138.
5 Ibid., p. 139.
6 Minutes of the Conference in the Reich Chancellery, Documents on German Foreign Policy, Series D, Vol. I, op.cit., p. 34.
7 Hitler, op.cit., p. 649.

And that sample year would go back six hundred years,

> "....we....take up where we broke off six hundred years ago. We stop the endless German movement to the South and West, and turn our gaze toward the land in the East. ....If we speak of soil in Europe today we can primarily have in mind only Russia and her vassal border states."[8]

Having defined his claims in living space and recognized the inevitability of resorting to force, it was natural for Hitler to prepare for an eventual recourse to force and plan his campaign. It would be shown later that he did not follow the time-table which he prepared, but in the November 5 Conference such a timetable was prepared and it took into account all foreseen eventualities.[9]

Developments on the Continent urged Hitler to abandon this timetable and act as opportunities presented themselves and made the realization of the expansionist campaign possible at an earlier date.

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8 Ibid., p. 654.

9 There are three cases to deal with:
Case 1: Period 1943-1945.
After this date only a change for the worse, from our point of view, could be expected.
The equipment of the army, navy, and Luftwaffe, as well as the formation of the officer corps, was nearly completed. Equipment and armament were modern; in further delay there lay the danger of their obsolescence. In particular, the secrecy of 'special weapons' could not be preserved forever. The recruiting of reserves was limited to current age groups; further drafts from older untrained age groups were no longer available.
Our relative strength would decrease in relation to the rearmament which would by then have been carried out by the rest of the world. If we did not act by 1943-1945, any year could, in consequence of a lack of reserves, produce the food crisis, to cope with which the necessary foreign exchange was not available and this must be regarded as a 'warning point of the regime.' Besides, the world was expecting our attack and was increasing its counter-measures from year to year. It was while the rest of the world was still preparing its defense that we were obliged to take the offensive.

The German military forces were always kept in a state of preparedness to, in the words of the Blomberg Directive, "(a) counter attack any time," (which was believed to be improbable), "(b) to enable the military exploitation of politically favourable opportunities should they occur."[10]

One important principle with Hitler was to achieve his conquests with the least possible cost. His conquest of Austria and Czechoslovakia, as we shall soon see, was in accord with this principle.

Nobody knew today what the situation would be in years 1943-1945. One thing only was certain, that we could not wait longer. On the one hand there was the great Wehrmacht, and the necessity of maintaining it at its present level, the aging of the movement and of its leaders; and on the other, the prospect of lowering of the standard of living and of a limitation of the birth rate, which left no choice but to act. If the Fuhrer was still living, it was his unalterable resolve to solve Germany's problem of space at the latest by 1943-45. The necessity for action before 1943-45 would arise in cases 2 and 3.

Case 2:
If internal strife in France should develop into such a domestic crisis as to absorb the French Army completely and render it incapable of use for war against Germany, then the time for action against the Czechs had come.

Case 3:
If France is so embroiled by a war with another state that she cannot 'proceed' against Germany.
For the improvement of our politico-military position our first objective, in the event of our being embroiled in war, must be to overthrow Czechoslovakia and Austria simultaneously in order to remove the threat to our flank in any possible operation against the West.

In a conflict with France it was hardly to be regarded as likely that the Czechs would declare war on us on the very same day as France. The desire to join in the war would, however, increase among the Czechs in proportion to any weakening on our part and then her participation could clearly take the form of an attack toward Silesia toward the north or towards the west.

1. Anschluss: The Conquest of Austria.

The conquest of Austria was achieved with great cleverness and an ingenuity for intrigue. It was so arranged that when the German troops entered Austria, they were not resisted but were jubilantly received.

German-Austrian relations after the rise of Hitler had been disturbed by the existence of several problems most of which had originated in Berlin. In 1936 however, the two countries signed an agreement in which Germany recognized Austria as an independent state, while, at the same time, Austria recognized herself as belonging to the German cultural orbit. The Agreement treated the thorny questions that have been creating tension between the two countries. It laid down principles for regulating the cultural and economic relations between the

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If the Czechs were overthrown and a common German-Hungarian frontier achieved, a neutral attitude on the part of Poland could be the more certainly counted on in the event of a Franco-German conflict. Our agreements with Poland only retained their force as long as Germany's strength remained unshaken. In the event of German setbacks a Polish action against East Prussia, and possibly against Pomerania and Silesia as well, had to be reckoned with.

On the assumption of a development of the situation leading to action on our part as planned, in the years 1943-45, the attitude of France, Britain, Italy, Poland and Russia could probably be estimated as follows:

Actually, the Fuhrer believed that almost certainly Britain, and probably France as well, had already tacitly written off the Czechs and were reconciled to the fact that this question would be cleared up in due course by Germany. Difficulties connected with the Empire, and the prospect of being once more entangled in a protracted European war, were decisive considerations for Britain against participation in a war against Germany. Britain's attitude would certainly not be without influence on that of France. An attack by France without British support, and with the prospect of the offensive being brought to a standstill on our western fortifications was hardly probable. Nor was a French march through Belgium and Holland without British support to be

two countries, and stipulated that the two countries shall exchange views in regard to the conduct of their respective foreign policies. The Austrian Government agreed to make great concessions in regard to granting amnesty to political prisoners and in accepting to appoint representatives of the "National Opposition Movement in Austria", the vanguard of Nazim in Austria, to participate in political responsibility.[11]

The effect of this agreement did not last long. Austrian Nazis were continuously spreading terror in Austria and German agents were working relentlessly to bring about the union of Austria and Germany.

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expected; this also was a course not to be contemplated by us in the event of a conflict with France, because it would certainly entail the hostility of Britain. It would of course be necessary to maintain a strong defense on our Western frontier during the prosecution of our attack on the Czecks and Austria. And in this connection it had to be remembered that the defence measures of the Czechs were growing in strength from year to year, and that the actual worth of the Austrian Army also was increasing in the course of time. Even though the populations concerned, especially of Czechoslovakia, were not sparse, the annexation of Czechoslovakia and Austria would mean an acquisition of foodstuff for 5 to 6 million people, on the assumption that the compulsory emigration of 2 million people from Czechoslovakia and 1 million people from Austria was practicable. The incorporation of these two States with Germany meant, from the politico-military point of view, a substantial advantage because it would mean shorter and better frontiers, the freeing of forces for other purposes, and the possibility of creating new units up to a level of about 12 divisions, that is, 1 new division per million inhabitants. Italy was not expected to object to the elimination of the Czechs, but it was impossible at the moment to estimate what her attitude on the Austrian question would be; that depended essentially upon whether the Duce were still alive.

The degree of surprise and the swiftness of our action are decisive factors for Poland's attitude. Poland - with Russia at her rear - will have little inclination to engage in war against a victorious Germany.

In 1938, Hitler decided to take a more radical approach towards Austria. He prepared for this by effecting changes in the German Government and diplomatic corps which included the termination of von Papen's services as Germany's Ambassador to Austria. Upon being dismissed von Papen visited Hitler and suggested a meeting between him and the Austrian chancellor, a suggestion which met Hitler's immediate approval.

Schuschnigg, the Austrian Chancellor, was also willing to meet Hitler and discuss with him the outstanding problems. But he demanded that he be assured that the 1936 agreement should be maintained. Von Papen, who was commissioned by Hitler to arrange the meeting, says:

> Military intervention by Russia must be counted by the swiftness of our operations; however, whether such an intervention was a practical contingency at all was, in view of Japan's attitude, more than doubtful.
>
> Should case 2 arise - the crippling of France by civil war - the situation thus created by the elimination of the most dangerous opponent must be seized upon whenever it occurs for the blow against the Czechs.
>
> The Fuhrer saw case 3 coming definitely nearer; it might emerge from the present tensions in the Mediterranean, and he was resolved to take advantage of it whenever it happened, even as early as 1938.
>
> .....This descent upon the Czechs would have to be carried out with 'lightning speed'.
>
> (Documents on German Foreign Policy, Series D, Vol. I, op.cit., pp. 34-38).

10 The Blomberg Directive 1937-38, Nuremberg Documents, Peter De Mendelssohn, (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1946), p. 19.

11 For complete text of the Agreement refer to Appendix A.

> "Schuschnigg and I had decided that no demands should be made or accepted which transgressed the independence and sovereignty of Austria as recognized by the agreement."[12]

Shirer also says: "....but, weak as his (Schuschnigg's) position was, (he) laid down certain conditions. He must be informed in advance of the precise points Hitler wanted to discuss, and he must be assured beforehand that the Agreement of July 11, 1936, in which Germany promised to respect Austria's independence and not to interfere in her internal affairs, would be maintained."[13]

Having been assured by Hitler that the Agreement would not be changed, Schuschnigg came to Berchtesgaden, where Hitler was residing, on February 11, 1938. On February 12, the two Chancellors held their meeting.

During his meetings with Hitler and all through out his stay in Berchtesgaden, Schuschnigg was threatened with military action against Austria unless he signed a new agreement. The terms of the proposed agreement[14] were such that, signing them, meant signing away Austria's independence. Under the force of such threat, Schuschnigg capitulated. He was allowed until February 15 to have it ratified and until February 18 to fulfill its terms.

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12 Franz Von Papen, Memoirs, (London: Andre Deutsch Ltd., 1952), p. 411.

13 Shirer, op.cit., p. 324.

14 Protocol of the Conference of February 12, 1938.
I. As a result of today's comprehensive exchange of views between the Fuhrer and Chancellor and the Federal Chancellor, Dr. Schuschnigg, the following communique, to be released by the press of both countries has been agreed upon as per enclosure 1.
II. The Federal Chancellor holds out the prospect of the following measures concerning which he will send a definitely binding reply by Tuesday, February 15, 1938.

To force the Austrian President to accept the agreement, Hitler began threatening to resort to armed invasion. The President gave in in the face of this threat and the terms of the Agreement concerning amnesty for Nazis and the appointment of Seyss -Inquart were put into effect.

There ensured four weeks of political and economic chaos in Austria. Austrian Nazis, now that Seyss-Inquart was in command of the police, started massive demonstrations throughout the whole country. Schuschnigg, in a desperate attempt to save Austria, decided to hold a plebiscite; the Austrians had to choose between an independent Austria and an Anschluss. On March 9 he declared that the plebiscite was scheduled for March 13.

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1. The Austrian Government will from time to time enter into a diplomatic exchange of views on question of foreign policy of common concern to both countries. Austria will on request give moral, diplomatic, and press support to the desires and actions of the German Reich, to the extent that circumstances permit. The Reich Government assumes the same obligation toward the Austrian Government.

2. Federal Chancellor Schuschnigg declares that he is willing to take State Counselor Dr. Seyss-Inquart into his government and entrust him with Security.

3. The Federal Chancellor states that the Austrian National Socialists shall in principle have opportunity for legal activity within the framework of the Fatherland Front and all other Austrian organizations. This activity shall take place on an equal footing with all other groups, and in accordance with the constitution. Dr. Seyss-Inquart has the right and the duty to see to it that the activity of the National Socialists can develop along the lines indicated above, and to take appropriate measures for this purpose.

The decision by Schuschnigg created a great commotion in Berlin. It was decided that Schuschnigg's plebiscite should be prevented because the pro-Anchluss party would find itself in a minority; the German army should move into Austria before the date of the plebiscite.

Case Otto, which had been previously drawn to counter an attempt to restore the Monarchy in Austria under Otto of Hapsburg, was to be the plan of military action against Austria.

In a directive called 'Directive Number One' Hitler outlined the proposed campaign.[15] He assumed full command and assigned to each force its respective task.

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4. The Austrian Government will immediately proclaim a general amnesty for all persons in Austria punished by courts or the police because of their National Socialist activities. Such persons whose further stay in Austria appears detrimental to relations between the two countries shall, after an examination of each individual case and by agreement between the two Governments be made to transfer their residence to the Reich.

5. Disciplinary measures in the fields of pensions, annuities, and public welfare -- especially the withholding or reduction of benefits -- and in education as well, because of National Socialist activities, will be revoked and restitution promised.

6. All economic discrimination against National Socialists will be eliminated.

7. The unimpeded execution of the press truce agreed upon between the Governments shall be assured by the appointment of Dr. Wolf to an important post in the Austrian Press Service.

8. Military relations between the German and Austrian armed forces will be assured by the following measures:
   a) The replacement of General Jansa by General Bohme
   b) A systematic exchange of officers
   c) Regular conferences between the General Staffs
   d) A systematic cultivation of comradely and professional military relations.

Meanwhile events were happening in a rapid succession. Schuschnigg, upon Hitler's demands, called off the plebiscite on March 11th. But he was told by an ultimatum that that was no more sufficient, and that he should resign and Seyss-Inquart be appointed his successor. Schuschnigg yielded. The President, while accepting schuschnigg's resignation, refused to appoint Seyss-Inquart.

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9. All discrimination against National Socialists, especially that affecting enrollment in and completion of military service, will be stopped. All past discriminatory actions will be canceled.

10. Preparations will be made for the intensification of commerce between the Austrian and German economies. For this purpose, Dr. Fischbock will be appointed to a leading post. The Federal Chancellor declares that he is prepared to carry out all measures agreed upon under II, 2, 4, 5, 7, by February 18, 1938, subject to the definitive reply agreed upon under II.

III. The Reich Government acknowledged that the future Ministry of the Interior, Seyss-Inquart, is the only person authorized to carry out article II, (2(3) of this Protocol. The Reich Government will take measures to prevent interference in the internal affairs of Austria on the part of the Reich-German Party organs. In case of difference of opinion concerning the interpretation of article II, 2 (3) of foregoing Agreement negotiations are to be conducted through Minister Seyss-Inquart exclusively.
(Documents on German Foreign Policy, Series D, Vol. I, op.cit., pp. 515-517.)

15 Directive Number One.

1. If other measures prove unsuccessful, I intend to invade Austria with armed forces to establish constitutional conditions there and to prevent further outrages against the pro-German population.

2. The whole operation will be directed by myself.
According to my instructions: The Supreme Commander of the Army will direct the land operations with the 8th Army in the formation and strength suggested to me, and with the attachments of the Air Force the SS, and the police.

The Supreme Commander of the Air Force will direct the air operations with the forces suggested to me.

Another ultimatum was sent to the President demanding the appointment of Seyss-Inquart. But the President held out. Seyss-Inquart was instructed to form a provisional government and to send a telegram to Berlin requesting armed support. The Nuremberg documents reveal that Goering dictated the words of the telegram on the telephone. It read so:

> "The Fuhrer and Chancellor, Berlin: The Provisional Austrian Government, which, after the resignation of the Schuschnigg government, considers it its task to restore law and order in Austria, urgently requests the German Government to support it in its task and to help it to prevent bloodshed. For this purpose it asks the German Government to send German troops as soon as possible."[16]

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3. Operational Duties:
   a) Army. The invasion of Austria must be carried out in the manner explained by me. The Army's first target is the occupation of upper Austria, Salsburg, Lower Austria Tyrol, the speedy occupation of Vienna and the securing of the Austro-Czech frontier.
   b) Air Force. The Air Force must demonstrate and drop propaganda material, occupy the Austrian aerodromes for the use of further possible reinforcements, assist the Army upon demand as necessary, and apart from this, hold bomber units in readiness for special taks.

4. The forces of the Army and Air Force detailed for this operation must be ready for invasion and/or ready for action from March 12th, 1938, onwards, at the latest at 12:00 hours. I reserve the right to give permission for crossing and flying.

5. The behaviour of the troops must give the impression that we do not wish to wage war against our brother nation. It is in our interest that the whole operation shall be carried out without any violence but in the form of a peaceful entry welcomed by the population. Therefore, any provocation is to be avoided. If however, resistance is offered it must be broken ruthlessly by force of arms.

6. On the remaining German frontiers no security measures are to be taken for the time being.
(Mendelssohn, op.cit., pp. 45-6).

16 Documents on German Foreign Policy, Series D, Vol. I, op.cit., p. 580.

On the evening of March 11, Hitler issued the invasion order. On March 12 he set off to Vienna.

2. Czechoslovakia: The Road to Munich.

During the Austrian crisis, Hitler took every precaution to conceal his intentions towards Czechoslovakia. It was of utmost importance for him not to alienate the Western powers, which were allied to Czechoslovakia by defence treaties, while he was busy occupying Austria, and to avoid Czechoslovak interference.

But in the speech he made to the Reichstag on February 20, he bluntly made clear that the turn of Czechoslovakia was coming soon. In that speech he said: "Over ten million Germans live in two of the states adjoining our frontiers.... It is unbearable for a world power to know there are racial comrades at its side who are constantly being afflicted with the severest suffering for their sympathy or unity with the whole nation, its destiny and its Weltanschaung. To the interests of the German Reich belong the protection of those German people who are not in a position to secure along our frontiers their political and spiritual freedom by their own efforts."[17]

Three out of these ten million were Sudeten Germans in Czechoslovakia and Hitler assumed the task of liberating them. He set about the fulfillment of this task with his usual intrigues and surprises.

The plan for the surprise attack on Czechoslovakia 'Case Green' had been drawn, prepared, and approved by November 5, 1937. It was

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17 Shirer, op.cit., p. 334.

suggested by Hitler that this attack might take place "as early as 1938."[18]

Hitler, however, wanted an excuse for military intervention. He found it in the demands of the Sudeten German Party for autonomy of the Sudeten region. For this purpose he asked Konrad Henlein, the party leader who was under Hitler's control, to confer with him on March 28, 1938. Hitler's instructions were that "demands should be made by the Sudeten German Party which are unacceptable to the Czech Government."[19]

Meanwhile a new plan of attack on Czechoslovakia was drawn out. It appeared in a directive dated May 30th, 1938. The Directive opened with this paragraph:

> "It is my unalterable decision to smash Czechoslovakia by military action in the future. It is the task of the political leaders to await or bring about the politically and militarily suitable moment. An inevitable development of conditions inside Czechoslovakia or other political events in Europe creating a surprisingly favorable opportunity, and one which may never occur again, may cause me to take early action. The proper choice and full utilization of a favorable moment is the surest guarantee of success. Accordingly preparations are to be made at once."[20]

Then the Directive goes on to outline the 'political possibilities for the commencement of the action', and states the tasks of each section of the armed forces.

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18 See n. 9, the minutes of the November 5, 1937 Conference.
19 Documents on German Foreign Policy, Series D, Vol. II, op.cit., p. 198.
20 Mendelssohn, op.cit., p. 60.

The campaign, whose plan was drafted in this directive, was not carried out. But planning was being carried on steadily. Part of the preparation was to collect information and receive reports on the state of the Czech Army as well as the comparative state of armament in both France and Britain.

Preparations required for action in 'Case Green' were scheduled to be completed by the first of October, 1938. The regular army manoeuvers were also scheduled for the Autumn, so that the two dates would coincide and the manoeuvers would act as a cover.

Newsof these preparations leaked out and the governments of Britain, France and Russia fell into a stage of panic. Tension rose further when steps towards mobilization were taken by Hitler in September.

On September 12, Hitler made a speech in which he demanded that the Czech Government should grant the just demands of the Sudeten Germans. Otherwise Germany would take measures to this end.

This speech had considerable repercussions. It inspired a revolt in the Sudetenland which lasted two days and which the Czech authorities put down. The only solution, it was stated, was the ceding of the Sudeten areas to Germany.

Britain was in favor of this solution. France appealed to the British Prime Minister, Mr. Chamberlain, "to make the best bargain he could with the German Dictator."[21]

To this end Chamberlain sent an urgent message to Hitler in which he said:

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21 Shirer, op.cit., p. 484.

"In view of the increasingly critical situation I propose to come over at once to see you with a view to trying to find a peaceful solution. I propose to come by air and am ready to start tomorrow.

"Please indicate earliest time at which you can see me and suggest place of meeting. I should be grateful for a very early reply."[22]

On September 15th, Chamberlain arrived in Berchtesgaden to start the negotiations that culminated in Munich. The details of these negotiations form the background of the Munich Conference and will be discussed in a separate chapter.

B. Appeasement.

This section serves as an introduction to the next chapter which deals with the Munich Conference and Britain's role in it.

It should be emphasized here, that Britain had always kept direct interest in the affairs of Continental Europe. Chamberlain asserted this fact when he said: ".....His Majesty's Government are, and always must be, interested in the developments in Central Europe, particularly events such as those which have just taken place (Anschluss), if only for the reason....that the object of all their policy has been to assist in the establishment of a sense of greater security and confidence in Europe...."[23]

But in the two main questions that troubled Europe in 1938, Austria and Czechoslovakia, Britain did not take a firm stand.

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22 Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919-1939, Third Series, Vol. II, (Oxford University Press, 1949), p. 754.
23 Chamberlain, op.cit., p. 126.

The attitude of Britain could be best summarized also in the words of Chamberlain:

> "The House may desire me to repeat what our position in regard to Austria was. We were under no commitment to take action vis-a-vis Austria, but were pledged to consultation with the French and Italian Governments in the event of action being taken which affected Austrian independence and integrity, for which provision was made by the relevant articles of the Peace Treaties. This pledge arises from agreements reached between the French, Italian, and United Kingdom Governments, first in February, 1934, then in September of the same year, and finally at the Stresa Conference in April, 1935, in which the position was reaffirmed, to consult together in any measures to be taken in the case of threats to the integrity and independence of Austria. We have fully discharged the pledge of consultation with both the French Government and the Italian Government, to whom we made an immediate approach when Austrian independence seemed to be threatened by recent events. As a result of that consultation with the French Government, His Majesty's Government addressed similar protests to the German Government on the action that has been taken. From the Italian Government we received no full exposition of their views, but their attitude has been defined with great precision in the statement issued on behalf of the Italian Government which appears in the Press today."[24]

To the protests advanced by Britain, the German Government replied that Austro-German relations were the concern of the German people and not the British Government.[25]

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24 Ibid., pp. 127-28.

25 Excerpts from the letter by German Foreign Minister to the British Ambassador in Berlin:

"Monsieur L'Ambassadeur,

"In your letter of March 11th your Excellency stated that news reached the British Government that a German ultimatum had been delivered in Vienna demanding the resignation of the Austrian Chancellor, his substitution by the Minister of the Interior, the formation of the new Cabinet with a two-third majority of National Socialist members and the readmission of the Austrian Legion. Should this news be correct the British Government protested against such coercion by force against an independent State in order to create a situation incompatible with its national independence.

To this contemptuous letter Chamberlain had only this to say:

> "I do not wish to enter into any long argument about the historical narrative of events as described by Baron von Neurath, but I am bound at once to refute his statement to the effect that His Majesty's Government were not within their rights in interesting themselves in the independence of Austria, and that, as in the opinion of the German Government relations between Austria and Germany are a purely internal affair, His Majesty's Government, as a third party, have no concern in them. The interests of His Majesty's Government in this question cannot, however, on any tenable ground be denied."[26]

Britain's possible reaction to the conquest of Austria had been a source of worry to Hitler. But any fears of a strong intervention was soon dispelled. In fact the German Charge d'Affaires in Britain was able to report to his master:

> "In the name of the German Government, I must state in reply that the British Government is not within its right in claiming the role of a protector of the independence of Austria. In the course of the diplomatic conversations regarding the Austrian question the German Government have never left the British Government in doubt that the form of the relations between the Reich and Austria can only be regarded as an internal affair of the German people which is no concern of third Powers. It is superfluous to recapitulate the historical and political bases of this standpoint.
>
> "For this reason the German Government must from the outset reject as inadmissible the protest lodged by the British Government even though only conditional. At the same time, in view of the information quoted in your letter that an ultimatum in Vienna, the German Government does not desire to omit, in the interests of truth to make the few days....
>
> (Taken from the text of Chamberlain's Speech, Chamberlain, op.cit., pp. 123-24.)

26 Ibid., pp. 126-27.

> "From the conversation as well as from Eden's statements in Commons yesterday and from conference with other persons I have the impression that although the step has created a feeling of insecurity here, no appreciable reaction is to be expected."[27]

When the German Government sent an ultimatum to Schuschnigg demanding his resignation, the British Ambassador in Germany filed a protest in which he stated:

> "I am instructed by my Government to represent immediately to the German Government that if this report is correct His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom feel bound to file a protest...."[28]

But "a formal diplomatic protest at this late hour was the least of Hitler's worries."[29]

This inactivity on the part of Britain, and France, allowed Hitler to annex Austria and March into Vienna triumphantly. It also encouraged him in his designs against Czechoslovakia, where the same attitude recurs, as will be shown in the next chapter.

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27 Documents on German Foreign Policy, Series D, Vol. I, op.cit., p.526.
28 Ibid., p. 578.
29 Shirer, op.cit., p. 345.

CHAPTER III

MUNICH

It is appropriate to begin this chapter with a brief note on the man whose efforts were instrumental in bringing about the Munich Conference and the settlement that emerged from this Conference. This will help to understand the background of Britain's policy in Munich.

Keith Feiling, who wrote a biography of Neville Chamberlain, describes him as: "Simple he was, as his letters show, and obstinately sanguine in that he was bent on finding decency even in dictators, and on counting his blessings."[1]

Reviewing Chamberlain's letters and speeches one would be convinced of his sincere belief in the desirability of peace, and, what is more, in the possibility of maintaining it.

"When I think of those four terrible years," he commented on the First World War, "and I think of the 7,000,000 of young men who were cut off in their prime, the 13,000,000 who were maimed and mutilated, the misery and the suffering of the mothers and fathers, the sons and the daughters, and the relations and the friends of those who were killed, and the wounded, then I am bound to say again what I have said before, and what I say now, not only to you, but to all

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1 Keith Feiling, The Idfe of Neville Chamberlain, (London: Macmillan & Co. Ltd., 1946), p. 365.

the world - in war, whichever side may call itself the victor, there are no winners, but all are losers."[2]

And again "disputes," he told the House of Commons, "even when they have been carried on to an extreme limit of acrimonious discussion, nevertheless can be settled by peaceful discussion, provided only there is a spirit of accommodation and good will on both sides."[3]

This outlook of the British Prime Minister had its share of influence in determining Britain's policy towards the Sudetenland question, especially as it coincided with a general desire for peace in Britain. And from this outlook derives his opinion as to the course Britain should follow in foreign policy, as best illustrated in one of his speeches in the House of Commons:

> "I believe it will be the general wish of the House that I should initiate a Debate on Foreign Affairs this afternoon by making a statement as to the attitude of His Majesty's Government as affected by recent events in Europe. I deliberately choose the word 'attitude' rather than 'policy' because I cannot imagine that any events would change the fundamental basis of British foreign policy which is the maintenance and preservation of peace and the establishment of a sense of confidence that peace will, in fact, be maintained. That must, I think, always be the aim of any government of this country, because as has so often been said, peace is the greatest interest of the British Empire. But that does not mean that nothing would make us fight. We are bound by certain obligations which would entail upon us the necessity of fighting if the occasion arose, and I hope no one doubts that we should be prepared, in such an event, to fulfill those obligations. Then there are certain vital interests of this country for which, if they were menaced, we should fight - for the defence of British territories and the communications which are vital

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2 Speech in the National Government Rally, Bougton House, Kettering, 2nd July, 1938, (Chamberlain, Struggle for Peace), op.cit., p. 238.
3 Speech in the House of Commons, 15th May 1938, Ibid., p. 197.

> to our national existence. There are other cases, too, in which we might fight, if we were clear that either we must fight or else abandon, once and for all, the hope of averting the destruction of those things which we hold most dear - our liberty and the right to live our lives according to the standards which our national traditions and our national character have prescribed for us.
>
> "All the same, our object must always be to preserve these things which we consider essential without recourse to war, if that be possible, because we know that in war there are no winners. There is nothing but suffering and ruin for those who are involved, and even if we ourselves were not involved, with our worldwide ramifications of trade and finance, we could not fail to be involved in the consequences of war and the destruction of life and property which sooner or later must react upon ourselves."[4]

And again, "I cannot imagine anyone in any part of the House who would disagree with what we have so frequently declared to be the main aim of the Government's foreign policy, namely, the establishment and the maintenance of peace and the removal, as far as that may be practicable, of all causes of possible conflict in the amelioration of grievances between one country and another."[5]

This belief in Britain's foreign policy was the background of Chamberlain's attitude towards the Sudetenland question.

> "If only we could find some peaceful solution of this Czechoslovakia question...."[6]

It should also be remembered that Chamberlain did not consider the Czech problem the direct responsibility of Britain, nor could he accept war over a question that has been settled in principle.

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4 Speech in the House of Commons, 24th March 1938, Ibid., p. 139.
5 Speech in the House of Commons, 26th July 1938, Ibid., p. 247.
6 Ibid., p. 256.

> "How horrible, fantastic, incredible it is that we should be digging trenches and trying on gas-masks here because of a quarrel in a far away country between people of whom we know nothing.
>
> "It seems still more impossible that a quarrel which has already been settled in principle should be the subject of war."[7]

Yet Chamberlain realized the gravity of the question and the necessity to take positive steps. As he stated to the House of Commons he conceived of three alternative courses open for the British Government.

> "For His Majesty's Government there were three alternative courses that we might have adopted. Either we could have threatened to go to war with Germany if she attacked Czechoslovakia, or we could have stood aside and allowed matters to take their course, or, finally, we could attempt to find a peaceful settlement by way of mediation. The first of those courses we rejected. We had no treaty liabilities to Czechoslovakia. We always refused to accept any such obligation. Indeed, this country, which does not readily resort to war, would not have followed us if we had tried to lead it into war to prevent a minority from obtaining autonomy, or even from choosing to pass under some other Government.
>
> "The second alternative was also repugnant to us. However remote this territory may be, we knew, of course, that a spark once lighted there might give rise to a general conflagration, and we felt it our duty to do anything in our power to help the contending parties to find agreement. We addressed ourselves to the third course, the task of mediation."[8]

So with this course of action in mind, and with a sense of a mission, Chamberlain embarked upon the attempt of reaching a peaceful solution for the Sudetenland question. The first thing to do, he decided, was to have a direct meeting with Hitler. He telegramed

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7 Broadcast, 27th September, 1938, Ibid., p. 275.
8 Speech in the House of Commons, 28th September, 1938, Ibid., pp. 279-80.

the German Chancellor telling him that he was ready to come to Germany immediately to discuss a peaceful solution.[9] Having received a cordial reply, Chamberlain set out on the 15th of March to have his first meeting with Hitler at Berchtesgaden.

A. The Meeting at Berchtesgaden - September 15, 1938

The atmosphere in which Chamberlain had his meeting with Hitler is best described by the following passage:

> "During the Parliamentary vacation events in Czechoslovakia became increasingly grave. Lord Runciman's efforts to find a solution acceptable to Czechs and Sudeten Germans, though welcomed by both parties, proved unavailing: Concessions which might have been received with relief a little earlier, before feelings had become acerbated by delay, were, when at last made, no longer acceptable. The Czech army had been partially mobilised since the end of May: in August the German army was put on what was virtually a war footing for autumn manoeuvres of unprecedented size. Nor were these warlike preparations confined to the two countries directly concerned. On 27th August, following urgent representations of the consequences of using force made by the British Ambassador in Berlin to the German Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, speaking at Lanark, had repeated the Prime Minister's warning of 24th March that, if war broke out over the question of Czecholslovakia, it would be unlikely to be confined to those who had assumed direct obligations. These warnings were repeated by the British Ambassador on 31th August and in the early days of September. Meanwhile French reservists had been called up to man the Maginot Line. Though by this time no doubt could have been left in Herr Hitler's mind as to the gravity with which Britain would regard a resort to force and the determination of France, if not Russia, to honour her treaty obligations to Czechoslovakia, Germany's resolve to support the demands of the Sudeten Germans showed no sign of abating. On 12th September, in his long-waited address to Nuremberg Conference Herr Hitler spoke with passionate conviction of the rights of his fellow Germans in Czechoslovakia and promised them the aid of the Reich if they could obtain these rights in no other way.

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9 See n. 22, Chapter II for text of telegram.

"On 13th September, following a succession of serious incidents in the unhappy Sudetenland and the declaration of martial law by the Czech Government, the Sudeten leaders broke off negotiations[10] and declared their unalterable desire to return to the Reich."[11]

France, it should be remembered, had concluded a treaty with Czechoslovakia in which she undertook to stand by her in case of aggression on her territories.[12] But France was hoping that she would not be forced to go to war with Germany over the Sudetenland problem as her military preparedness for war was not sufficient then. England's rearmament had just started, and Chamberlain had this in mind when he went to meet Hitler.

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10 Negotiations between the Sudeten leader, Konrad Henlein and the Czech Government took place according to the following eight points as approved by the Sudeten German Party Congress at Karsbad; April 24, 1938.

1. Restoration of complete equality of German national group with the Czech people.

2. Recognition of the Sudeten German national group as a legal entity for the safeguarding of this position of equality within the State;

3. Confirmation and recognition of the Sudeten German settlement area;

4. Building up of Sudeten German self-government in the Sudeten German settlement area in all branches of public life in so far as questions affecting the interests and affairs of the German national group involved;

5. Introduction of legal provisions for the protection of those Sudeten German citizens living outside the defined settlement area of their national group;

6. Removal of wrong done to Sudeten German element since the year 1918, and compensation for damage suffered through this wrong;

7. Recognition and enforcement of the principle: German public servants in the German area;

8. Complete freedom to profess adherence to the German element and the German ideology.
(Documents on German Foreign Policy, Series D, Vol. II, opcit., p. 242.)

In going to meet Hitler, Chamberlain was hoping still to reach a compromise which will save peace. As he put it himself he went to Germany in order to "find out in personal conversation whether there was yet any hope of saving the peace."[13] But he soon realized that the situation was much graver than he had thought. "At this first conversation.....I very soon became aware that the position was much more acute and much more urgent than I had realized."[14]

Hitler was determined to solve the Sudeten question "one way or the other" and was willing to risk war.

> "In courteous and perfectly definite terms, Herr Hitler made it plain that he had made up his mind that the Sudeten Germans must have the right of self-determination and of returning, if they wished, to the Reich. If they could not achieve this by their own efforts, he said, he would assist them to do so, and he declared categorically that rather than wait he would be prepared to risk a world war."[15]

Chamberlain was convinced that Hitler was serious in his threats and that he was contemplating an immediate invasion of Czechoslovakia. This was, however, contrary to his assumption that the fact that Hitler agreed to meet him meant that he was disposed to discuss possible means of reaching a compromise. So he asked Hitler why, if he was determined to settle this matter by force, did he let him come. Hitler replied that if he were assured that "the British Government accepted the principle of self-determination he would be quite ready to discuss ways and means of carrying it out."[16]

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11 Ibid., p. 263.
12 For complete text of treaty, refer to Appendix B.
13 Speech in the House of Commons, September 28, 1928, Chamberlain, op.cit., p. 288.
14 Ibid., p. 288.
15 Ibid., p. 288.
16 Ibid., pp. 288-89.

To this proposal Chamberlain answered, according to his account, that he "was not in a position to give there and then such an assurance."[17] According to Schmidt's (the German interpretor present) account, Chamberlain's answer was that "he was not in a position to make categorical statements for the whole of the British Government.... He could state personally that he recognized the principle of the detachment of the Sudeten area....he wished to return to England in order to report to the Government and secure their approval of his personal attitude."[18]

And so, having been convinced of the seriousness of Hitler's intentions and having declared his personal approval of the principle of detachment and having received from Hitler assurances that he will not start any action until he was able to obtain a reply, Chamberlain returned to London to occupy himself in obtaining the approval of his ministers as well as that of France and Czechoslovakia to the said principle, and also to devise a plan carrying it out.

He did not meet much difficulty in gaining the approval of the British Government or of the French. Upon his arrival on the evening of September 16th he called the British Cabinet for a meeting in which he reported his conversation with Hitler and in which Lord Runciman presented his recommendations.[19] Chamberlain's belief that the detachment of the Sudeten areas was the sole means of avoiding war and Runciman's recommendations that areas where Sudeten population was in majority should be transferred to Germany without even a plebiscite, became now the basis of British policy.

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17 Ibid., p. 289.
18 Documents on German Foreign Policy, Series D, Vol. II, op.cit., p. 796.
19 Lord Runciman had been sent earlier by Chamberlain as a special mediator. For his complete report refer to Appendix C.

The French Premier Daladier and his Minister of Foreign Affairs Bonnet were invited to come to London for consultation. They arrived on the 18th of September and there followed a series of conferences in which the French Ministers accepted the principle of transfer but in which Daladier insisted on giving Czechoslovakia a guarantee of the new frontiers.

The conferences between the British and the French Governments culminated in what became known as the Anglo-French proposals which were despatched to the Czech Government on the 19th and in which the two governments proposed the transfer of the Sudeten areas to Germany and the willingness of the British government to join in an international guarantee of Czechoslovakia's new frontier.[20]

There followed two days of frantic activity on the part of the British government and its diplomatic representatives in Paris and Prague. On the 20th the Czech Government refused the proposals in her reply to the two governments.[21] The British ministers in Paris and Prague were instructed to put pressure on the French Government to join in appealing to the Czech Government to accept the proposals and on the Czech Government to do so. The instructions of Halifax, the British Foreign Minister, to this effect demonstrate urgency and insistence. On the 21st the British minister in Prague delivered to the Czech Government a note which said:

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20 For the complete text of the proposals refer to Appendix D.
21 For the complete text of the Czech reply refer to Appendix E.

> "In the view of His Majesty's Government the Czechoslovak Government's reply in now way meets the critical situation which the Anglo-French proposals were designed to avert and if adhered to would, when made public, in the opinion of His Majesty's Government lead to an immediate invasion. His Majesty's Government therefore urge the Czechoslovak Government to withdraw this reply and urgently consider an alternative that takes account of realities."[22]

The French minister also, upon instruction from his Government, joined in urging the Czech Government to do so.

In the face of such pressure, and realizing that they have been abandoned by their allies, the Czech Government could not but surrender. And so in the same day they gave their consent.

> "Under pressure of urgent insistence culminating in British communication of September 21, Czechoslovak Government sadly accept French and British proposals on supposition that the two governments will do everything in carrying them out to safeguard vital interests of Czechoslovak State."[23]

And so Chamberlain was able to take a favorable reply for his meeting with Hitler next day.

While Chamberlain was pressing forward the policy of surrender, Hitler on his part was pursuing his military and political plans for the invasion of Czechoslovakia. The Sudeten Free Corps was organized by the help of German officers and Austrian arms, and a schedule was drawn for the march of thirty six German divisions. On the political side, pressure was put on Poland and Hungary to demand for their minorities similar treatment as the Sudetends were receiving. The

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22 Documents on British Foreign Policy, Third Series, Vol. II, op.cit., p. 442.
23 Ibid., p. 444.

Slovaks were urged to forward demands for autonomy. On September 21st the Polish Government demanded a plebiscite in the Teschen district where there was a large Polish minority, and Hungary followed suit in the next day. Also on the 22nd the Sudeten Free Corps occupied, with the support of German forces, the Czech frontier towns of Asch and Eger. And so September 22, the day Chamberlain set out again for another visit to Hitler was a very tense day in Europe.

But before proceeding to discuss the details of this second visit, it is worthwhile to pose for a moment and look back at the events of the first one and what it brought about. For the Berchtesgaden visit is of extreme historical importance.

The events which led to the Munich Conference were set in motion in this visit. The issue, after the meeting, became one of devising a timetable, as the main principle of transfer had been accepted. The method of execution of such a principle did not constitute a sufficient justification for a world war. Besides, Chamberlain's conversation with Hitler confirmed the latter's conviction that Britain, and consequently France, would not fight for the Sudetenland. Italy also became convinced of the weakness of the Western democracies, and this had had far reaching results. Also as Britain and France transmitted the German proposals to Czechoslovakia as their own proposals, they were committed to exert pressure upon the Czech Government to accept these proposals. Thus they were not free to pursue any other line if it was found advisable.

Hence one could say that the Munich Agreement was only the inevitable consequence of the Berchtesgaden visit.

B. The Godesberg Meeting. - September 22, 1938

Chamberlain went to Godesberg convinced that, now that he had got the British, French and Czech Governments' approval of the Berchtesgaden decisions, he was bringing to Hitler all that he demanded and "had only to discuss quietly with him the proposals that (I) had brought with me."[24] But a surprise was waiting for him.

In the first meeting Chamberlain stated, in reference to the Berchtesgaden conversations, that, to quote Schmidt's note:

> "After personally recognizing the principle of self-determination, he had promised to consult his ministerial colleagues and other statesmen, and to obtain their agreement to this principle. He had succeeded, after laborious negotiations, in persuading not only the British and French Cabinets, but also the Czech Government to agree in principle to what the Fuhrer had demanded during the last conversation. He would now outline roughly the proposal he could make as a result of this."[25]

He went then to explain his proposal. The Sudeten areas were to be turned over to Germany without a plebiscite - the future of the mixed areas will be determined by a commission of three members, a German, a Czech and a neutral who would be head of the commission. This plan, he told Hitler, will recognize the element of urgency which Hitler so much insisted upon. Having been answered in the affirmative, Hitler shocked Chamberlain by telling him:

> "I am terribly sorry, but after the events of the last few days, this plan is no longer of any use."[26]

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24 Chamberlain, op.cit., p. 294.
25 Documents on German Foreign Policy, Series D, Vol. II, op.cit., p. 870.
26 Documents on German Foreign Policy, Series D, Vol. II, op.cit., p. 873.

Chamberlain described his reaction to these words to the House of Commons:

> "Hon. members will realise the perplexity in which I found myself, faced with this totally unexpected situation.....I do not want hon. members to think that he was deliberately deceiving me - I do not think so for one moment - but....it was a profound shock to me when I was told....that these proposals were not acceptable, and that they were to be replaced by other proposals of a kind which I had not contemplated at all."[27]

To Hitler he said that he was "both disappointed and puzzled." He explained to him that in order to achieve the proposals he brought him he had risked his political career. But Hitler was not moved and insisted on demanding immediate occupation. The problem must finally be solved not later than October 1. On a map that he had ready he indicated the frontiers he was proposing.

So Chamberlain withdrew with a mind "full of foreboding as to the success of (my) mission." He, however, had obtained from Hitler an extension of his previous assurance that he would not attack as long as negotiations lasted promising in return to appeal to the Czech Government to avoid any action which might provoke incidents.

Hitler's behavior could only be explained in that he did not think when he made his demands at Berchtesgasen, that they will be agreed to. Chamberlain told the House of Commons that Hitler told him that "he never for one moment supposed that I (Chamberlain) should be able to come back and say that the principle was accepted."[28] Hitler's

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27 Chamberlain, op.cit., p. 294.
28 Ibid., p. 294.

objective was to take the Sudeten land by force. So to accept the Anglo-French plan meant that military action was not called for, an eventuality which was not to Hitler's tastes as he was determined to humiliate the Czechs and demonstrate Germany's power.

The situation during that night seemed a complete deadlock. Consultations between the British and French Governments resulted in a message in which they told the latter that they could no longer advise Czechoslovakia not to mobilise. Henceforth, Czechoslovakia ordered mobilization on the 23rd.

On the 23rd Chamberlain refused to renew conversations until the situation had been better clarified. He also sent Hitler a letter in which he informed him:

> "I am ready to put to the Czech Government your proposal as to the areas, so that they may examine the suggested boundary....But I do not think you have realised the impossibility of my agreeing to put forward any plan unless I have reason to suppose that it will be considered by public opinion in my country, in France and, indeed, in the world generally, as carrying out the principles already agreed upon in an orderly fashion and free from the threat of force." He thought that: "In the event of German troops moving into the areas....there is no doubt that the Czech Government would have no option but to order their forces to resist."

But he suggested that:

> "I could ask the Czech Government whether they think there could be an arrangement under which the maintenance of law and order in certain agreed Sudeten areas would be entrusted to the Sudeten Germans themselves - by the creation of a suitable force, or by the use of forces already in existence, possibly acting under the supervision of neutral observers."[29]

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29 Documents on British Foreign Policy, Third Series, Vol. II, op.cit., pp. 482-83.

To this letter Chamberlain got a furious reply which carried no modifications of his previous demands. Chamberlain again wrote requesting that the proposals be set in a memorandum together with a map, which he undertook, as a mediator, to send to Prague. He, however, had another meeting with Hitler that evening. In this meeting the German memorandum was presented with an accompanying map. A new time limit was set. The Czechs were to bigin the evacuation of the ceded areas by the morning of September 26 and completed by the 28th.

Chamberlain objected that this was more of an ultimatum. Hitler denied this by directing his attention to the fact that it was headed by the word 'Memorandum'. There followed a lengthy conversation which was interrupted by the arrival of a message announcing mobilization in Czechoslovakia. Finally Chamberlain inquired whether the German memorandum was Hitler's last word. Hitler replied that it was, but that he was prepared to set a new date for evacuation on October 1. Thereupon the memorandum was corrected accordingly.[30] Next morning Chamberlain returned to London. Upon landing he stated:

> "My first duty now that I have come back is to report to the British and French Governments the results of my mission, and until I have done that, it would be difficult for me to say anything...."[31]

In fact the first thing he attempted to do was, contrary to what he told Hitler, to try and persuade the British Cabinet to accept Hitler's new demands.

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30 For complete text of memorandum refer to Appendix F.
31 Chamberlain, op.cit., p. 293.

But this time the attempt was not successful. A faction in the Cabinet headed by the First Lord of the Admiralty refused to accept the new demands. The Cabinet adjourned without reaching a decision. Next morning it met and Halifax joined in urging Chamberlain to reject the Godesberg demands and to assure France of British support in the event that she should go to war. In the face of such pressure Chamberlain agreed to do so. The French Cabinet also refused the Godesberg Memorandum on the 25th. The Czech minister in London delivered to the British Government a note of rejection in which he said:

> "My Government wish me to declare in all solemnity that Herr Hitler's demands in their present form are absolutely and unconditionally unacceptable to my Government."[32]

And thus again on September 25th, when the French and British ministers were meeting in London, the problem seemed to have reached another complete deadlock.

The French and British Ministers discussed their respective positions. Daladier declared that France will come to the assistance of Czechoslovakia if Germany invaded her. Chamberlain stated that he would make a final appeal to reach a solution by negotiations but that Britain will support France. The conference concluded with an agreement on united action and for further pursuit of peaceful solution.

Chamberlain was decided to make another effort. He now sought to put into action a plan for negotations through an international

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32 Documents on British Foreign Policy, Third Series, Vol. II, op.cit., p. 518.

conference which he was contemplating for a while. On September 25th when he received the Czech Minister he suggested the plan to him. On the 26th the answer of the Czech Government came in the affirmative.

> "The Czech Government would be ready to take part in an international conference where Germany and Czechoslovakia, among other nations, would be represented, to find a different method of settling the Sudeten German Question from that expounded by Herr Hitler's proposals."[33]

The suggestion was then discussed with the French Government. France agreed to it in principle. Accordingly Sir Horace Wilson was dispatched to Berlin with a letter which he was to deliver to Hitler before his speech in the Sportspalast that evening.

In the letter Chamberlain informs Hitler of the refusal on the part of the Czech Government of the Godesberg proposals, and suggested that

> ".....representatives from Germany shall meet representatives of the Czechoslovakian Government to discuss immediately the situation by which we are confronted with a view to settling by agreement the way in which the territory is to be handed over."[34]

He also suggested that British representatives be present at the discussions.

The meeting between Sir Wilson and Hitler went wrong from the beginning. When the letter was translated to Hitler he became furious and shouted 'there is no sense at all in negotiating further.' His response to Chamberlain's suggestions was that he would negotiate with

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33 Ibid., p. 551.
34 Documents on German Foreign Policy, Series D, Vol. II, op.cit., pp. 944-45.

the Czechs only if they accepted in advance the Godesberg Memorandum and agreed to a German occupation of the areas by October 1. He must, he said, have the reply by 2 P.M. on September 28.

That evening Hitler made his speech and declared in an outburst of insults at the Czech President that he would have the Sudetenland by October 1. Next day he met Sir Wilson again but offered nothing new. Accordingly Sir Wilson informed him that

> ".....if, in the fulfillment of her obligation to Czechoslovakia, France decided that her forces must become actively engaged in hostilities against Germany, then....Britain would feel herself obliged to support France."[35]

Hitler replied that that was a matter of 'complete indifference' to him.

Wilson consequently left to London. Shortly after his departure Hitler issued an order directing the first wave of attack, of seven divisions, to be ready to begin action by September 30th.[36] That evening he also sent a letter to Chamberlain urging him to continue his pressure on Czechoslovakia to accept his proposals.

British diplomacy was now directed into two channels. One was to press forward upon Hitler the British suggestion of agreement by negotiation. For this purpose the British ambassador was instructed to deliver to Hitler a note which contained proposals agreed to by France, and with reservations, by Czechoslovakia, which pressed the Czech Government to agree to the immediate transfer of the Sudeten areas according to a time-table, and which suggested the creation of an international Boundary Commission for the delimitation of frontiers.[37]

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35 Schmidt's notes, Ibid., p. 964.
36 Mendelssohn, op.cit., p. 89.
37 For complete text refer to Appendix G.

He also delivered a personal message from Chamberlain to Hitler which said:

> "After reading your letter I feel certain that you can get all essentials without war and without delay. I am ready to come to Berlin myself at once to discuss arrangements for transfer with you and representatives of the Czech Government, together with representatives of France and Italy if you desire. I feel convinced that we could reach agreement in a week. However much you distrust the Prague Government intentions, you cannot doubt the power of the British and French Governments to see that the promises are carried out fairly and fully and forthwith."[38]

The second channel was directed towards convincing Mussolini to use his influence with Hitler for the extension of the time limit, and also to obtain his approval of the suggested conference. The British Ambassador to Italy was instructed to present to the Duce a request to intervene with Hitler. Chamberlain sent him a personal message in which he said:

> "I have today addressed a last appeal to Hitler to abstain from force to settle Sudeten problem, which, I feel sure, can be settled by a short discussion and will give him the essential territory, population and protection for both Sudetens and Czechs during the transfer. I have offered myself to go at once to Berlin to discuss arrangements with German and Czech representatives, and if the Chancellor desires representatives also of Italy and France.
>
> "I trust your excellency will inform the German Chancellor that you are willing to be represented and urge him to agree to my proposal which will keep our peoples out of war."[39]

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38 Chamberlain, op.cit., p. 299.
39 Ibid., pp. 299-300.

This latter action on the part of Chamberlain proved to be of great historical importance. For Mussolini reacted by sending a message to Hitler on September 28 requesting a 24-hour extension of the time limit. This message had a great weight upon Hitler. Upon its arrival he declared to the French Ambassador who was in conference with him that he would grant Mussolini's request. Later in the day he invited Chamberlain, Daladier, and Mussolini to meet him next day at Munich.

And so Chamberlain succeeded, for another time, in averting the immediate danger of war. Czechoslovakia, whose fate was to be decided upon, was, however, not invited to attend. All the Czech President was able to do was to beg Chamberlain

> ".....to do nothing at Munich which could put Czechoslovakia in a worse situation than under Anglo-French proposals...."[40]

C. The Munich Conference - September 29, 1938

On the morning of September 29 when Chamberlain was leaving to Munich he said to the assembled newsmen and members of Cabinet:

> "When I was a boy I used to repeat, 'If at first you don't succeed, try, try, try again,' That is what I am doing."[41]

Chamberlain said this statement in a spirit of high optimism and, undoubtedly, with a sense of relief. Now that the impending threat of war was, thanks to his efforts, averted, Chamberlain was determined to reach an agreement in Munich which would secure his

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40 Documents on British Foreign Policy, Third Series, Vol. II, op.cit., p. 604.
41 Chamberlain, op.cit., p. 301.

purpose of peace. He was determined, one can conjecture, not to allow any considerations to stand in his way, be they Czech appeals or French resistance. The French put up verbal resistance, and the two Czech representatives who were allowed to come to Munich to give information to the British and French delegations tried to protest when informed of the terms of the agreement. But that did not affect very much.

In fact the Munich Conference was no more than a ceremony in which Hitler was formally given his demands. The Anglo-French proposals were abandoned and the agreement was based on a new proposal made by Mussolini which was a synthesis of the Godesberg Memorandum and the new proposals which were put forward by the British on September 27.

The terms of the agreement[42] stipulated that evacuation, and occupation by German troops, of areas of predominantly German character will begin on October 1, and be completed by October 10. An international commission was to be formed of representatives of Germany Britain, France, Italy and Czechoslovakia. This commission was to lay down the conditions governing the evacuation and will determine the territories in which a plebiscite was to be held and the new frontiers. It was agreed that the commission will consist of the Secretary of State in the German Foreign Office, the British, French and Italian Ambassadors in Berlin and a Czech representative.

Britain and France adhered to their offer to join in an international guarantee of the new frontiers of the Czechoslovak State, and

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42 For complete text refer to Appendix H.

Germany and Italy promised on their part to give such a guarantee once the question of Polish and Hungarian minorities in Czechoslovakia was settled.

The agreement was signed in the early morning of September 30, and it was left to the British and the French to convey it to the Czechs and obtain their acceptance.

This was the final act in the Drama of Munich that Chamberlain had to play, and he was determined to allow no default. He summoned the two representatives of Czechoslovakia and told them, in the presence of the French delegation, that if they do not accept they will have to settle their affairs with the Germans absolutely alone. The two representatives were handed the text of the agreement and told that no comment or reply was expected from them but that the Czech Government must be ready to send a representative to the international commission not later than 5 p.m. of the same day. Chamberlain also sought to exert pressure on the Czech President. He instructed the British Minister that he

> ".....should at once see the President and on behalf of His Majesty's Government urge acceptance of plan that has been worked out today after prolonged discussion with a view to avoiding conflict.
>
> "You will appreciate that there is no time for argument, it must be a plain acceptance."[43]

The Czech President debated the question. There seemed to him no other possible alternative. So he was compelled to submit and at 12:30 p.m. of September 30 the decision was announced. Chamberlain had fulfilled his peace mission.

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43 Documents on British Foreign Policy, Third Series, Vol. II, op.cit., p. 629.

D. The Munich Agreement - Appraisal and Consequences

The terms of the Munich Agreement included two main concessions from the Godesberg proposals. The first one was the admission of a Czech representative into the International Commission. The second one was that it ruled that the commission might, in exceptional cases, depart from the strict rule that all areas of predominantly German majority belong automatically to Germany.

But these were minor concessions. Hitler, in effect, was given all the essential demands. He had demanded that German troops enter the Sudetenland by October 1, and the Agreement granted him that. It is true that no military action was to take place, contrary to Hitler's desires. But, the defeat he inflicted on Czechoslovakia and on Britain and France, was of sufficient magnitude to compensate for the loss.

But what is more important is that Hitler had been able, through the Conference and the Agreement, to pave the way for his next stroke in the destruction of Czechoslovakia. He had weakened considerably the French Security system and isolated Russia from the European alignment.

For France Munich was disastrous. By agreeing to the terms of the agreement she had abandoned her most faithful ally and, thereby, sacrificed her position on the Continent. The breakdown of Czech defences was a blow to her own security. Premier Daladier was aware of these facts but he was not in a position to pursue any other line. As to Czechoslovakia herself, the Agreement, as we shall see a little further, led to her complete dismemberment. She was in no position

to resist. Refusal meant going to war without the support of France and Britain. That left her only one ally, Russia. Russia's support was doubtful. But even if Russia elected to honor her obligations, the Czech Government was convinced that Germany would have been able to crush the combined forces of Russia and Czechoslovakia, and that would have meant the complete destruction of Czechoslovakia. Besides, the Czech President knew that going to war with Russia's support only would eventually result in civil war in Czechoslovakia. So he had no alternative but to submit.

Chamberlain, however, was elated at the outcome. The 'prolonged nightmare' ended to his satisfaction. The threat of war, so near, was averted and peace preserved. The Czech problem was settled as conveniently as possible. Was not this, after all, Chamberlain's main objective? He told the House of Commons in the debate on Munich:

> ".....We did not go there to decide whether the predominantly German areas in the Sudetenland should be passed over to the German Reich. That had been decided already....What we had to consider was the method, the conditions and the time of transfer.... it was essential that we should quickly reach a concession, so that this painful and difficult operation of transfer might be carried out at the earliest possible moment and concluded as soon as was consistent with orderly procedure, in order that we might avoid the possibility of something that might have rendered all our attempts at peaceful solution useless."[44]

But what seemed more important to Chamberlain was that Munich was the opening of a new era.

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44 Chamberlain, op.cit., p. 308.

> "In my view the strongest force of all, one which grew and took fast shapes and forms every day was the force not of one individual, but was that unmistakable sense of unanimity among the peoples of the world that war somehow must be averted....
>
> "Ever since I assumed my present office my main purpose has been to work for the pacification of Europe, for the removal of those suspicions and those animosities which have so long poisoned the air. The path which leads to appeasement is long and bristles with obstacles. The question of Czechoslovakia is the latest and perhaps the most dangerous. Now that we have got past it, I feel that it may be possible to make further progress along the road to sanity."[45]

And was not he, Chamberlain, the principal advocater of appeasement, and should he not, then, feel satisfied with his achievement? As to the points of difference between the new agreement and the Godesberg Memorandum which was rejected earlier, which difference after all constituted the basis for accepting the new agreement, Chamberlain enumerated the following:[46]

1. While the Godesberg Memorandum was in fact an ultimatum with a time limit of six days, the Munich Agreement reverts to the Anglo-French plan and lays down the conditions for the application, on the responsibility of the four powers and under international supervision, of the main principle of that memorandum.
2. Under the Munich Agreement evacuation of the territory which is to be occupied by German military forces and its occupation by those forces is to be carried out in five clearly defined stages between 1st October and 10th October instead of having to be completed in one operation by 1st October.

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45 Ibid., pp. 314-15.
46 Ibid., pp. 309-311.

3. The line up to which German troops will enter into occupation is no longer the line as laid down in the map which was attached to the Godesberg Memorandum but is to be fixed by an international commission.
4. Under the Godesberg Memorandum the areas on the Czech side of the line laid down on the map which were to be submitted to a plebiscite were defined by the Germans, whereas the areas on the German side of the line were left undefined. Under the Munich Agreement all plebiscite areas were to be defined by the International Commission.
5. The Munich Agreement included provisions which were not found in the Godesberg Memorandum such as the article regarding the right of option, provisions for facilitating the transfer of populations and the supplementary declaration which provided that all other questions arising out of the transfer were to be referred to the International Commission.

The differences are, undoubtedly, quite valuable. But these are differences on details and their existence did not obliterate the fact that the basic principle which was the basis of the Godesberg Memorandum, that of occupation of the areas by German troops beginning October 1st, was accepted in Munich.

But Munich had provided another cause of satisfaction for Chamberlain. With the thorny question of Czechoslovakia being disposed of, the way for establishing further relationships with Hitler

on the same basis, it seemed to Chamberlain, was now paved. So, accordingly, on September 30 he sought another conference with Hitler with the purpose of making him join in a declaration of agreement between Germany and Britain. The outcome of that conference was the following declaration:

> "We the German Fuhrer and Chancellor, and the British Prime Minister, have had a further meeting today and are agreed in recognizing that the question of Anglo-German relations is of the first importance for the two countries and for Europe.
>
> "We regard the agreement signed last night and the Anglo-German Naval Agreement as symbolic of the desire of our two peoples never to go to war with one another again.
>
> "We are resolved that the method of consultation shall be the method adopted to deal with any other question that may concern our two countries, and we are determined to continue our efforts to remove possible sources of differences and thus to contribute to assure the peace of Europe."[47]

Chamberlain seemed to attach a great deal of importance to this declaration. He thought that it could improve his political position in his own country. Did he, then, have this conference in mind while he was conceding to Hitler's demands?

The consequences of the Munich Agreement were, indeed, staggering to Czechoslovakia. The final settlement which was reached in accordance with the terms of the Agreement, and through German pressure on the International Commission, forced Czechoslovakia to cede to Germany 11,000 square miles of territory in which dwelt 2,800,000

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47 Documents on German Foreign Policy, Series D, Vol. II, op.cit., p. 1017.

Sudeten Germans and 800,000 Czechs. Within this area lay the formidable fortifications which Czechoslovakia had laboriously erected and the loss of which meant for her the loss of her defence lines.

But these were not all the losses incurred by Czechoslovakia. Her economic losses were more considerable. The new frontier was so drawn that the whole system of railway communications was completely dislocated. Road, Telephone and telegraph communications were disrupted. Moreover Czechoslovakia was deprived of 66 per cent of her coal and 80 per cent of her lignite. Her industrial losses were also tremendous. They amounted to 70 per cent of her iron and steel, 80 per cent of her textiles, 75 per cent of her cement, 90 per cent of her porcelain, 86 per cent of her glass, 86 per cent of her chemicals, 90 per cent of her news-type, 40 per cent of her timber, and 70 per cent of her electric powers.[48]

The political life of the country fell under German influence. President Benes who had shouldered the burden of the crisis gaining thereby Hitler's utmost hatred, was forced, under German pressure to resign and to flee the country, taking refuge in Britain. General Jan Syrovy, then Premier, succeeded him as chief of State. Syrovy was anxious to please the Germans, and he started by informing the Russian government that Czechoslovakia was no more interested in her alliance with Russia.

What was more important, however, was the sequel of events which followed in the wake of the Munich Agreement and which eventually caused the total disappearance of Czechoslovakia as a sovereign state.

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48 Shirer, op.cit., p. 422.

Poland, pressing her demands, was able to take over the territories around Teschen which were about 650 square miles in area and which comprised a population of 228,000 inhabitants over half of whom were Czechs. Hungary got a larger area of 7,500 square miles with a population of over half a million.

The British and French guarantees of the Czechoslovak new frontiers which wereupheld in the Munich Agreement, proved to be of no worth. Hitler, after four months had gone by since the Munich Conference, had not given Germany's promised guarantee of the Czech frontiers. The French and British governments sent him a note on February 8, 1939, inquiring about Germany's views regarding the guarantee.[49] Hitler's reply, which was not delivered until February 28, said that Germany would have "to wait first a clarification of the internal development of Czechoslovakia."[50]

These 'internal developments' were now in the process of being shaped by Hitler himself. He had devised a twofold plan: on the one hand he was planning to detach Slovakia from Prague, and on the other he was preparing for the liquidation of what remained of Czechoslovakia by taking over, by military action, Bohemia and Moravia. The plan to carry out the liquidation was already drawn.

On October 21st, 1938, Hitler issued a directive which said:

> "The future task of the Armed Forces and the preparations for the conduct of war resulting from these tasks will be laid down by me in a later directive. Until this directive comes into force, the Armed forces must be prepared at all times for the following eventualities:

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49 Documents on German Foreign Policy, Series D, Vol. IV, op.cit., pp. 207-8.

50 Ibid., pp. 218-20.

1. The securing of the frontiers of Germany, and the protection against air attacks;

2. The liquidation of the remainder of Czechoslovakia;

3. The occupation of the Memelland."[51]

On November 24th, 1938, Hitler issued 'a first Supplement to Instructions dated October 21st, 1938'. It said:

"Apart from the three contingencies mentioned in the instructions of October 21st, 1938, preparations are also to be made to enable the Free State of Danzig to be occupied by German troops by surprise."[52]

Also, on December 17th, 1938, Keitel, Chief of the Supreme Command of the German Armed Forces passed the following instructions:

"Reference 'Liquidation of the Rest of Czechoslovakia' the Fuhrer has given the following additional order:

The preparations for this eventuality are to continue on the assumption that no resistance worth mentioning is to be expected.

To the outside world too it must clearly appear that it is merely an action of pacification and not a war-like undertaking.

The action must therefore be carried out by the peace-time Armed Forces only, without reinforcement from mobilization. The necessary readiness for action, especially the ensuring that essential supplies are brought up, must be effected by adjustment within the units."[53]

The opportunity for action was presented to Hitler by the Czechs themselves. In March 1939, and in consequence of internal troubles in Slovakia and Ruthenia, the Czech President dismissed the autonomous governments of the two states. Hitler seized the

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51 Mendelssohn, op.cit., p. 92.
52 Ibid., p. 94.
53 Ibid., p. 95-96.

opportunity. On March 11, he decided to take over Bohemia and Moravia by ultimatum which he prepared and kept as top secret. Turning towards Slovakia, he invited Tiso, the deposed Premier, to come to Berlin to see him. There he was given the text of a declaration which proclaimed Slovakia independent and requested Hitler to take over the protection of the new State. He was also instructed to send a telegram to Berlin to this effect. On March 14, Slovakia was declared an independent state. On March 16 Tiso dispatched the telegram and Hitler immediately declared that he was glad to take over the protection of the newly independent Slovak State.

The independence of Slovakia left Prague with only the Czech states of Bohemia and Moravia. Hitler decided to force upon the Czech President the solution which he had intended to achieve with military action. Again the Czech President played into his hands. He asked to be received by Hitler. Hitler granted him his wish and so the President duly arrived in Berlin on March 14th accompanied by his Foreign Minister.

There the two statesmen were subjected to every sort of threat of force against their country. They should agree to place its fate in the hands of Hitler. The old President fainted in the process.

On the morning of the 15th the Czech statesmen submitted to demands
Hitler's/and signed a declaration to this effect:

> "At their request, the Fuhrer today received the Czechoslovak President, Dr. Hacha, and the Czechoslovak Foreign Minister, Dr. Chvalkovsky, in Berlin in the presence of Foreign Minister von Ribbentrop. At the meeting the serious situation created by the events of recent weeks in the present Czechoslovak territory was examined with complete frankness.

> "The conviction was unanimously expressed on both sides that the aim of all efforts must be the safeguarding of calm, order and peace in this part of Central Europe. The Czechoslovak President declared that, in order to serve this object and to achieve ultimate pacification, he confidently placed the fate of the Czech people and country in the hands of the Fuhrer of the German Reich. The Fuhrer accepted this declaration and expressed his intention of taking the Czech people under the protection of the German Reich and of guaranteeing them an autonomous development of their ethnic life as suited to their character."[54]

No sooner had the declaration been signed than the German troops entered into Bohemia and Moravia. Hitler's desire to enter into Prague triumphantly was thus, and after all, fulfilled.

And so with the occupation by Germany of Bohemia and Moravia on March 15th, and of Slovakia on the 16th, and having given Ruthenia to Hungary, Czechoslovakia ceased to exist as a sovereign state.

It should be mentioned here that Britain and France, the guarantors of Czechoslovakia's frontiers in Munich failed, when this guarantee was put to test, to honor their obligations. And Hitler was able to complete what was started, but not completed, in Munich.

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54 Shirer, op.cit., pp. 447-8.

CONCLUSION

The Munich Agreement has, in the past years, given rise to strong controversy and has been the subject of divergent opinions, comments, and one may say, passions. The British diplomacy, taking the course it did towards Hitler's Germany in the 30's in general, and towards the Czech crisis in particular, received, understandably, the greatest share of interest and of the controversy. Chamberlain, who was recognized by some as the apostle of peace and the manifestation of the wisdom of British diplomacy, was assigned by others the role of the villain.

This controversy, while justified, does not obliterate the fact that there are basic considerations that we cannot dispense with in appraising the British diplomacy at the Munich Conference. For one thing the Munich Conference cannot be dealt with as an isolated event to be examined in the light of only the immediate circumstances which led to it, or, in fact, in the light of the circumstances of the whole Czech problem. For the forces which were at the moment at play and which had a determining influence on the parties concerned, were only the outcome of a chain of events and circumstances which started even before the rise of Hitler. And so one cannot start examining the British policy, for the purpose of determining the amount of credit or criticism it should receive, with Munich itself. One should go back over the years so as to see how British policy

towards Germany was responsible for the creation of the very forces that weighed upon her own position in Munich.

In the course of the previous chapters British policy towards Germany before and after the rise of Hitler was discussed in detail. The underlying elements which motivated this policy were also enumerated and explained. We have seen that economic, political as well as moral and psychological considerations were behind the policy of appeasement which Britain adopted in her dealings with Germany after the First World War and which continued after the rise of Hitler. This policy, it should be remembered, was instrumental in permitting Germany to regain her military power and to carry out such a program of rearmament that, by 1938, Chamberlain, in trying to decide on what course to follow, was faced with a Germany whose military power was such that it was considered more than in par with the combined powers of Britain, France and Czechoslovakia. This state of comparative power was, as is well known, a decisive element in Munich.

It is said in the explanation of this policy, that Britain, in accordance with her traditional policy of balance of power on the Continent was only aiming at permitting Germany to regain just sufficient power which would enable her to stand in the face of France's ambitions of domination. That is, Britain's objective was to regulate Germany's military power and to keep it within limits defined for her by Britain herself. A strong Germany, within these limits, would be to the advantage of Britain, both politically and economically.

This belief in the possibility of keeping Germany within bounds

was a grave misjudgment. It was unwise to suppose that a revived Germany under a wildly ambitious dictator, who made no secret of his expansionist intentions, would tolerate the dictation of her limitations by other powers. It should have been apparent that a Nazi Germany nurtured on the belief in the superiority of the German race, will, beyond any doubt, seek to assert this superiority by attempting to subordinate others. And to achieve this, military superiority, which would permit of no imposed limits, was essential. Any belief to the contrary is, in the opinion of the present writer, not well founded.

There are some historians, political scientists and politicians who are of the opinion that Hitler should have been checked before 1936 and that the Nazi regime in Germany would, and could, have been easily crushed prior to that date. They base their assumptions on the not unjustified belief that by then Germany's military preparedness had not reached a stage which would have placed her in a comparable position with that of the Western democracies.

The present writer, while recognizing the various considerations which would have made such an action undesirable, nevertheless, shares in the belief in its advisability at the time. Up till 1936, the Western democracies had, not only the ability to check Hitler and destroy his Nazi movement, but also the morally and legally justified occasion to do so. The proclamation of the general conscription in Germany in 1935 was an occasion that Britain should have seized in order to curb Hitler's rearmament drive. The occupation of the demilitarised Rhineland by German troops offered a sufficient cause for taking military action against Germany, which would have enabled the Western democracies to destroy Hitler's regime at no great cost.

Under Britain's influence, Hitler was allowed to get away with these breaches of international treaties. This had two results:

1. It boosted Hitler's self-confidence and strengthened his position in Germany.
2. It gave him valuable time to rearm at a rate which outpaced the rate of armament in either France or Britain. The whole German economy was directed towards military effort, and in 1938 Germany was spending 16 per cent of her national income on military preparations while Britain and France devoted only 7 per cent of their national income for the same purpose.

The ultimate result was a shift in the situation to Hitler's advantage which, when coupled with his success in the annexation of Austria, emboldened him further and wetted his appetite.

So one can see that Britain herself was responsible, to a great extent, for the creation of the forces which greatly influenced Chamberlain's attitude towards the Czech problem.

In analysing the British policy towards the Czech problem, it is worthwhile to ask the question whether Chamberlain could have followed a course different from the one he did follow. Chamberlain believed that the circumstances of the Czech problem left him with only two alternative courses:

1. Either to submit to Hitler's demands,
2. Or resist these demands and threaten to resort to force running thereby the very probable risk of going to war with Germany.

In choosing the first alternative Chamberlain was influenced by three main factors:

1. His own deep conviction of the wrongness of war and the desirability of maintaining peace.
2. His belief that the whole problem of the Sudetenland was not worth a world war, especially when Britain had no legal commitments towards Czechoslovakia.
3. His estimate of the military situation, which convinced him of the insufficiency of the military preparedness of both Britain and France as compared to Germany's.

As to Chamberlain's attitude towards war and peace, one cannot but be convinced of the sincerity of his convictions in this respect. He had demonstrated it in words and deeds so often as not to leave any doubt about it. And though he was undoubtedly guided by practical considerations, his desire for peace was a dominant influence upon his handling of the Czech problem. To quote his biographer, Keith Feiling,

> "Many have spoken, and written, as if Chamberlain's first object at Munich was to gain time to arm against an inevitable war. He would, indeed, have been unfit for his position if that had not been in his mind; as we know from letters already quoted, it long had been. But it was never his first motive, which was plain enough, simply the rightness of peace and the wrongness of war."[1]

Chamberlain in addition, could not accept the idea of going into a world war over a minor question as that of the Sudetenland.

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1 Feiling, op.cit., p. 359.

To involve the world in a war which would undoubtedly result in great damage to human lives and to property while the problem had already been solved in principle, with only the details of carrying out this principle remaining to be settled, seemed to Chamberlain an abhorrent prospect. If Britain would go to war over the Sudeten problem it would be in support of France who had an alliance with Czechoslovakia. Nor were Britain's interests directly effected by the crisis.

Moreover, Chamberlain thought that even if the war was won the Czech problem will remain standing.

> "..... any res-establishment of the Czechoslovak State would have to wait the issue of a war in which we had been victorious. It might be necessary to wait a long time before such a conclusion had been reached, and it was perhaps impossible to exclude from our mind the question whether, even at the end of a victorious war, it would in fact be possible to reestablish the Czechoslovak State on its present basis."[2]

As regards his estimate of the military situation, Chamberlain was convinced that, in the case of Britain, there were two factors which made her position risky:

1. The British people were not prepared morally and psychologically to go to war over the Sudeten problem. What is more the peoples and the governments of the Dominions were less prepared to accept such a war. Britain's military position depended, to a considerable degree on the support she gets from the Dominions.

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2 Documents on British Foreign Policy, Third Series, Vol. I, op.cit., p. 214.

2. Militarily, Britain's preparations were in their early stages and Chamberlain was advised that time was needed if Britain wanted to fight the Germans on equal terms. Hence it was necessary to buy the required time by averting war by concessions.

The reports on France's military position were more discouraging. The French people were less willing to be drawn into war than were the British. France's military preparedness, moreover, was still greatly lacking.

As to Russia, Czechoslovakia's other ally, it was doubtful whether she would honor her obligations. And even if she did, it did not seem that her support would be of much military significance. Besides, ideological differences made her interference in Central Europe undesirable.

Regarding the U.S., its noninvolvement policy in European affairs did not help to stiffen the attitude of the Western Powers. The interwar period had witnessed the rise of isolationist sentiments in America. The administration at that period was divided in its outlook toward the role of their Country in World Affairs. But the isolationist tendencies were dominant. Undoubtedly, this position of the U.S.A. had always been in Chamberlain's mind as well as in the minds of the other European statesmen in their dealings with Hitler. "Chamberlain at least cherished no hope of American action and was determined, like Bonnet on the French side, to go to almost any lengths, at the expense

of the Czechs, to avoid the outbreak of hostilities with Germany."[3] This negative attitude of a strong and democratic country like the U.S.A., had left the Western Powers alone to weigh their forces under the existing circumstances and shape their policies to meet Hitler's demands.

So the military situation was considered by Chamberlain to be discouraging, and hence he was determined to avoid war. He made this known to the French Government and agreed with them that they should urge the Czech Government to make as many concessions as was practicable.

All these considerations, taken together, explain Chamberlain's attitude, and, what is more, made him feel that his policy was justified. That is, taking the circumstances of the Czech crisis which led to the surrender in Munich in isolation from the events of the preceding years and, what is equally important, from its consequences, one would tend to conclude that Chamberlain's attitude was forced upon him.

However, information revealed later, show that Chamberlain's estimate of the military situation was inaccurate. German generals testified that they were of the opinion, that in spite of the fact that Hitler was convinced of the adequacy of his war machinery, had Germany gone to war in 1938, she would have suffered a defeat in a short period. These generals' testimony reveal that while Germany was equipped to achieve an initial victory, she lacked the ability to maintain this victory for long.[4]

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3 W.L. Langer and S.E. Gleason, The Challenge to Isolation, (New York: Harper and Brothers publishers, 1952), p. 32.
4 Refer to Shirer, op.cit., p. 423-26.

What is more, we know now that some of the generals who were dissatisfied with Hitler's policy were planning a coup on the event of the outbreak of war in 1938; so, had war broken this coup might have succeeded resulting in the deposition of Hitler's regime.

So it seems that the chances of winning the war were not as remote as Chamberlain thought them to be.

This brings the question of whether the 'year of grace' which Chamberlain earned in Munich did improve the comparative military position of the Western democracies. The question would call for expert opinion on the subject, as well as for a detailed study of the military position of the two parties in the two years, an impractical endeavour in the moment. But there are some qualified persons who are of the opinion that, while this delay had given Britain and France the chance to accelerate their armament programs and improve their military preparedness, it had, at the same time, given Germany a similar chance. And, considering the German zeal in this respect, it would seem that this delay was of more value in the military field to Germany than it was for Britain and France. Those who are of this opinion venture to say that the comparative state of military power was more in favor of Britain and France in 1938 than it was in 1939.

This leaves one more question to examine: Chamberlain's main objective, was the establishment of peace. The Munich settlement had averted war and established peace temporarily and only for one year. It is the opinion of the present writer that the Munich settlement and the resulting temporary peace had generated circumstances which made war later on inevitable. For one thing the surrender in Munich sharpened Hitler's appetite for more territorial gains, while at the same time, it made him more confident of his strength and had rallied the

Germans more strongly behind him. His success in Czechoslovakia was a great incentive for him to make further such endeavors.

At the same time the period which lapsed between Munich and the outbreak of war, made war more acceptable, over the issues at hand, to the people of Britain both morally and psychologically. Hence an event similar to that of the Sudetenland was considered by people as a sufficient justification for war.

> ".....it was not the differing shades of justice in Germany's claims upon the Rhineland, Austria, the Sudetenland, Prague, and Danzig which caused men who had swallowed the first of these annexations to be increasingly exasperated by those which followed and take up the arms against the last. It was a changing mood, a growing conviction that all such claims were but pretexts under which Hitler persued no justice or self-determination for Germany but world-conquest, and that, now or never, he must be stopped."[5]

All this means that the sacrifice, the humility and the lapse from honor obligations which were inflicted on the Western democracies in 1938 by a fascist regime did not bring about the expected good results, but, probably, were themselves a cause for further tragedies.

At the end of the Munich Conference Henderson, the British ambassador to Germany wrote to Chamberlain:

> "Millions of mothers will be blessing your name to-night for having saved their sons from the horrors of war. Oceans of ink will flow hereafter in criticism of your action."[6]

Democracy had won in the end. But the price in human lives and misery was great. All because a dictator was not stopped from aggression when the time was ripe for it.

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5 H.R. Trevor Roper, "A.J.P. Taylor, Hitler and the War", under Books and Writers, the Encounter Monthly Magazine, July, 1961, p. 88.

6 Nevile Henderson, Failure of a Mission, (London: Hodder & Stoughton Ltd., 1940), p. 168.

APPENDIX A

THE GERMAN AUSTRIAN AGREEMENT

July 11, 1936

GENTLEMEN'S AGREEMENT

CONFIDENTIAL!

Convinced that the mutually expressed desire for the reestablishment of normal and friendly relations between the German Reich and the Federal State of Austria requires a series of preliminary stipulations on the part of the two Governments, both Governments approve the following Gentlemen's Agreement.

I. REGULATION OF THE TREATMENT OF REICH-GERMANS IN AUSTRIA AND OF AUSTRIAN NATIONALS IN THE REICH.

Associations of their nationals in either country shall not be hindered in their activities so long as they comply with the policies established in their bylaws in conformity with the laws in force and do not interfere in the internal political affairs of the other country, nor, in particular, endeavor to influence citizens of the other State by means of propaganda.

II. MUTUAL CULTURAL RELATIONS.

All factors decisive for the formation of public opinion of both countries shall serve the purpose of reestablishing normal and friendly relations. With the thought that both countries belong within the German cultural orbit, both parties pledge themselves immediately to renounce any aggressive utilization of radio, motion picture, newspaper, and theatrical facilities against the other party. A gradual elimination of presently existing restrictions on (cultural) exchange is envisaged on the basis of absolute reciprocity. As far as the sale of works of authors of either country in the territory of the other country is concerned, all restrictions are to be removed, in sofar as these works are in conformity with the laws of the country of entry.

III. THE PRESS.

Both parties shall influence their respective press to the end that it refrains from exerting any political influence on conditions in the other country and limit its objective criticism of conditions in the other country to an extent not offensive to public opinion in the other country. This obligation also applies to the emigre press in both countries.

The gradual elimination of prohibitions on the importation of newspapers and printed matter of the other party is envisaged by both parties, in relation to the gradual detente in mutual relations aimed at in this Agreement. Newspapers admitted shall, in any criticism of the internal political situation in the other country, adhere particularly strictly to the principle enunciated in paragraph 1.

The Austrian Government declares itself ready to permit, effective immediately, the importation and distribution in Austria of the following newspapers published in Germany:

Berliner Borsen-Zeitung
Berliner Tageblatt
Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung
Leipziger Neueste Nachrichten
Essener National-Zeitung

The German Government declares itself ready to permit, effective immediately, the importation and distribution in Germany of the following newspapers published in Austria:

The Official Wiener Zeitung
Neues Wiener Journal
Volszeitung
Grazer Tagespost
Linzer Tagespost.

IV. EMIGRE PROBLEMS

Both parties agree in their desire to contribute by reciprocal concessions to the speediest possible satisfactory solution of the problem of the Austrian National Socialist exiles in the Reich.

The Austrian Government will proceed to the examination of this problem as soon as possible and will announce the result to a joint commission to be composed of representatives of the competent Ministries so that an agreement may be put into effect.

V. NATIONAL INSIGNIA ANDNATIONAL ANTHEMS.

Each of the two Governments declares that within the scope of existing laws, it will place the nationals of the other party on an equal footing with nationals of third states in regard to the display of the national insignia of their country.

The singing of national anthems shall - in addition to official occasions - be permitted to nationals of the other party at closed meetings attended by these national exclusively.

VI. ECONOMIC RELATIONS.

The Government of the German Reich, putting aside considerations of Party policy, is prepared to open the way for normal economic relations between the German Reich and Austria, and this readiness extends to the reestablishment of routine border crossing (der Kleine Grenzverkehr). Discrimination against persons and areas, if not based upon purely economic considerations, will not be undertaken.

VII. TOURIST TRAFFIC.

The restrictions on tourist traffic imposed by both sides because of the tension which had arisen between the two States shall be lifted. This understanding shall not affect restrictions based on the legislation of both countries for the protection of foreign exchange.

In order to avoid undesirable consequences, the two countries shall reach a provisional understanding concerning the maximum quotas, which shall be increased from time to time; relatives, persons traveling on business, sick persons, and athletes (especially members of the German-Austrian Alpine Association - Deutschosterreichischer Alpenverein-) shall receive preferential treatment as hitherto.

VIII. FOREIGN POLICY.

The Austrian Government declares that it is prepared to conduct its foreign policy in the light of the peaceful endeavors of the German Government's foreign policy. It is agreed that the two Governments will from time to time enter into an exchange of views on the problems of foreign policy affecting both of them. The Rome Protocols of 1934 and the Supplementary Protocols of 1936, as well as the position of Austria with regard to Italy and Hungary as parties to these protocols, are not affected thereby.

IX. AUSTRIAN DECLARATION OF DOMESTIC POLICY IN RELATION TO THIS MODUS VIVENDI.

The Federal Chancellor declares that he is prepared:

a) to grant a far-reaching political amnesty, from which persons who have committed serious public crimes shall be excluded. Also covered by this amnesty shall be persons who have not yet been sentenced by judicial decree or penalized by administrative process. These provisions shall also be duly applied to emigres.

b) for the purpose of promoting a real pacification, to appoint at the appropriate moment, contemplated for the near future, representatives of the so-called "National Opposition in Austria" to participate in political responsibility; they shall be men who enjoy the personal confidence of the Federal Chancellor and whose selection he reserves to himself. It is agreed, in this connection, that persons trusted by the Federal Chancellor shall be charged with the task

of arranging, in accordance with a plan worked out with the Federal Chancellor, for the internal pacification of the National Opposition and for its participation in the shaping of the political will in Austria.

X. PROCEDURE FOR OBJECTIONS AND COMPLAINTS.

For the handling of objections and complaints which may arise in connection with the above Gentlemen's Agreement, as well as in order to guarantee a progressive detente within the framework of the preceding agreements, there shall be established a joint commission composed of three representatives of the Foreign Ministry of each country. Its task shall be to discuss at regular meetings the operation of the Agreement as well as any supplements thereto which may be required.

(Documents on German Foreign Policy, Series D, Vol. I, op.cit., pp. 278-81).

APPENDIX B

FRANCO-CZECHOSLOVAK TREATY OF MUTUAL ASSISTANCE

(October 16, 1925)

(Translation)

The President of the French Republic and the President of the Czechoslovak Republic;

Equally desirous to see Europe spared from war by a sincere observance of the undertakings arrived at this day with a view to the maintenance of general peace;

Have resolved to guarantee their benefits to each other reciprocally by a treaty concluded within the framework of the Covenant of the League of Nations and of the treaties existing between them;

And have to this effect, nominated for their plenipotentiaries:

Who, after having exchanged their full powers, found in good and due form, have agreed on the following provisions:

Article 1

In the event of Czechoslovakia or France suffering from a failure to observe the undertakings arrived at this day between them and Germany with a view to the maintenance of general peace, France, and reciprocally, Czechoslovakia, acting in application of article 16 of the Covenant of the League of Nations, undertake to lend each other immediately aid and assistance, if such a failure is accompanied by an unprovoked recourse to arms.

In the event of the Council of the League of Nations, when dealing with a question brought before it in accordance with the said undertakings, being unable to succeed in making its reports accepted by all its makers other than the representatives of the parties to the dispute, and in the event of Czechoslovakia or France being attacked without provocation, France, or reciprocally Czechoslovakia, acting in application of article 15, paragraph 7, of the Covenant of the League of Nations, will immediately lend aid and assistance.

Article 2

Nothing in the present treaty shall affect the rights and obligations of the high contracting parties as members of the League of Nations, or shall be interpreted as restricting the duty of the League to take whatever action may be deemed wise and effectual to safeguard the peace of the world.

Article 3

The present treaty shall be registered with the League of Nations, in accordance with the Covenant.

Article 4

The present treaty shall be ratified, the ratification will be deposited at Geneva with the League of Nations at the same time the ratification of the treaty concluded this between Germany, Belgium, France, Great Britain and Italy, and the ratification of the treaty concluded at the same time between Germany and Czechoslovakia.

It will enter into force and remain in force under the conditions as the said treaties.

The present treaty done in single copy will be deposited in the archives of the League of Nations, and the Secretary-General of the League will be requested to transmit certified copies to each of the high contracting parties.

Done at Locarno the 16th October 1925.
British White Paper, Cmd. 2525, N.3.
(Taken from Wheeler-Benett, op.cit., p. 441).

APPENDIX C

RUNCIMAN REPORT

(September 21, 1938)

Lord Runciman to the Prime Minister

Westminister S.W.1,
September 21, 1938.

My Dear Prime Minister,

When I undertook the task of mediation in the controversy between the Czechoslovak Government and the Sudeten German party, I was of course, left perfectly free to obtain my own information and to draw my own conclusions. I was under no obligation to issue any kind of report. In present circumstances, however, it may be of assistance to you to have my final views which I have formed as a result of my Mission, and certain suggestions which I believe should be taken into consideration, if anything like a permanent solution is to be found.

The problem of political, social and economic relations between the Teuton and Slav races in the area which is now called Czechoslovakia is one which has existed for many centuries with periods of acute struggle and periods of comparative peace. It is no new problem, and in its present stage there are at the same time new factors and also old factors which would have to be considered in any detailed review.

When I arrived in Prague at the beginning of August, the questions which immediately confronted me were 1) constitutional, 2) political and 3) economic. The constitutional question was that with which I was immediately and directly concerned. At that time it implied the provision of some degree of home rule for the Sudeten Germans within the Czechoslovak Republic; the question of self-determination had not yet arisen in an acute form. My task was to make myself acquainted with the history of the question, with the principle persons concerned, and with the suggestions for a solution proposed by the two sides, viz. by the Sudeten German party in the 'Sketch' submitted to the Czechoslovak Government on the 7th June (which was by way of embodying the 8 points of Herr Henlein's speech at Karlsbad), and the Czechoslovak Government in their draft Nationality Statute, Language Bill, and Administrative Reform Bill.

It became clear that neither of these sets of proposals was sufficiently acceptable to the other side to permit further negotiations on this basis, and the negotiations were suspended on the 17th August. After a series of private discussions between the Sudeten leaders and the Czech authorities, a new basis for negotiations was adopted by the Czech Government and was communicated to me on the 5th September, and to the Sudeten leaders on the 6th September. This was the so-called 4th Plan. In my opinion - and, I believe, in the opinion of the more responsible Sudeten leaders - this plan embodied almost all the requirements of the Karlsbad 8 points and with a little clarification and extension could have been made to cover them in their entirety. Negotiations should have at once been resumed on this favourable and hopeful basis; but little doubt remains in my mind that the very fact that they were so favourable operated against their chances with more extreme members of the Sudeten German party. It is my belief that the incident arising out of the visit of certain Sudeten German Deputies to investigate into the case of persons arrested for arms smuggling at Mahrisch-Ostrau was used in order to provide an excuse for the suspension, if not for the breaking off, of negotiations. The Czech Government, however, at once gave way to the demands of the Sudeten German party in this matter, and preliminary discussions of the 4th Plan were resumed on the 10th September. Again, I am convinced that this did not suit the policy of the Sudeten Extremists, and that incidents were provoked and instigated on the 11th September and, with greater effect after Herr Hitler's speech, on the 12th September. As a result of the bloodshed and disturbance thus caused, the Sudeten delegation refused to meet the Czech authorities as had been arranged on the 13th September. Herr Henlein and Herr Frank presented a new series of demands - withdrawal of state police, limitation of troops to their military duties, etc. which the Czech Government were again prepared to accept on the sole condition that a representative of the party come to Prague to discuss how order should be maintained. On the night of the 13th September this condition was refused by Herr Henlein, and all negotiations were completely broken off.

It is quite clear that we cannot now go back to the point where we stood two weeks ago; and we have to consider the situation as it now faces us.

With the rejection of the Czech Government's offer on the 13th September and with the breaking off of the negotiations by Herr Henlein, my functions as a mediator were, in fact, at an end. Directly and indirectly, the connection between the chief Sudeten leaders and the Government of the Reich had become the dominant factor in the situation; the dispute was no longer an internal one. It was not part of my function to attempt mediation between Czechoslovakia and Germany.

Responsibility for the final break must, in my opinion, rest upon Herr Henlein and Herr Frank and upon those of their supporters inside and outside the country who were urging them to extreme and unconstitutional action.

I have much sympathy, however, with the Sudeten case. It is a hard thing to be ruled by an alien race; and I have been left with the impression that Czech rule in the Sudeten areas for the last twenty years, though not actually oppressive and certainly not "terroristic", has been marked by tactless, lack of understanding, petty intolerance and discrimination, to a point where the resentment of the German population was inevitably moving in the direction of revolt. The Sudeten German felt, too, that in the past they had been given many promises by the Czech Government, but that little or no action had followed these promises. This experience had induced an attitude of unveiled mistrust of the leading Czech statesmen. I cannot say how far this mistrust is merited or unmerited; but it certainly exists, with the result that, however conciliatory their statements, they inspire no confidence in the minds of the Sudeten population. Moreover, in the last elections of 1935 the Sudeten German party polled more votes than any other single party; and they actually formed the second largest party in the State Parliament. They then command some 44 votes in a total Parliament of 300. With subsequent accessions, they are now the largest party. But they can always be outvoted; and consequently some of them feel that constitutional action is useless for them.

Local irritations were added to these major grievances. Czech officials and Czech police, speaking little or no German, were appointed in large numbers to purely German districts; Czech agricultural colonists were encouraged to settle on land transferred under the Land Reform in the middle of German populations; for the children of these Czech invaders Czech schools were built on a large scale; there is very general belief that Czech firms were favoured as against German firms in the allocation of State contracts and that the State provided work and relief for Czechs more readily than for Germans. I believe these complaints to be in the main justified. Even as late as the time of my Mission, I could find no readiness on the part of the Czechoslovak Government to remedy them on anything like an adequate scale.

All these, and other, grievances were intensified by the reactions of the economic crisis on the Sudeten industries, which form so important a part of the life of the people. Not unnaturally, the Government were blamed for the resulting impoverishment.

For many reasons, therefore, including the above, the feeling among the Sudeten Germans until about three or four years ago was one of hopelessness. But the rise of Nazi Germany gave them new hope. I regard their turning for help towards their kinsmen and their eventual desire to join the Reich as a natural development in the circumstances.

At the time of my arrival, the more moderate Sudeten leaders still desired a settlement within the frontiers of the Czechoslovak State. They realised what war would mean in the Sudeten area, which would itself be the main battlefield. Both nationally and internationally such a settlement would have been an easier solution than territorial transfer. I did my best to promote it, and up to a point with some success, but even so not without misgiving as to whether, when agreement was reached, it could ever be carried out without giving rise to a new crop of suspicions, controversies, accusations and counter-accusations. I felt that any such arrangement would have been temporary, not lasting.

This solution, in the form of what is known as the "Forth Plan" broke down in the circumstances narrated above; the whole situation, internal and external, had changed; and I felt that with this change my mission had come to an end.

When I left Prague on the 16th September, the riots and disturbances in the Sudeten areas, which had never been more than sporadic, had died down. A considerable number of districts had been placed under a regime called Standrecht, amounting to martial law. The Sudeten leaders, at any rate the more extreme among them, had fled to Germany and were issuing proclamations defying the Czechoslovak Government. I have credibly informed that, at the time of my leaving, the number killed on both sides was not more than 70.

Unless, therefore, Herr Henlein's Freikorps are deliberately encouraged to cross the frontier, I have no reason to expect any notable renewal of incidents and disturbances. In these circumstances the necessity for the presence of State Police in these districts should no longer exist. As the State Police are extremely unpopular among the German inhabitants, and have constituted one of their chief grievances for the last three years, I consider that they should be withdrawn as soon as possible. I believe that their withdrawal would reduce the causes of wrangles and riots.

Further, it has become self-evident to me that those frontier districts between Czechoslovakia and Germany where the Sudeten population is in an important majority should be given full right of self-determination at once. If some cession is inevitable, as I believe it to be, it is as well that it should be done promptly and without procrastination. There is real danger, even a danger of civil war, in the continuance of a state of uncertainty. Consequently there are very real reasons for a policy of immediate and drastic action. Any kind of plebiscite or referendum would, I believe, be a sheer formality in respect of these predominantly German areas; a very large majority of their inhabitants desire amalgamations with Germany. The inevitable delay involved in taking a plebiscite vote would only

serve to excite popular feelings, with perhpas most dangerous results. I consider, therefore, that these frontier districts would at once be transferred from Czechoslovakia to Germany, and, further, that measures for their peaceful transfer, including the provision of safeguards for the population during the transfer period, should be arranged forthwith by agreement between the two Governments.

The transfer of these frontier districts does not, however, dispose finally of the question how Germans and Czechs are to live together peacefully in future. Even if all the areas where the Germans have a majority were transferred to Germany there would still remain in Czechoslovakia a large number of Germans, and in the areas transferred to Germany there would still be a certain number of Czechs. Economic connexisons are so close that an absolute separation is not only undesirable but inconceivable; and I repeat my conviction that history has proved that in times of peace the two peoples can live together on friendly terms. I believe that it is in the interest of all Czechs and of all Germans alike that these friendly relations should be encouraged to re-establish themselves; and I am convinced that this is the real desire of the average Czech and German. They are alike in being honest, peaceable, hard-working and frugal folk. When political friction has been removed on both sides, I believe that they can settle down quietly.

For those portions of the territory, therefore, where the German majority is not so important, I recommend that an effort be made to find a basis for local autonomy within the frontiers of the Czechoslovak Republic on the lines of the "Fourth Plan", modified so as to meet the new circumstances created by the transfer of the preponderantly German areas. As I have already said, there is always a danger that agreement reached in principle may lead to further divergences in practice. But I think that in a more peaceful future this risk can be diminished.

This brings me to the political side of the problem, which is concerned with the question of the integrity of the Czechoslovak Republic, especially in relation to her immediate neighbours. I believe that here the problem is one of removing a center of intense political friction from the middle of Europe. For this purpose it is necessary permanently to provide that the Czechoslovak State should live at peace with all her neighbours and that her policy, internal and external, should be directed to that end. Just as it is essential for the international position of Switzerland that her policy should be entirely neutral, so an analogous policy is necessary for Czechoslovakia - not only for her own future existence but for the peace of Europe.

In order to achieve this, I recommend:

1. That those parties and persons in Czechoslovakia who have been deliberately encouraging a policy antagonistic to Czechoslovakia's neighbours be forbidden by the Czechoslovak Government to continue their agitations; and that, if necessary, legal measures should be taken to bring such agitation to an end.

2. That the Czechoslovak Government should so remodel her foreign relations as to give assurances to her neighbours that she will in no circumstances attack them or enter into any aggressive action against them arising from obligations to other States.

3. That the principal Powers, acting in the interests of the peace of Europe, should give to Czechoslovakia guarantees of assistance in case of unprovoked aggression against her.

4. That a commercial treaty on preferential terms should be negotiated between Germany and Czechoslovakia if this seems advantageous to the economic interests of the two countries.

This leads me on to the third question which lay within the scope of my enquiry, viz. the economic problem. This problem centres on the distress and unemployment in the Sudeten German areas, a distress which has persisted since 1930, and is due to various causes. It constitutes a suitable background for political discontent. It is a problem which exists; but to say that the Sudeten German question is entirely or even in the main an economic one is misleading. If a transfer of territory takes place, it is a problem which will for the most part fall to the German Government to solve.

If the policy which I have outlined above recommends itself to those immediately concerned in the present situation, I would further suggest: (a) That a representative of the Sudeten German people should have a permanent seat in the Czechoslovak Cabinet. (b) That a Commission under a neutral chairman should be appointed to deal with the delimitation of the area to be transferred to Germany and also with controversial points immediately arising from the carrying out of any agreement which may be reached. (c) That an international force be organized to keep order in the districts which are to be transferred pending actual transfer, so that Czechoslovak State police, as I have said above, and also Czechoslovak troops, may be withdrawn from this area.

I wish to close this letter by recording my appreciation of the personal courtesy, hospitality and assistance which I and my staff received from the Government authorities, especially Dr. Benes and Dr. Hodza, from the representatives of the Sudeten German party with whom we came in contact, and from a very large number of other people in all ranks of life whom we met during our stay in Czechoslovakia.

British White Paper, Cmd. 5847. No. 1 (Ibid., p. 449-455).

APPENDIX D

ANGLO-FRENCH PROPOSALS TO THE CZECHOSLOVAK GOVERNMENT

(September 19, 1938)

The representatives of the French and British Governments have been in consultation to-day on the general situation, and have considered the British Prime Minister's report of his conversation with Herr Hitler. British Ministers also placed before their French colleagues their conclusions derived from the account furnished to them of the work of his Mission by Lord Runciman. We are both convinced that, after recent events, the point has now been reached where the further maintenance within the boundaries of the Czechoslovak State of the districts mainly inhabited by Sudeten Deutsch cannot, in fact, continue any longer without imperilling the interests of Czechoslovakia herself and of European peace. In the light of these considerations, both Governments have been compelled to the conclusion that the maintenance of peace and the safety of Czechoslovakia's vital interests cannot effectively be assured unless these areas are now transferred to the Reich.

2. This could be done either by direct transfer or as the result of a plebiscite. We realise the difficulties involved in a plebiscite, and we are aware of your objections already expressed to this course, particularly the possibility of far-reaching repercussions if the matter were treated on the basis of so wide a principle. For this reason we anticipate, in the absence of indication to the contrary, that you may prefer to deal with the Sudeten Deutsch problem by the method of direct transfer, and as a case by itself.

3. The area for transfer would probably have to include areas with over 50 per cent of German inhabitants, but we should hope to arrange by negotiations provisions for adjustment of frontiers, where circumstances render it necessary, by some international body, including a Czech representative. We are satisfied that the transfer of smaller areas based on a higher percentage would not meet the case.

4. The international body referred to might also be charged with questions of possible exchange of population on the basis of right of opt within some specified time-limit.

5. We recognise that, if the Czechoslovak Government is prepared to concur in the measures proposed, involving material changes in the conditions of the State, they are entitled to ask for some assurance of their future security.

6. Accordingly, His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom would be prepared, as a contribution to the pacification of Europe, to join in an international guarantee of the new boundaries of the Czechoslovak State against unprovoked aggression. One of the principal conditions of such a guarantee would be the safeguarding of the independence of Czechoslovakia by the substitution of a general guarantee against unprovoked aggression in place of existing treaties which involve reciprocal obligations of a military character.

7. Both the French and British Governments recognise how great is the sacrifice thus required of the Czechoslovak Government in the cause of peace. But because that cause is common both to Europe in general and in particular to Czechoslovakia herself they have felt it their duty jointly to set forth frankly the conditions essential to secure it.

8. The Prime Minister must resume conversations with Herr Hitler not later than Wednesday, and earlier if possible. We therefore feel we must ask for your reply at the earliest possible moment.

British White Paper, Cmd. 5847, No. 2 (Ibid., pp.456-457)

APPENDIX E

CZECHOSLOVAK REPLY

(September 20, 1938)

The Czechoslovak Government thank the British and French Governments for the report transmitted, in which they express their opinion on a solution of the present international difficulties concerning Czechoslovakia. Conscious of the responsibility they bear in the interests of Czechoslovakia, her friends and allies, and in the interest of general peace, they express their conviction that the proposals contained in the report are incapable of attaining the aims which the British and French Governments expect from them in their great effort to preserve peace.

These proposals were made without consultation with the representatives of Czechoslovakia. They were negotiated against Czechoslovakia, without hearing her case, though the Czechoslovak Government have pointed out that they cannot take responsibility for a declaration made without their consent. It is hence understandable that the proposals mentioned could not be such as to be acceptable to Czechoslovakia.

The Czechoslovak Government cannot for constitutional reasons take a decision which would affect their frontiers. Such a decision would not be possible without violating the democratic regime and juridicial order of the Czechoslovak State. In any case it would be necessary to consult Parliament.

In the view of the Government, the acceptance of such a proposal would amount to a voluntary and complete mutilation of the State in every respect. Czechoslovakia would be completely paralysed in regard to economics and communications and, from a strategic point of view, her position would become extremely difficult. Sooner or later she would fall under the complete domination of Germany.

Even if Czechoslovakia should make the sacrifices proposed, the question of peace would by no means be solved.

(a) Many Sudeten Germans would, for well-known reasons, prefer to leave the Reich and would settle in the democratic atmosphere of the Czechoslovak State. New difficulties and new nationality conflicts would be the result.

(b) The mutilation of Czechoslovakia would lead to a profound political change in the whole of Central and South-Eastern Europe. The balance of forces in Central Europe and in Europe as a whole would be completely destroyed: it would have the most far-reaching consequences for all other States and especially for France.

(c) The Czechoslovak Government are sincerely grateful to the Great Powers for their intention of guaranteeing the integrity of Czechoslovakia; they appreciate it and value it highly. Such a guarantee would certainly open the way to an agreement between all interested Powers, if the present nationality conflicts were settled amicably and in such a manner as not to impose unacceptable sacrifices on Czechoslovakia.

Czechoslovakia has during recent years given many proofs of her unshakable devotion to peace. At the instance of her friends, the Czechoslovak Government have gone so far in the negotiations about the Sudeten German question that it has been acknowledged with gratitude by the whole world - also a British Government pronouncement stressed that it is necessary not to exceed the bounds of the Czechoslovak Constitution - and even the Sudeten German Party did not reject the last proposals of the Government but publicly expressed its conviction that the intentions of the Government were serious and sincere. In spite of the fact that a revolt has just broken out among a part of the Sudeten population which has been instigated from abroad, the Government have again declared solemnly that they still adhere to the proposals which had met the wishes of the Sudeten German minority. Even to-day they consider this solution as realizable as far as the nationality question of the republic are concerned.

Czechoslovakia has always remained faithful to her treaties and fulfilled her obligations resulting from them, whether in the interests of her friends or the League of Nations and its members or the other nations. She was resolved and is still resolved to fulfil them under any circumstances. If she now resists the possibility of the application of force, she does so on the basis of recent obligations and declarations of her neighbour and also on the basis of the arbitration treaty of October 16, 1925, which the present German Government have recognized as valid in several pronouncements. The Czechoslovak Government emphasize that this treaty can be applied and ask that this should be done. As they respect their signature, they are prepared to accept any sentence of arbitration which might be pronounced. This would limit any conflict. It would make possible a quick honourable solution which would be worthy of all interested States.

Czechoslovakia has been always bound to France by respect and most devoted friendship and an alliance which no Czechoslovak Government and no Czechoslovak will ever violate. She has lived and still

lives in the belief in the great French nation, whose Government have so frequently assured her of the firmness of their friendship; She is bound to Great Britain by traditional friendship and respect with which Czechoslovakia will always be inspired, by the indissoluble co-operation between the two countries and thus also by the common effort for peace, whatever conditions in Europe prevail.

The Czechoslovak Government appreciate that the effort of the British and French Governments have their source in real sympathy. They thank them for it sincerely. Nevertheless, for reasons already stated, they appeal again and for the last time and ask them to reconsider their opinion. They do so in the conviction that they are defending, not only their own interests, but also the interest of their friends, the cause of peace and the cause of healthy development in Europe. At this decisive moment, it is not only a question of the fate of Czechoslovakia, but also the fate of other countries, and especially of France.

Documents on International Affairs (R.I.I.A.), 1938, Vol. 2, pp. 214-16 (Ibid., pp. 458-460).

APPENDIX F

GODESBERG MEMORANDUM

(September 23, 1938)

Reports which are increasing in number from hour to hour regarding incidents in the Sudetenland show that the situation has become completely intolerable for the Sudeten German people and, in consequence, a danger to the peace of Europe. It is therefore essential that the separation of the Sudetenland agreed to by Czechoslovakia should be effected without further delay. On the attached map the Sudeten German area which is to be ceded is shaded red. The areas in which, over and above the areas which are to be occupied, a plebiscite is also to be held are drawn in and shaded green.

The final delimitation of the frontier must correspond to the wishes of those concerned. In order to determine these wishes, a certain period is necessary for the preparation of the voting, during which disturbances must in all circumstances be prevented. A situation of parity must be created. The area designated on the attached map as a German area will be occupied by German troops without taking account as to whether in the plebiscite there may prove to in this or that part of the area a Czech majority. On the other hand, the Czech territory is occupied by Czech troops without regard to the question whether, within this area, there lie large German language islands, the majority of which will without doubt avow their German nationality in the plebiscite.

With a view to bringing about an immediate and final solution of the Sudeten German problem the following proposals are now made by the German Government:

1. Withdrawal of the whole Czech armed forces, the police, the gendarmerie, the customs officials and the frontier guards from the area to be evacuated as designated on the attached map, this area to be handed over to Germany on the 1st October.

2. The evacuated territory is to be handed over in its present condition. The German Government agree that a plenipotentiary representative of the Czech Government or of the Czech Army should be attached to the headquarters of the German military forces to settle the details of the modalities of the evacuation.

3. The Czech Government discharges at once to their homes all Sudeten Germans serving in the military forces or the police anywhere in Czech State territory.

4. The Czech Government liberates all political prisoners of German race.

5. The German Government agrees to permit a plebiscite to take place in those areas, which will be more definitely defined, before at latest the 25th November. Alterations to the new frontier arising out of the plebiscite will be settled by a German-Czech or an international commission. The plebiscite itself will be carried out under the control of an international commission. All persons who were residing in the areas in question on the 28th October, 1918, or were born prior to this date will be eligible to vote. A simple majority of all eligible male and female voters will determine the desire of the population to belong to either the German Reich or to the Czech State. During the plebiscite both parties will withdraw their military forces out of areas which will be defined more precisely. The date and duration will be settled by the German and Czech Governments together.

6. The German Government propose that an authoritative German-Czech commission should be set up to settle all further details.

British White Paper, Cmd. 5847, No. 6 (Ibid., pp. 461-462).

APPENDIX G

BRITISH PLAN FOR OCCUPATION

(September 27, 1938)

1. German troops would occupy the territories of Egerland and Asch outside the Czech line of fortifications on October 1.

2. German and Czech plenipotentiaries would meet a British representative at some town in Sudetenland on October 3. The British representative would have equal voting rights with his German and Czech colleagues.

On the same day an International Boundary Commission, consisting of German, Czech, and British members, would meet.

On the same day, if possible, observers and also, if possible, a British Commission would arrive. Later, four British officers could be added; observers, commission and troops would be under the command of the Boundary Commission. The duty of the meeting of plenipotentiaries would be:

a) To arrange for the immediate withdrawal of Czech troops and State police.
b) To lay down broad lines for the protection of minorities in the ceded territory, and also to safeguard their right to opt and to withdraw their property, similar arrangements being made for the German minority in the new Czechoslovakia.
c) To determine the instructions based on the Anglo-French plan to be given to the International Boundary Commission for the delimitation of the new frontier with the utmost speed.

3. The entry of German troops into the zone in which the plenipotentiaries have indicated that their arrangements are complete. This might be the whole area, but that might not be possible as early as October 10, as the Czech forces might not have been completely withdrawn and there would be a risk of clashes with the incoming German forces. The International Boundary Commission must, however, have delimited the final line by October 31, and the Czech forces and police must have been withdrawn over that line and the German troops must have occupied up to that line by that date at the latest.

4. The meeting of plenipotentiaries will have to consider both agreements should be made for an improvement of the frontier delimited by the Boundary Commission in October, in order better to meet local, geographical, and economic requirements in the various localities. It would be for consideration whether local plebiscites would be necessary or desirable for this purpose.

5. As soon as possible, negotiations to be started between Germany, Great Britain, and Czechoslovakia for the purpose of:

a) agreeing on joint measures for demobilization or withdrawal of troops and
b) revising Czechoslovakia's present treaty relationships and instituting a system jointly guaranteeing the new Czechoslovakia.

(Documents on German Foreign Policy, Series D, Vol. II, op.cit., pp. 987-88).

APPENDIX H

MUNICH AGREEMENT

(September 29, 1938)

Germany, the United Kingdom, France and Italy, taking into consideration the agreement, which has been already reached in principle for the cession to Germany of the Sudeten German territory, have agreed on the following terms and conditions governing the said cession and the measures consequent thereon, and by this agreement they each hold themselves responsible for the steps necessary to secure its fulfilment:

1. The evacuation will begin on the 1st October.

2. The United Kingdom, France and Italy agree that the evacuation of the territory shall be completed by the 10th October, without any existing installations having been destroyed and that the Czechoslovak Government will be held responsible for carrying out the evacuation without damage to the said installations.

3. The conditions governing the evacuation will be laid down in detail by an international commission composed of representatives of Germany, the United Kingdom, France, Italy and Czechoslovakia.

4. The occupation by stages of the predominantly German territory by German troops will begin on the 1st October. The four territories marked on the attached map will be occupied by German troops in the following order: the territory marked No. I on the 1st and 2nd of October, the territory marked No. II on the 2nd and 3rd of October, the territory marked No. III on the 3rd, 4th and 5th of October, the territory of preponderantly German character will be ascertained by the aforesaid international commission forthwith and be occupied by German troops by the 10th of October.

5. The international commission referred to in paragraph 3 will determine the territories in which a plebiscite is to be held. These territories will be occupied by international bodies until the plebiscite has been completed. The same commission will fix the conditions in which the plebiscite is to be held, taking as a basis the conditions of the Saar plebiscite. The commission will also fix a date, not later than the end of November, on which the plebiscite will be held.

6. The final determination of the frontiers will be carried out by the international commission. This commission will also be entitled to recommend to the four Powers, Germany, the United Kingdom, France and Italy, in certain exceptional cases minor modifications in the strictly ethnographical determination of the zones which are to be transferred without plebiscite.

7. There will be a right to option into and out of the transferred territories, the option to be exercised within six months from the date of this agreement. A German-Czechoslovak commission shall determine the details of the option, consider ways of facilitating the transfer of population and settle questions of principle arising out of the said transfer.

8. The Czechoslovak Government will within a period of four weeks from the date of this agreement release from their military and police forces any Sudeten Germans who may wish to be released, and the Czechoslovak Government will within the same period release Sudeten German prisoners who are serving terms of imprisonment for political offences.

British White Paper, Cmd. 5848, No. 4 (taken from Wheeler-Benett, op.cit., p. 465-466).

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