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OF THE MUNICH CRISIS

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PREFACE

My purpose in this study is to show the development
of British historiography of the Munich Crisis of 1938. To
accomplish this, I trace British historians, diplomats,
journalists, and politicians' interpretations of Munich
through successive phases of British history from 1938 to
1965. Emphasis is placed on the forces which have influenced
British writing and speech-making on Munich: personal polit-
ical opinions, Britain's social and political structure,
Britain's world position, and the British traditions of
Munich historiography. I attempt to show that these fac-
tors are different in Britain than in either Europe or Amer-
ica and that British writers' conclusions are largely deter-
mined by such influences. Thus, hopefully I establish the
existence of a unique historiography of Munich in Britain.
The main body of the study is primarily concerned with two
products of this uniqueness; the rise of a revisionary
treatment of the origins of the Second World War, and the
tendency to see Munich as an historical model for present
policy.

I first became interested in the British writing
on Munich in 1963. At that time I did a Master's thesis

on British foreign policy in the spring of 1938, and part of the background research included a review of the better known British works on Munich. Several things struck my attention. I found that British policy-makers in 1938 did not believe Czechoslovakia important to British security. Also, they seemed more impressed with the Sudeten Germans' right to self-determination than with Czech claims to democratic solidarity. The point of view of most later British writers seemed exactly the opposite, and I was interested to find out why Britons frequently ignored or seemed unaware of the difference betweeen their own values and those of 1938. Further, I was curious to know why British historians, whom I then considered models of detachment, were still so emotional about Munich. These motives provided the original impetus to study British historiography as a dissertation topic.

As my research progressed in 1964-65, American involvement in Viet Nam intensified, and the Johnson Administration increasingly justified its policy by historical analogies between the present situation in Southeast Asia and Europe at the time of Munich. I had finished my own military service and was too involved with graduate school to have strong feelings about the Government's course of action. I was, however, interested to discover how American leaders had become so sure of the validity of parallels which seemed dubious to me. Also, I knew that British leaders on an earlier occasion, during the Suez Crisis of

1956, had had a similar preoccupation. The answer in both cases, I suspected, lay in British writing on Munich, if for no other reason than the sheer volume of British writing on the subject, which was greater than that of any other nation.

I was able to satisfy my own curiosity on these matters, and I hope that I have been able to communicate my findings with clarity. In my attempt to do so, I have had the invaluable direction of Dr. William H. Maehl, Jr. Dr. Maehl gave me kindness, helpful criticism, and encouragement at every step in the research and writing of this dissertation.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

British and American statesmen have at various times
since 1945 accepted Munich as an historical model for present
policy, and they have made foreign policy decisions on the
basis of the supposed lessons of Munich. In the years after
the end of the Second World War, British and American lead-
ers determined Western policy towards Soviet Russia partly
on the basis of the apparent parallels between Nazi and Soviet
actions. Such analogical thinking also influenced British
policy in the Middle East in the late 1950's. The present
United States Government justifies American intervention in
Viet Nam on similar grounds. The common element is aggres-
sion, Secretary of State Dean Rusk has said.[1] Critics of
the policies so based have rejected the validity of such
analogies. Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., has emphasized the

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[1]Rusk in Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., "On the Inscruta-
bility of History," Encounter, XXVII (November, 1966), 14.

dissimilarities between Europe in 1938 and Southeast Asia
in 1967.[2] A. J. P. Taylor once called the seeming resem-
blance of Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia "twaddling scraps
of history."[3]

Yet, the reference to even remote parallels seems
an inevitable part of twentieth century decision-making.
British and American statesmen have repeatedly faced terri-
fying situations for which their personal experience was no
guide. Consequently, they have looked to history for direc-
tion in making the unfamiliar somehow familiar. Munich is
only the latest historical guide. In 1938 at least one
politician and historian judged Munich in terms of his view
of the origins of World War I.[4]

Munich has acquired special significance as such an
analogue. A British magazine in 1958 complained that British
statesmen had a "Munich complex."[5] The same charge could
be made against American political leaders even before Viet
Nam. In 1955 Vice-President Nixon ordered that officials
not bring umbrellas to the airport when President Eisenhower
returned from the Geneva Conference. The day was rainy, but

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[2]*Ibid.*, 13-4.

[3]A. J. P. Taylor, "Munich Ten Years After," *New
Statesman*, XXXVI (October 2, 1948), 279.

[4]Great Britian, 5 *Parliamentary Debates* (Commons),
CCCXXXIX (1937-38), 31. Referred to hereafter as *Parl. Deb.*

[5](anon.), "The Fallacy of Slogans," *Spectator*, CCI
(October 3, 1958), 424.

Nixon did not want anyone to be reminded of the umbrella-
carrying Neville Chamberlain coming back from Munich.[6]
This concern with Munich is not the result of the Agreement's
continued importance. The Treaty was signed nearly thirty
years ago, on September 30, 1938. Since then we have had
World War II and the Cold War. The Great Powers who signed
the Treaty--Britain, France, Germany, and Italy--are great
no more. The Treaty terms, the cession of Czechoslovakia's
German-speaking border districts to Nazi Germany, were thrown
over in 1945.

Rather, the preoccupation rests on a sequence of
conclusions about Munich. Historians have looked at Munich
solely in terms of its common characteristic with their own
experience. They have seen Munich as the confrontation of
democracies with totalitarian dictatorships. In effect they
have seen Munich as the first event of the modern age. They
have concluded that on this occasion Western leaders had a
choice of policies and that World War II came from the wrong
decision. From these conclusions about Munich, historians
and politicians have reasoned that all concessions to dic-
tators are surrenders, which they have called "appeasement."
Appeasement always whets the appetites of dictators. Thus
appeasement always makes wars. These generalizations have

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[6]Keith Eubank, _Munich_ (Norman: University of Okla-
homa Press, 1963), 298.

been persuasive. They have created for many Britons and
Americans a new way of looking at the world.

The responsibility for such analogical thinking be-
longs to British writers. During the years 1945-8 a small
group of British Conservative politicians and historians
pointed to the parallels between Munich and the present in
support of Western resistance to the Soviet Union. Their
action involved a choice. These men disliked Munich. They
believed that Britain should have resisted Germany in 1938
and that she had the strength to do so successfully. Part
of their belief rested on confidence in the Soviet Union as
a 1938 ally. However, in 1945-8 the Soviets seemed to aim
at conquering the West. In this light some American histor-
ians began to question Soviet sincerity in the Munich crisis.
They wrote that perhaps British leaders had been right to
mistrust Russia and conciliate Germany in 1938. The British
Conservatives, all former critics of the 1938 British Govern-
ment, wanted to resist Russia. At the same time they did
not want to admit that they had been wrong about Munich.
They resolved their dilemma by keeping their old opinions
about Munich and generalizing from them about the present.
Their decision was paradoxical in two ways. The Conserva-
tive critics offered a legend about Munich as a guide for
British action against the Soviets, but one element of the
legend was an earlier Soviet fidelity to Britain. Further,
the Conservatives' analogies influenced Western Cold War
policy, but apparently they wrote of analogies because

Munich was more important to them than the Cold War.

The rather odd British choice in 1945-8 was the product of the distinctive conditions of British historiography of Munich. Unlike that of any other country, British national debate of the event has always had a highly emotional quality involving large numbers of people outside the academic community. This is because Britons have considered Munich the most controversial and the most important event in recent British history. In contrast, although the French have not agreed on Munich, Frenchmen have mainly argued about the debacle of 1940. For Germans Munich has been only one part of a larger question of Nazism. Most Americans have accepted the British critical interpretation of Munich. Those who have disagreed have not been emotional about it. Russian and Czech historians have been emotional about Munich. However, Russians and Czechs do not publicly engage in controversy about even less recent affairs of state.[7]

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[7]Samuel M. Osgood (ed.), The Fall of France, 1940: Causes and Responsibilities in Problems in European Civilization, Ralph W. Greenlaw and Dwight E. Lee (ed.) (Boston: D.C. Heath, 1965), 10-24, 30-42, 47-57, 61-77; John L. Snell (ed.), The Outbreak of the Second World War: Design or Blunder? in Problems in European Civilization, Ralph W. Greenlaw and Dwight E. Lee (ed.) (Boston: D. C. Heath, 1962), 1-45, 62-75; Snell (ed.), The Nazi Revolution: Germany's Guilt or Germany's Fate? in Problems in European Civilization, Ralph W. Greenlaw and Dwight E. Lee (ed.) (Boston: D. C. Heath, 1959), 35-7, 46-62, 73-84; Robert L. G. Waite (ed.), Hitler and Nazi Germany in European Problems Studies, Henry Bertram Hill (ed.) (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1965), 38-41, 46-51, 65-75, 84-92.

The peculiar English social and political structure
explains why it has been possible for Munich to be a subject
of national debate. In Britain the schooling of academicians,
diplomats, higher ranking journalists, and politicians is
frequently the same. Most attend public schools and then
one of the two older universities. Also men in the four
fields tend to be more socially homogenous than in other
countries. Most are drawn from the upper-middle class. The
similarity of education and social background has several
effects. Men from different professions read the same qual-
ity periodicals, newspapers, and books more than is probably
true in the United States. Further, translation from one
occupation to another is relatively easy. Diplomats like
Harold Nicolson have gone into both politics and letters.
University teachers such as R. H. S. Crossman have gone into
politics. Similarly, Oxbridge-trained Britons have frequent-
ly had an avocational interest or skill in a field other than
their own. Professors have engaged in political journalism.
British politicians have generally shown a greater literary
flair than have American politicians, who are generally law-
yers. The late Sir Winston Churchill was only one example.
As a result of these qualities of British social and politi-
cal life, when an issue gains sufficient public interest,
articulate diplomats, journalists, and professors as well
as politicians can usually iind influential audiences for
their printed thoughts on a subject. Thus, they can also
reasonably hope that their opinions will change policies.

Throughout the years Munich has strongly engaged the thoughts and emotions of such men. It has done so because of an interaction between British historical experience and the traditions of British historiography of Munich. Britons have seen their history from 1938 to the 1960's as a succession of defeats and Pyrrhic victories culminating in national decline. "The main fact governing English life...is the loss of power,"[8] Anthony Hartley has written. Many educated Britons have been unhappy with this loss of grandeur. They have been unable to find any satisfactory new economic and political role either for themselves or the nation. They have been emotional about Munich because British writers since 1938 have connected each stage of Britain's decline with the Agreement. This connection has kept Munich almost a current event. It has also kept Munich historiography from ever becoming a discussion among historians. Journalists, diplomats, politicians, and others have continued to write about the Agreement. The large number of highly emotional commentators has given the Munich writing in Britain characteristics which it might not otherwise have had. Writers have never been content simply to reconstruct the decision-making process. They have made value judgments about the decisions in the light of subsequent events, and

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[8]Anthony Hartley, A State of England (New York: Harcourt Brace and World, 1963), 58.

they have described with some heat desirable alternative courses of action. For years such retrospective conclusions suggested current policies. In the years 1939 to 1945 various critics of Munich demanded that the large number of Cabinet ministers identified with the Agreement be barred from public office. The "Men of Munich," as the critics called them, rejected this demand.[9] Since 1945 they have shown an understandable reluctance to take all the blame for all of Britain's reverses. Their protestations have made Munich historiography in Britain what it is not in other countries--a continuing national debate.

The debate on Munich up to the time of the creation of the Munich Legend divided into six stages. The first stage lasted from the signing of Munich till the end of the special House of Commons debate in early October 1938. During this brief time Munich was tremendously popular in Britain. Most people apparently accepted unqualifiedly the Government's three basic reasons for the admitted capitulation: (1) morality was on Germany's side; (2) Germany was a permanent European problem; and (3) modern war was too horrible to try solving the German problem temporarily by fighting. Both Labourite and Conservative critics were more impressed by different parts of these arguments than they liked afterwards to remember.

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[9] A. L. Rowse, "End of an Epoch," Political Quarterly, XI (July, 1940), 248-60.

The jubilation over Munich died out quickly in later October and November. German actions compromised the moral aspect of Munich. It also seemed that Hitler might use his new power and prestige in Eastern Europe to limit British freedom of speech. The small group of Conservative critics gained a large audience in British periodicals. Many other writers came to accept their view that the morality of Munich was a sham and that the Chamberlain Government had endangered British security. During this time large numbers of writers began an important tradition. They declared Munich solely responsible for a great downward turning point in British history.

The writers in periodicals saw Munich as such a tremendous blow to British power that the nation could probably do nothing to reverse German hegemony, whatever sinister form it might take. Thus, when it began to appear by December that German expansion was going to be peaceful and mainly economic, Britons of all political beliefs apparently stopped talking about Munich much. At this same time, however, from December to the following March a small number of ardently pro-Czech writers were preparing books which would have an immense future impact on Munich historiography. These writers continued the nascent custom of regarding Munich as the cause of many ills. More important, they stated dogmatically that Munich was both wrong and unnecessary. Germany was weak. Czechoslovakia was strong and entitled to the same decent treatment as any other democratic sovereign state. These

views were atypical of British opinion of the period. German power had frightened most Britons, and the Czech cause had shared the opprobium of the Versailles Treaty which most Britons had assumed to be the creator of Czechoslovakia. But the pro-Czech writers' opinions were to be the ones read by the researchers of the many wartime polemics against Munich. Thus, the pro-Czech works would perpetuate the retrospective fantasy that most Britons had favored resistance to Germany in 1938.

In the months from the German occupation of Prague on March 15, 1939 till the declaration of war on September 3, 1939, the British Government began hesitantly to resist Nazi Germany. During this time, a few writers disliked the Government's conduct of the new course. They continued the history of attributing set-backs to Munich, and they insisted that the British Government had thrown away the best conditions for opposing Germany at Munich. But apparently most Britons were confident that the Government would be able to stop Hitler's aggression merely by threatening him with war. Those who wrote about Munich in this mood showed an unwonted tolerance for the British Government's actions.

This tolerance ended abruptly with the war. The war began badly. Britain entered it without a Russian alliance, and some blamed Munich for this. The Poles, whom many considered in retrospect a much more unsatisfactory ally than the Czechs would have been, were quickly beaten. The Western

Front settled down to the nine months of the "Phoney War."
This was a dismal time in Britain. There was discomfort
without idealism. The Government seemed only to be waiting
for the chance of a negotiated settlement with Germany.
During this period, critics of the Chamberlain Government
increasingly saw the origins of the present difficulties in
the Government's Munich policy. If the Government had acted
correctly in 1938, critics claimed, Britain, France, Czecho-
slovakia, and Soviet Russia would have given Hitler the
crushing defeat which his actions merited and which was now
impossible. This by now traditional view of Munich continued
after the defeat at Dunkirk. Then large sections of the
British public were openly furious with Chamberlain and his
followers. Yet, the Chamberlainites clung to important
offices. It even seemed to some that the new Prime Minister
Churchill might simply be a front for continued Chamberlainite
domination. Men of all parties demanded the purge of the
Chamberlainites from office. They did so as much for Munich
as for Dunkirk, for the critics continued to ascribe the pres-
ent difficulties to Munich. Chance played a part in the
continuation of this intellectual habit. Many of the German
tanks in France came from the Skoda Works of Czechoslovakia.
Probably more important was the tenure of the Chamberlainites
in office from 1938-40. Britain suffered many defeats in
this time. It was human for critics to see a cause and
effect relationship between Munich and the Prime Minister's
later failures.

After 1940, pamphleteers in both parties made Munich
a partisan political issue. Even though the most bitter 1938
critic of Munich now led the Conservative Party, Labour pam-
phleteers branded the whole Conservative Party as the party
of Munich. Their efforts increased as military victory and
the resumption of normal party conflict came closer. Labour's
reason for first emphasizing Munich and other prewar topics
as possible postwar election issues probably lay in their
anxiety that the Conservatives were exploiting the wartime
Coalition for future electoral benefit. Also, Collective
Cabinet responsibility for Coalition decisions made it impos-
sible to use wartime questions as issues. The Labourite worth
was disingenuous. The pamphleteers ignored the extent to
which Labour had been influenced in 1938 by the Conserva-
tives' arguments for revisionism.

Their writing also showed how in the perspective of
wartime the 1938 reasons for conciliating Germany probably
seemed incomprehensible. Germany was no longer the victim
of Versailles. She was now a barbaric conqueror. Czecho-
slovakia was no longer a "far away country" which the New
Statesman did not think worth a war.[10] She was contributing
a gallant army-in-exile, and it was widely known that in
1938 the Czechs had been strong in the weapon the allies

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[10](anon.), "Comments," New Statesman, XVI (August
27, 1938), 301-2.

seemed so conspicuously to lack in 1940--tanks. The Soviets,
whose sincerity and strength British leaders had doubted in
1938, proved the most successful of all the Allied armies
in fighting Germany. Churchill, who had had almost no fol-
lowers in his 1938 denunciation of Munich, had become the
venerated wartime leader. Finally, in the light of Dunkirk,
it was apparently difficult for many Britons to believe that
Britain could possibly have fought on worse possible terms
than in 1939-40. The factors which had made Munich seem
desirable now belonged to a different world.

After 1945, British writers continued to be influenced
by the wartime perspective. In the years 1945-8 the Conser-
vative critics shared many of the wartime Labourite views
even though they resented the Labourite intellectuals' attempt
to make Munich an election issue. Their connection of the
Agreement with subsequent disasters kept them bitter about
the Agreement and its apparent cost. They described Munich
as "a cynical act of cold-blooded butchery" and as "the
agreement reached by friends holding down the victim for
the executioner."[11] The defection of the Soviet Union from
the wartime alliance was not enough to change these feelings.
The Conservative critics wrote of Munich as a time of choice,
when the wrong decision brought later defeats. As a conces-
sion to the times, they generalized from these conclusions

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[11]Duff Cooper, Viscount Norwich, "A Cynical Act of
Cold-blooded Butchery," Listener, XL (November 18, 1948),
757; Sir Robert Vansittart Lord Vansittart, "A Morally Inde-
fensible Argument," Listener, XL (November 4, 1948), 675.

and wrote that concessions to any dictators, especially the
Soviets, were wrong. Other writers accepted the Conserva-
tive critics' conclusions and their analogies. Also, some
of them grasped what the Conservative critics apparently
failed to understand. Britain's power was permanently re-
duced. Following established tradition, they related the
decline to Munich. The "men of Munich," A. L. Rowse wrote
in 1960, "ruined their country." "The real decisions," he
went on, "are made elsewhere."[12] Thus the widely noted
dissatisfaction with Britain's straitened postwar circum-
stances was translated into dissatisfaction with Munich.

Despite the barrage of criticism, Munich has always
had defenders. These men have at different times produced
quite different justifications of Munich. In the House of
Commons debate just after Munich, defenders of the Agree-
ment pointed out the justice of Germany's claims in Czecho-
lovakia, the permanence of the German problem, and the horror
of modern war. In October and November 1938 supporters of
Chamberlain admitted that Hitler had much more extensive
ambitions than uniting all Germans in the Reich. But Germany,
they emphasized, had no claims against Britain, which was,
in any event, not really a European power. After the deter-
ioration in Anglo-German relations following Prague and until
the declaration of war, Munich apologists for the most part

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[12]A. L. Rowse, _All Souls and Appeasement_ (London:
Macmillan, 1961), 56, 87-8, 4.

maintained that British unpreparedness dictated Munich. In the years from Dunkirk until the 1945 General Election, Conservative pamphleteers made the same defense, and this remained the apologetic explanation of Munich after 1945.

After the Conservative critics' presentation of Munich as an historical model, a new voice was added to the defenders of Munich. This was the historian A. J. P. Taylor. Taylor disliked the Munich Legend's call for resistance to the Soviet Union. Consequently, from 1948 onwards, he began to look critically at his own conclusions about Munich, which had been the same as those from which the Conservative critics made their generalizations. The culmination of Taylor's reexamination was his 1961 work, The Origins of the Second World War.[13] In this book, Taylor presented an interpretation of Munich which was a revision of both postwar criticisms and defenses. Taylor's most startling point was his revised picture of Hitler. Taylor presented the German dictator as a shrewd diplomatist who used brilliantly timed complaints of mistreatment to secure immediate success, both for its own sake and for German domination in Eastern Europe. In contrast, the Conservative critics had used the postwar document publications to portray Hitler as a mad arch-criminal with a blue-print for world conquest, and the defenders of Munich had agreed with them. Hitler, Taylor

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[13]A. J. P. Taylor, The Origins of the Second World War (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1961).

continued, had no time table for Czechoslovakia and no real
intention of fighting her--the war of nerves was the only
war he liked fighting. Therefore, Taylor reasoned, Chamber-
lain's misdirected zeal was responsible for Munich. Cham-
berlain hurried the French and the Czechs along to Munich
in order to prevent a German invasion which Hitler never
intended to start. Also whereas critics stressed Chamber-
lain's ignorance and insularity, Taylor emphasized that
the thinking of 1938 judged Chamberlain's action as morally
right. Munich, Taylor wrote in subsequently famous passage,
"was a triumph for all that is best in British life."[14]

In the uproar that followed the appearance of Taylor's
"astonishing and deplorable reconstruction,"[15] most of the
almost unanimously critical reviewers failed to notice the
similarity between Taylor's 1961 views and those of three
earlier writers. In 1939-40, during the wartime months
remembered as the "Phoney War," E. H. Carr, Nevile Henderson,
and W. N. Medlicott described Munich in much the same terms
as Taylor. They saw no German plan for world dominance, and
they insisted, as did Taylor, that Hitler had no aggressive
intentions toward Britain. Rather, mutual misunderstandings
and accidents brought Munich. The attitudes created by
Munich in both Britain and Germany brought war. In effect

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[14]Ibid., 189.

[15]Times Literary Supplement, May 21, 1961, 325.

Carr, Henderson, and Medlicott presented a picture of war
origins to complement their goal of a negotiated settlement
of the war. Critics of Taylor did not recognize that in
many ways Taylor stood in the same relation to Carr, Hander-
son, and Medlicott as had the revisionist historians of the
interwar years to the wartime Union of Democratic Control
pamphleteers. Like the earlier revisionists, Taylor was
dissatisfied with the course of postwar foreign policy, and
took up the views of a wartime dissenting minority in order
to get the policy changed.

However, the parallel was imperfect. Taylor's critics
still felt too strongly about the war and Britain's decline,
both of which they connected with Munich, to agree with
Taylor's conclusions. Thus, Taylor was unable to gain for
Carr, Henderson, and Medlicott the same belated acceptance
that the revisionists won for the U. D. C. pamphleteers.
Even Medlicott criticized Taylor's presentation of his own
earlier views. Also, Taylor himself felt too strongly about
the war and Britain's decline to follow the Phoney War
writers consistently. He did describe Munich as a moral
"triumph."[16] At the same time he also wrote that the Brit-
ish pressure on President Benes of Czechoslovakia was a
"demand that Benes commit suicide in order to secure /British
and French7 peace of minds."[17]

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[16]Taylor, _Origins_, 189.

[17]_Ibid._, 161.

Both the critics' reaction to Taylor's work and Taylor's own ambivalent attitude towards Munich suggest that the emotional British debate on Munich will continue. It may well go on until the British find a new, more satisfactory world role for themselves. Then perhaps Britons will be able to look back on their last decisions as a Great Power without anger and without regret.

CHAPTER II

MUNICH TO WAR. THE FIRST PHASE:

THE HOUSE OF COMMONS DEBATE

Munich to War

The period from Munich to the beginning of World
War II, from September 30, 1938 to September 3, 1939, forms
perhaps the most important single twelve months in British
history. During this time the British Government and people
debated among themselves the proper British action towards
the extension of German territory and influence taking place
on the continent of Europe. German expansion, it was fin-
ally decided, was criminal aggression and a threat to Bri-
tain. As a result the British chose to declare war on Ger-
many after that country's attack on Poland. Thus, they
transformed a regional conflict into a general European war
and finally a world war. The world war greatly changed the
British position in world affairs. Afterwards, the nation
which had claimed the status of a first class world power
since the reign of Elizabeth I found herself impoverished
by her efforts of wartime and dwarfed in size by the United
States and the Soviet Union. The freedom of choice and
debate in foreign policy, so vigorously exercised in 1938-9
seemed permanently reduced.

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British historians have generally divided the year into two parts: from the Munich Agreement to the German occupation of Prague on March 15, 1939; and from Prague to the declaration of war. They have made this division according to the two stages of British foreign policy in 1938-9 and also, more generally, the tenor of British political life: debate on appeasement of Germany until Prague; agreement on resistance to Germany afterwards.

The first of these stages has received somewhat more attention. Eight then Members of Parliament subsequently wrote memoirs of the special House of Commons debate of October 3-6, 1938.[1] A number of British historians have examined in some detail the speeches, writings, and events of these six months.[2] Most of the writers--both during and since

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[1]Leo Amery, My Political Life; Vol III: The Unforgiving Years, 1929-40 (London: Hutchinson, 1955), 283-8; Cooper, Old Men Forget (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1954), 243-57; Winston Churchill, The Second World War; Vol. I: The Gathering Storm (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1948) 324-39; Hugh Dalton, Memoirs; Vol. II: The Fateful Years, Memoirs, 1931-45 (London: Frederick Mueller 1957), 198-203; Sir Anthony Eden, Earl of Avon, The Reckoning (London: Cassell, 1965), 31-42;Sir Samuel Hoare Viscount Templewood Nine Troubled Years (London: Collins, 1954), 285-326; Harold Nicolson, "The Commons and the 1938 Crisis," The Listener, XL (November 25, 1948), 795-6; Viscount Simon (formerly Sir John Simon), Retrospect (London: Hutchinson, 1952), 247-50.

[2]See especially Sir John Wheeler-Bennett, Munich: Prologue to Tragedy (London: Macmillan, 1948), 182-202, 293-330; Martin Gilbert and Richard Gott, The Apeasers (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 177-212. Probably the most single detailed study of British newspapers and periodicals is by an American, William R. Rock, Appeasement on Trial, British Foreign Policy and Its Critics, 1938-1939 (Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Press, 1966), 137-202.

World War II--have looked at the time in terms of its common
element with their own experience, the confrontation between
democracy and totalitarian dictatorships. They have mainly
disliked the appeasement of dictators and have found the
1938-9 arguments in its favor incomprehensible. Thus, they
have tended to depict the October-March period as a furious,
uninterrupted debate between opponents of appeasement--elo-
quently led by Winston Churchill--and the deluded supporters
of the Prime Minister, Neville Chamberlain. They have stressed
the former's remarks on Hitler's ambitions, the bestiality of
Nazism, and the strategic disadvantage caused by the loss of
the Czech ally. In effect, they have credited Chamberlain's
1938 critics with the gift of prophecy. Conversely, they
have treated the Chamberlainites' arguments as rationaliza-
tions of cowardice or--at best--dubious expediency.

After Prague, although the actions of the British
leadership continue to be a matter of dispute, historians
have almost unanimously agreed that the British people de-
termined at this time to resist Hitler--even at the cost of
war.[3]

Munich was one point of argument in the year-long
British preoccupation with foreign policy, and, in terms
of the Munich debate, discussion falls into four rather than
two phases: The House of Commons debate of early October
1938; the writing in periodicals during the rest of October

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[3]Wheeler-Bennett, 349-428; Gilbert and Gott, 223-
300; Rock, 203-320.

and all of November 1938; the books prepared by pro-Czech
journalists and historians from December to the next March;
and the renewed interest in Munich from Prague to the coming
of the war. The British attitude towards Munich in each of
these phases has distinctive elements. All the writing has
made an important contribution to the traditions of the
voluminous British historical writing on Munich.

In the first phase, in the House of Commons debate,
the Prime Minister's Munich achievement was wildly popular.
One competent, critical observer later estimated that ninety
per cent of the British people initially approved of the
Agreement.[4] Most of them were won over by the National Gov-
ernment's insistence that war had been the only alternative
to Munich. Apparently, they also accepted the three Govern-
ment explanations for Britain's not going to war or even
threatening to go to war with Germany over Czechoslovakia:
the morality of Germany's revisionist claims, the perma-
nence of the German problem, and the horror of modern war.
It is difficult to determine the popular response to the
Chamberlainites' further request that the British people
trust Hitler not to abuse the power given him in Eastern
Europe at Munich. Most subsequent historians, writing in
the light of World War II, have been contemptuous of the
Chamberlainite arguments. They have concentrated on the

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[4]R. H. Bruce Lockhart, "September Crisis and After,"
The Listener, XL (October 28, 1948), 636.

admonitions of the small number of Labour, Liberal, and Con-
servative critics about Hitler's ambitions and the dangers
of losing Czechoslovakia. The Parliamentary critics' insis-
tence that Chamberlain should have threatened Hitler with
war in the Czech Crisis is, historians have implied, evidence
of contemporary knowledge of what has often seemed the right
policy in retrospect. For the most part historians have not
mentioned that the Chamberlainite arguments, far from being
discreditable, impressed the Parliamentary critics. Labour-
ites and Liberals hated Nazi aggression, but they also ac-
cepted German claims for self-determination for the Sudeten
Germans of Czechoslovakia. Conservative critics called for
threatening Hitler with war to prevent Munich. But they
frequently and somewhat inconsistently combined their stand
with an awareness of the limiting effect of British arms
weakness on foreign policy actions.

In the second phase, which lasted through the rest
of October and all of November, the House critics' opinion
that Hitler's actions in the Munich Crisis proved him untrust-
worthy seemed justified. Hitler's speeches in this time
suggested that he might use his new strength to limit Brit-
ish liberties. Also, German actions on the commission
drawing a new Czech-German frontier undermined the moral
basis of Munich. The anti-Semitic pogroms in Germany inten-
sified British hatred of Nazism. In view of these circumstances,

and with the memory of gratitude to Chamberlain as a peace-
maker apparently dimming, the attitude of the House of
Commons critics gained a much wider popular acceptance.
Dislike of Munich also became much more unequivocal because
self-determination had lost so much of its force. Authors
in periodicals wrote bitterly in retrospect of Chamberlain's
handling of the Crisis. Also, they continued the Commons
tendency to describe Munich as a great downward turning
point in British history, for the periodical writers agreed
that little could be done to reverse the bad effect of Munich.
Supporters of the Prime Minister recognized the new public
temper. They reiterated, though now in defensive tones, the
morality of Munich. But they also admitted that Hitler wanted
much more than a union of German speaking peoples in the Reich.
They justified their admission by claiming that Hitler did
not want to conquer Britain and that Britain was not a Euro-
pean power.

Public speculation on Munich stopped in December.
The prospect that Germany would expand economically and the
absence of new territorial crises apparently made most Bri-
tons believe that, for better or worse, Munich would be the
basis for a permanent and peaceful European settlement. How-
ever, at the same time, other Britons with close personal
ties to Czechoslovakia were preparing books which would state
more uncompromisingly than any Commons or magazine critic
that Munich was both wrong and unnecessary. It had already

brought disasters to Britain and would bring still others.
In the works of the Czechophils, which were to be the main
source for many future writers on Munich, and in the writ-
ings and speeches of the Commons and magazine critics an
idea was appearing in nascent form: Munich alone caused
Britain's decline and a different British Government could
have avoided Munich. This notion was to be the assumption
behind much future British critical writing on Munich. It
was to be the source of the intense emotionalism which re-
mains today one of the two important traditions of British
writing on the Agreement.

However, concern with Britain's decline was not the
dominant theme, when the public discussion of Munich revived
after Prague and the revolution in British diplomacy which
soon followed. Some critics were quick to point out that
Prague proved the bankruptcy of Chamberlain's Munich policy.
They related such failures of the new course as the lack of
success in getting an alliance with the Soviet Union back to
Munich. Supporters of the National Government refuted such
charges by presenting a new explanation for the September
capitulation to Hitler. They now explicity justified it by
British unpreparedness. Not many such defenses were neces-
sary. Apparently, most critics of Munich now came to support
the Prime Minister and were confident of the success of his
new policy in bluffing Hitler. Those who still wrote about
Munich in this mood left off recriminations about the past.

Instead, they showed in retrospect an unwonted tolerance of Chamberlain's Czech policy. This tolerance would not long survive the frustrations of the Phoney War.

The House of Commons Debate: October 3-6, 1938

The first extensive British discussion of Munich came when the House of Commons met in one of the most dramatic sittings in its history on October 3, 1938.[5] Parliament had not originally been scheduled to meet again until November. A special session was called, however, to debate a motion of confidence in the National Government's foreign policy in the Munich Crisis. The recently concluded events of that Crisis made the meeting dramatic. The episode had begun with a speech by Hitler on September 12 at the Nazi Party Rally in Nuremberg. In the speech Hitler had demanded "self-determination" for the Sudeten Germans of Czechoslovakia.[6] His tone had convinced Western statesmen that the alternative to immediate concessions was war. The Munich Agreement, an Anglo-French-German-Italian treaty ceding the Sudetenland to Germany and thus ending the Crisis, had only been signed in the early hours of September 30 after the Prime Minister's third flight to Germany in a period of

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[5]Parl. Deb., CCCXXXIX (1937-38), 25-552.

[6]Adolph Hitler, The Speeches of Adolph Hitler, April 1922-August 1939, II, Norman H. Baines, ed. and trans., (London: Oxford University Press, 1942), 1487-99.

a little over two weeks, actions then unprecedented in diplomacy.[7]

In the days from September 12 until Chamberlain's final Munich effort to conciliate Hitler, Britons had lived under the threat of imminent European war. The Fleet had mobilized. The Home Office had issued 38,000,000 gas masks.[8] Many had seen the slit trenches dug for air raid protection in Hyde Park or watched the handling of London's forty-four anti-aircraft guns.[9] Rumours had been heard that Hitler had gone mad, had actually chewed the carpet in a seizure after meeting Chamberlain at Godesberg;[10] or that the German generals would overthrow Hitler if only Britain would stand firm.[11] Apparently one of the most frequently heard rumours had concerned Charles Lindbergh, the American aviator then visiting Britain. The German Luftwaffe, Lindbergh

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[7]The text of the Agreement with a copy of the official appended map of ceded territory is found Wheeler-Bennett, 465-67.

[8]Taylor, English History, 1914-1945; Vol. XV of The Oxford History of England, ed. Sir George Clark (London: Oxford University Press, 1936-65). 427.

[9]Ibid.

[10]William L. Shirer, Berlin Diary, The Journal of a Foreign Correspondent, 1934-41 (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1942), 110.

[11]Thomas Jones to Gwendolyn Davies, September 29, 1938, Thomas Jones, A Diary with Letters, 1931-40 (London: Oxford University Press, 1954), 411. See also the diary entries for September 20 and September 26 respectively in Harold Nicolson, Diaries and Letters, 1930-9 (London: Collins, 1966), 362; Amery, 275.

was said to claim, could destroy London from the air.[12]

A British Expert writing after the Crisis admitted expect-

ing as many as 250,000 air raid casualties in the first

week of the war.[13] In view of such circumstances, Chamber-

lain's September 28 surprise announcement of his Munich

trip to a House anxiously expecting a declaration of war

had set off a joyful demonstration which a Member afterwards

described as a "Welsh Rivivalist Meeting."[14]

The hysteric atmosphere continued through the week

of the debate, and the popularity of Chamberlain as the

savior of peace seemed almost unchallengeable. All but one

of the major newspapers of Britain congratulated the Prime

Minister.[15] In Parliament such diverse groups as the right-

wing Anglo-German Fellowship and the members of the left-

wing, pacifist Independent Labour Party applauded Chamberlain

and each other for Munich. The Parliamentary Labour Party

and the Liberals criticized Munich, but together the two **had**

won only 174 seats at the last General Election.[16] The

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[12]Jones, 410, 411; Nicolson, 343.

[13]Basil Liddell Hart, The Defense of Britain (New York: Random House, 1939), 153-54.

[14]Nicolson, **Diaries and Letters**, 372.

[15]William Waite Hadley, Munich, Before and After (London: Cassell, 1944), 93-110. The one paper to criti-cize Munich was Reynold's News.

[16]In the General Election of 1935, the National Government--a Conservative-dominated coalition which in-cluded the "National Liberals" under Sir John Simon and

approximately thirty Conservative critics of Munich, whose

writings were later to dominate Munich interpretation, were

at this time despised by other Tories in Parliament and in

trouble with their Constituents.[17]   One of their number in

the House of Lords, the Marquess of Salisbury, was given a

bloody nose in the Lobbies of the Commons at this time for

criticizing Chamberlain.[18]   When Churchill described Munich

as "a total and unmitigated defeat" for Britain and France,

Tory back-benchers booed him so loudly that he had to stop

speaking for a few moments.[19]   Similarly, Duff Cooper, who

had resigned as First Lord of the Admiralty in protest over

Munich and who therefore by custom opened the debate, remem-

bered years later that the Conservative benches were bored

and inattentive during his afterwards famous speech; most

Tories only wanted to hear Chamberlain.[20]   The dissident

Conservatives and the Labourites expected an immediate

"National Labour" under Malcolm MacDonald--returned 432
supporters. The Labourites returned 154 Members. The Lib-
erals won only twenty seats. Taylor, English History 383-4.
Bye-elections did not greatly alter these figures in the
years 1935-8.

[17]They were also divided among themselves. The "Eden
Group" hoped for a reconciliation with Chamberlain. The few
men around Churchill, who seemed "more bitter than determined
and more out for a fight than reform," were apparently eager
to ally Labour and try to break Chamberlain. Harold Nicolson
to V. Sackville-West, November 9, 1938, Nicolson, 378. See
also Dalton, 198-203.

[18]Eden, 32.

[19]Churchill, 326.   [20]Cooper, 246.

general election, an "inverted Khaki Election," as Churchill called it.[21] In the week of the debate they tried negotiating a coalition against Chamberlain and Munich. But they held little hope for such a coalition in the face of the Prime Minister's claim of "peace in our time."[22]

Although the public enthusiasm for Munich and probably their own relief did affect their speeches, Labourites, Liberals, and Tory Rebels were still vocal in finding fault with the Agreement. Almost all critics except Churchill began by complimenting Chamberlain for trying to save peace, but they frequently followed by complaining of the strategic consequences of Munich, complaints that were to be heard again and again up to the present day. The Czech Army and the Czech strategic defenses were destroyed. The Soviets, it was feared even at this early date, were perhaps permanently alienated as a result of Chamberlain's treatment of them during the Crisis. Indeed, the whole French Eastern alliance system was in ruins. Britain and France were isolated. They were robbed of their most effective potential weapon: the blockade.[23]

Such changes were dangerous because Hitler's actions in the Czech crisis suggested that his ambitions made his word worthless. Hitler's statement at the time of the Anschluss with Austria that he had no claims against

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[21]Parl. Deb., 371.   [22]Dalton, 198-203.

[23]Parl. Deb., 36, 51, 67, 78, 110, 143, 180-81, 170, 206, 242-43, 369, 426-7, 5-7, 524, 538.

Czechoslovakia was brought up as an example of the German dictator's lying.[24] His September 12 Nuremberg speech purposely set the stage for an uprising intended to give a pretext for the invasion and annexation of Czechoslovakia.[25] When the Prime Minister then intervened, the Tory Leo Amery pointed out that Chamberlain had thought he was going to Berchtesgaden to negotiate with Hitler, but he had become merely "the transmitter of an ultimatum," which he then had to force on the Czechs "with indecent haste and ruthlessness" in the form of the Anglo-French Plan of September 18.[26] The Labourite Arthur Greenwood contended that once the Czechs had accepted the Anglo-French Plan, Hitler, continuing his lying, had increased his demands again at Godesberg on September 23.[27] Hitler's subsequent claim just before Munich that he wanted none but Germans in his empire had been proven a lie, a Liberal critic insisted, by his almost simultaneous admission that he had offered the Czechs a quite different frontier at Godesberg than he had intended to take by conquest.[28]

The conclusion of this criticism was clear: the National Government had handed an immense strategic gain to a man who could not be trusted. By so doing it had purchased

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[24] Ibid., 39.

[25] Ibid., 200.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Ibid., 353-5.

[28] Ibid., 75.

a "breathing space," several critics noted, but at the pres-
ent cost of German hegemony in Europe and perhaps the future
cost of German conquest of the British Empire.[29]

Along with a distrust of Hitler, the critical speeches
also showed hatred for the ideology of Nazi Germany and a
sense of democratic solidarity with the Czechs, a point of
view from which the later criticism of Munich was to be made.
The Labour, Liberal, and Conservative critics of Munich knew
the accounts of Nazi brutality in Austria after the Anschluss,
and reports were already coming from Czechoslovakia of roads
jammed with refugees fleeing Gestapo persecution. The critics
spoke of the Czechs as "the gallant torchbearers of democracy
amid the surrounding darkness of dictatorships."[30] The Nazis
represented "the most cruel, the most inhuman tyranny the
world has ever known."[31] Because of their identification
of the Czech and British systems of government the critics
considered Munich a deep national humiliation for Britain.
They were angry at the Government's connivance with "these
devils to whom you have handed over these decent innocent
people without giving them any guarantee or protection."[32]
The ideological differences between Britain and Germany also
made the strategic changes of Munich seem worse. Churchill

[29]Ibid., 74, 76, 114, 140, 205-6, 257-8, 505.

[30]Ibid., 137.   [31]Ibid., 113.

[32]Ibid., 387.

worried that the leaders of "that barbarous paganism which
vaunts the spirit of aggression and conquest," would turn on
Western Europe when they are sated in the east.[33] Churchill
and others also expressed fears that the Nazis were already
reaching a position in which they could demand limitations
on British free speech. Labourites accused Chamberlain of
wanting to become a dictator himself.

In answering these charges, Cabinet ministers and
other supporters of Chamberlain conceded the preemptoriness
of German behavior in the crisis. The Germans were so deter-
mined to have their own way quickly, the Chamberlainites
maintained, that the alternative to giving in to their de-
mands was a European war. The Government had to do all in
its power to prevent the war and inevitable British involve-
ment because morality was on Germany's side. Even a war
victory could not solve the German problem, and war itself
had become almost too horrible to contemplate. The Chamber-
lainites, just as the Labourites, Liberals, and Tory Rebels,
were concerned with the future. Many of them contended that
Munich began a new and peaceful era in international affairs.
But their vision of the future was for the most part ob-
scured by the past: deliverance from war in the recent
past; and, more remotely, Britain's experiences since 1914.

Dislike of the Versailles Treaty, the "unclean
peace" which ended the First World War, influenced the

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[33]Ibid., 370.

Chamberlainite view of Munich.[34] The Versailles Treaty

created Czechoslovakia, "a polygot...of five different

races."[35] The Czechs who dominated the new state tyran-

nized the Sudeten Germans in all areas of Czechoslovakian

life while denying them the chance to fulfill their own

national aspirations. The British and especially the French,

the Chamberlainites said, had abetted the Czechs until 1938.

They had shown no sympathy for the Sudeten Germans. There-

fore, the Nazi German policies of annexing the Sudetenland

were "reasonable national aims."[36]

Sympathy with German goals and guilt feelings about

the past made the Chamberlainites much more tolerant of Nazi

tactics in the Czech Crisis than the critics. Sir John

Simon, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, stated that Hitler's

determination to go to war for the Sudetenland was not evi-

dence of aggressiveness. Hitler's raising of his demands on

Czechoslovakia at Godesberg did not show perfidy. Rather,

Hitler's actions indicated a distrust of both Western and

Czech intentions--amply justified by past German experience.[37]

The German haste, other Chamberlainites said, should be

judged against the twenty years delay in the Sudeten German

union with the Reich. More positively, the Chamberlainites

claimed that the methods of Munich offered hope for Hitler .

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[34]Ibid., 421.

[35]Ibid., 419.

[36]Ibid., 107.

[37]Ibid., 340-47.

future good behavior. During the course of the Crisis Hitler
had accepted Anglo-French peaceful intervention. Also he
had greatly modified his Godesberg demands in the interests
of a negotiated settlement at Munich. Most importantly, the
Anglo-German consultative machinery also agreed upon at Munich
made possible the peaceful adjustment of inequitable fron-
tiers, an urgent problem which another Versailles creation,
the League of Nations, had failed to solve.[38]

Acceptance of the morality of Germany's claims made
the Chamberlainites reject the critics' views on ideology
and strategy. Czechoslovakia, they implied, was not a demo-
cracy. Seeing Germany as right and Czechoslovakia as wrong,
the Chamberlainites disclaimed any identification between
Czech and British interests. Britain, they said, had been
a mediator in the recent dispute, not an ally of Czechoslo-
vakia. Thus, Munich was not really a humiliation. In any
event, any impression of humiliation the haste of Munich
might seem to bring Britain, any suffering it caused the
Czechs, was atonement for past sins of British delay and
Czech persecution. Besides rejecting the relevance of ideo-
logy to the Czech Crisis, the Chamberlainites also rejected
ideology as the basis for British foreign policy. Such a
foreign policy, they said, would be automatically hostile
to Germany, and would judge proposed solutions to all European
problems according to their effect on the equilibrium of power

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[38]_Ibid._

between Britain and Germany. It would resist on strategic
grounds German efforts to unite all German speaking peoples
in the Reich. Thus, it would be immoral, and the National
Government wanted no part of it. Sir Samuel Hoare, the Home
Secretary, told the House bluntly that if Britain had acci-
dentally gone to war with Germany while disputing methods
of transferring territory--and indeed this had been the only
issue--the British Government would still have given the
Sudetenland to Germany at the end of the war.[39]

A policy emphasizing strategy, even if it were cloaked
in the rhetoric of "collective security," would be a return
to the "power politics" of the years before 1914.[40] Just as
surely as the old, the new balance of power politics would
lead to war. It would bring victory, but only another Pyrrhic
victory, because Germany, whatever her system of government,
was a permanent problem for Europe. As the Conservative Lt.
Col. Arthur Lambert-Ward pointed out:

> Twenty years ago Germany was completely defeated
> and in the dust; to-day she is more powerful
> than ever; and there is no guarantee that if
> we succeeded in defeating Germany again in the
> next two years, the situation would not, in
> another twenty years' time be exactly as it is
> to-day. After all, we have got this great
> block of 70,000,000 Germans living almost at
> our doors. Even if we defeat them we cannot
> kill them all--it is impossible as well as un-
> thinkable. That being so, it seems to me that
> the only thing we can do is to learn to live
> with them.[41]

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[39]Ibid., 154.   [40]Ibid., 378-79.

[41]Ibid., 135.

Lambert-Ward's remarks on the futility of resisting Germany and the emphasis of other Chamberlainite M.P.'s on the morality of Germany's case both reflected British revulsion with the results of World War I. The promises of "a land fit for heroes" and "a world safe for democracy" had not been realized. Britain had never seemed to regain her old strength. Germany had all too quickly become "more powerful than ever." Under such circumstances, Britons, first on the Left and then in all parties, violently reacted against what they came to consider wartime illusions. The pacifism implied in Lambert-Ward's view that another war would not solve the German problem represented one frequent reaction. The rejection of wartime beliefs also found expression in the public acceptance of the writings of the Versailles-revision publicists. These revisionist writers, taking up the wartime dissent of the Union of Democratic Control pamphleteers, told the British people that the "power politics" of the Entente powers, not the ambitions of the German Kaiser, started the war. Therefore, they argued, the Versailles Treaty was unjust. The treaty makers unfairly humiliated the German people and tried to impoverish them. Worst of all, according to the revisionists, they denied self-determination to Germans. Large numbers of Germans found themselves in bondage in largely Slavic and thus culturally inferior successor states, perhaps the most oppressive of which was Czechoslovakia. The sum of these injustices, the revisionists wrote after 1933, drove the

Germans to the madness of Nazism. Until the British and

the French rectified the wrong done to Germany, the Germans

even though Nazis were victims deserving sympathy.[42]

The intellectual climate which produced the atti-

tudes of Lambert-Ward and in which morality was on the side

of Germany now seems incredibly remote. Although conviction

of the pointlessness of seeking a military victory did remain

with some Conservatives for another two years, such calcula-

tions became irrelevant after Dunkirk when the British saw

themselves fighting for survival. After 1945, the Cold War

solved the German question by dividing the country in two.

Whatever crises the two Germanies have caused since 1945,

Europeans have not had the problem of facing alone a solid

block of 70,000,000 restless and energetic people located

in the very center of the continent. As the problem has dis-

appeared so has an appreciation of it disappeared in the

analyses of those writing on Munich. Similarly, the idea

of the morality of German claims found less and less accep-

tance even before Prague, and also largely died out after

Dunkirk. At the end of the war, with evidence of the cre-

matoria and other tools of genocide at hand, it was never

revived. However, in 1938 both the seeming permanance of the

German problem and the German demand for Versailles revision

had a great influence on the Chamberlainites.

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[42]Taylor, The Troublemakers, Dissent over Foreign
Policy, 1789-1939 (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1957), 167-200.

Throughout the House debate the Chamberlainites also dwelt on the horror of modern war. Brigadier Sir Henry Croft recalled the wretched stalemate of trench warfare in 1914 which finally cost a million Empire dead. He noted that subsequent technology favored the defense even more, and accused the critics of Munich of wanting to "fight to the last Frenchman," as Britain had no immediately available expeditionary force.[43] Apparently many Members had also heard Lindbergh's reports, remembered a former Prime Ministers remark that bombers would always be successful, and knew what were then thought to be the lessons of the Spanish Civil War.[44] Thus, they dreaded aerial bombardment even more than a repetition of World War I. Members talked of expecting the immediate obliteration of London, of men living "underground as rats,"[45] of 10,000,000 United Kingdom deaths from bombing.[46] The likelihood of such carnage, speakers maintained, completely changed the role of war in national policy. Men could no longer fight over ideological differences nor over the balance of power. Chamberlain said that Britain could not go to war for the Czechs, and he emphasized the support of

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[43]Parl. Deb., 380.

[44]Taylor, English History, 389-92.

[45]Parl. Deb., 194.

[46]Ibid., 260. In an article written shortly after the House debate Harold Nicolson wrote: "in this country the fear of aerial bombardment has become an obsession. A certain amount of panic, with its electoral consequences, was assuredly created." Harold Nicolson, "After Munich," The Nineteenth Century and After, CXXIV (November 1938), 513-24.

Dominion and English public opinion for his view. The Czech
cause was not worth the sacrifice of so many British lives.[47]
Moreover, the worst tortures the Czechs might face at the
hands of the Gestapo were as nothing compared to the extinc-
tion of their national life by aerial bombardment. Such
slaughter would have come, regardless of the ultimate allied
victory, if the Czechs had been made "pawns in a preventive
war."[48]

These arguments partly, though by no means entirely,
convinced the Government's critics. A genuine note of relief
at escape from war was evident in the opening remarks of many
who went on to criticize the terms of Munich. Under ques-
tioning, Clement Attlee, the Labourite leader, tacitly ad-
mitted that war finally became the alternative to the Munich
concessions at the end of the September Crisis and that under
such circumstances Chamberlain had acted correctly.[49] The
Tory Rebel Leo Amery made a similar admission.[50] Many critics,
including Amery and Attlee, however, did dispute the Govern-
ment's contention that the Munich terms were the only alter-
native to war. Critics of all parties contended that a policy
of bluffing Hitler by threatening him with war either in late
August or early September might at least have salvaged "a
trifle from the wreck though no one claimed that it would

[47]Ibid., 545.   [48]Ibid., 379.

[49]Ibid., 52.   [50]Ibid., 204.

have kept Czechoslovakia completely intact.[51] This convic-
tion had several sources. Duff Cooper brought up an his-
torical analogy--ironically considering the subsequent use
of Munich as a model for action--between 1938 and 1914.
Cooper suggested that a clear warning of British intent in
1914 would have kept Germany from invading Belgium. A
similar warning, he reasoned, before the Nazi Party rally
actually began on September 5, would have intimidated Hitler.[52]
Attlee, voicing a popular misconception of more recent events,
was sure that, just as Czech and Western solidarity had
stopped Hitler in the May Crisis earlier in 1938, bluffing,
if used soon enough, would have brought a more favorable out-
come in September.[53] Others noted that Hitler only retreated
in September after the Foreign Office Declaration of Septem-
ber 26 and the Fleet mobilization of the next day. Conse-
quently, they maintained, more pressure on Germany earlier
would have brought better results.[54]

The most intriguing reason for belief in bluffing
Hitler was one that could only be hinted at, the German
Generals' Plot to overthrow Hitler. High-ranking German
officers conspired in August and early September to depose
Hitler if he insisted on going to war. Those of the group

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[51]Ibid. See also Ibid., 30-31, 33, 57, 69, 148,
358, 363, 430 506-07.

[52]Ibid., 30-31.   [53]Ibid., 57.

[54]Ibid., 506.

who were still alive after 1945 claimed with great publicity
that only Chamberlain's trip to Berchtesgaden on September
15 kept them from carrying out their plan.[55]   The British
Government knew of the plans through an emissary of the gen-
erals.   Chamberlain refused the requested cooperation of
threatening Hitler with war at least partly because he was
dubious of the conspiracy's chances of success.[56]   Some
critics also knew of the generals' plans.   Churchill talked
personally to the generals' London emissary.[57]   Others gained
their knowledge from a German officer's remark to one of the
British journalists accompanying the Chamberlain party to
Berchtesgaden.[58]   The critics who heard of the plot were
apparently much more favorably impressed with its chances
than was Chamberlain.   The generals had not yet revealed
themselves as continuous and verbose schemers whose plans
always went awry.   Thus, at the time of the September Crisis
the spectacle of defeatism and treason in the awesome German
military machine may well have seemed an irresistible tempta-
tion to the critics.   Churchill and five other critics hinted

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[55]Wheeler-Bennett, The Nemesis of Power, The German
Army in Politics, 1918-1945 (London: Macmillan, 1953), 395-426.

[56]Unofficial German Approaches, Great Britain, E.L.
Woodward and Rohan Butler (ed.), Documents of British Foreign
Policy, 1919-1939, 3rd Ser., II (London: Her Majesty's Sta-
tionery Office, 1949), 686.   Referred to hereafter as D.B.F.P.

[57]Ibid., 686-87.

[58]Nicolson, 362.   The journalist was Vernon Bartlett.

strongly of their knowledge and approval of the plot.[59] An
even more widespread awareness would account for the sureness
of so many other members that a bluff would have worked
against Hitler. It would also account for the critics lack
of response to the Chamberlainites' remarks on the permanence
of the German, and implicitly the Hitler, problem.

Later Labourites liked to remember their calls to
stand up to Hitler and their deploring the strategic results
of Munich, especially when they thought that Munich might be
an election issue in 1945. They forgot that in 1938 their
thinking on Germany was quite confused. They were torn by
the contradictory moralities of resisting Nazi oppression
and considering German revisionist claims. Like the Chamber-
lainites their thinking was influenced by revisionism; they
had in fact supported revisionism long before the Conserva-
tives. Thus, while they complained of the sufferings caused
the Czechs, no Labourite questioned the moral right of the
Sudeten Germans to join the Reich. Rather, they seemed up-
set that the Czechs had not gotten better terms and that
the transaction had not been carried out through the League
of Nations. They maintained that Britain, France, and the
Soviet Union should have threatened Hitler with war in order
to secure "justice for the Sudeten Germans /and/ justice for
the Czechs," a policy they called "collective security."[60]

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[59]Parl. Deb., 33, 69, 203, 363, 430, 507.

[60]Ibid., 501, 358. See also Ibid., 548.

At the same time they deplored Chamberlain's promises of
increased arms expenditure as a return to "power politics."[61]
Further, while they objected to the strategic advantage given
Germany, Labourites did not rule out further territorial
concessions. Indeed, Attlee proposed bigger and better ap-
peasement in a world conference which would deal with Germany's
territorial demands but would mainly concentrate on guaran-
teeing her access to raw materials and markets.[62] Another
Labour M. P. promised that a Labour Government would outdo
Chamberlain's appeasement by sending the King and Queen to
Berlin.[63]

Confusion about the conflicting ethics of resisting
Nazism and accepting Germany's revisionist claims did not
greatly trouble the Tory Rebels. The Rebels' thinking rep-
resented an older, pre-1914 tradition in British foreign
policy. To them, the balance of power--a term which the
revisionists had decried and which the Labourites were still
uneasy about using--was a "law of nature."[64] Their remarks
in the Munich debate indicated that they would have wanted
to resist the expansionism of any German government. They
were just as concerned about the extension of German economic
hegemony as about the expansion of Nazism; Harold Nicolson

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[61]Ibid., 355. See also Ibid., 102, 227, 500-01.

[62]Ibid., 65-66.   [63]Ibid., 263.

[64]Ibid., 434.

spoke of the dangers of cheap German transport dominating

the Danube in terms reminiscent of Eyre Crow, perhaps even

of Pitt the Elder.[65] Unlike the Labourites they had never

been touched by what had in fact been the idealism of revi-

sionism. Consequently, they dismissed "self-determination"

in their own minds as "a slogan of singularly repulsive

hypocrisy."[66]

They did recognize the moral force of the concept

with world opinion. Many argued, somewhat defensively, that

Munich was not really self-determination.[67] Duff Cooper,

who criticized Munich on strategic grounds, admitted that

he had accepted the September 18 Anglo-French Plan, which

involved the cession of Czechoslovakia's strategic frontiers,

because "it would be hard to have it said that we were

fighting against self-determination."[68]

The Tory Rebels' speeches differed from those of

Labourites in another way. Whereas Labourites kept quiet

on the question, the Tory Rebels' frequently criticized the

Government's defense preparations. Churchill compared the

Government's incompetence in air defense and air craft

production to the fecklessness of Ethelred the Unready.[69]

Duff Cooper pointed to the complete absence of a British

expeditionary force available for foreign service.[70] Sidney

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[65]Ibid., 431-32. See also Ibid., 435.

[66]Ibid., 112.   [67]Ibid., 82-83, 234, 365.

[68]Ibid., 35.   [69]Ibid., 367.

[70]Ibid., 38-39.

Herbert remarked: "I was led to suppose the locusts had stopped nibbling about two years ago, but I can hear their little jowls creaking yet under the Front Bench."[71]

This issue, however, faced the Tory Rebels with a dilemma: did the obvious arms deficiencies justify the Munich terms? In a later controversy three of the four Rebels who discussed the point agreed that the Government should have threatened to fight and then gone to war if the Generals' Plot failed.[72] In the House of Commons debate, the views of the Tory Rebels were not so clear. Churchill seemed to have absolute faith in the success of the Generals' Plot, and his optimism was only slightly qualified in his memoirs published in 1948.[73] Nicolson alone of all the critics in the House agreed with the Government that war was the alternative to Munich; he went on to imply Britain should have gone to war.[74] The speeches of Amery, Cooper, and Anthony Eden somewhat inconsistently combined criticism of the Sudetenland cession, advocacy of bluffing, and recognition of the limiting effect of the arms situation on foreign policy actions.[75] The other Rebels were even less consistent: they criticized the arms weakness and the Munich terms

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[71]Ibid., 244-45.   [72]Amery, 275, 288-90.

[73]Churchill, 279-339.

[74]Parl. Deb., 431. Nicolson's diary at this time confirms his House statement which is not entirely clear. Nicolson, 365.

[75]Parl. Deb., 34, 38-39, 85-87, 204.

apparently without any awareness of a possible relationship between the two.

Government supporters in the House of Commons debate did not explicitly acknowledge that armaments weakness had determined policy. They mainly defended Munich on the grounds of the morality of Germany's case in Czechoslovakia, the futility of seeking military victory, and the insignificance of all causes in the face of modern war. At the same time both Chamberlain and Hoare made oblique admissions that the recent mobilization had shown serious deficiencies in Britain's defense preparations, a fact that most Britons knew already. They promised extensive changes and increased spending.[76] Two Tory back-benchers hinted that Britain would be better prepared to fight in one or two years.[77] Such remarks support the subsequent contention of many Munich apologists, including Chamberlain himself in 1940, that unpreparedness was the real reason for Munich. Certainly the number of Conservative references to increased armaments seems odd at the moment of achieving "peace in our time:" a paradox which critics pointed out so many times that Chamberlain finally disavowed the remark.[78] Yet, Chamberlain's numerous private remarks at this time and his advertisement

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[76]Ibid., 50, 160, 551-52.

[77]Ibid., 119-20, 297-98.

[78]Ibid., 551.

of his Munich accomplishment in his 1938 Christmas cards
suggest that the reasons he and his supporters emphasized
in public were genuine.[79] The truth of this is substantiated
by the Chamberlainites' contention in the House debate that,
while war over Czechoslovakia would have been pointless,
Britain would undoubtedly have won such a war.[80]

The Chamberlainites recognized in part that their
arguments, just as those of the Labourites and the Tory
Rebels, were not entirely consistent. Their basic defense
against criticism of the Munich terms was that the alterna-
tive to these terms was war. They also asked the British
people to trust Hitler not to use the strategic advantage
gained by these terms against Britain. Critics replied by
asking why the British people should trust a man who was
willing to plunge Europe into a war over the timetable of
a territorial transfer. The Government had no sure answer
to this question. Sir John Simon contended that Hitler's
past behavior was unimportant because the generosity of the
Munich terms and the consultative machinery of the Anglo-
German Declaration created a whole new climate in international

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[79]Douglas Reed, Disgrace Abounding (London: Cape,
1939), 428; Keith Feiling, The Life of Neville Chamberlain
(London: Macmillan, 1946), 386; Eden, 37; Lockhart, Comes
The Reckoning (London: Putnam, 1947), 82; Ian Colvin, Van-
sittart in Office: Origins of World War II (London: Gollancz,
1965), 276.

[80]Parl. Deb., 378-79. 407.

relations.[81] A Tory back-bencher, apparently still somewhat

hysterical from the events of the week before, declared that

God had called the English people to an act of faith in

Hitler.[82] But another back-bencher, William Marbane, prob-

ably more accurately expressed the prevailing Tory view when

he said that the division in the House was "between those

who do not believe in the sincerity of German promises and

those who reserve judgment on the matter."[83]

What then if the critics' distrust proved well-founded?

It is entirely possible that, just as the Labourites and Tory

Rebels were impressed by parts of the Chamberlainites' argu-

ments, the Chamberlainites themselves were impressed with the

possibilities of bluffing Hitler when re-armament was com-

pleted. Chamberlain himself had believed bluffing had worked

in the May Crisis.[84] Bluffing was essentially the policy

attempted by the British Government after March 1939. The

Government then did not want war with Germany, and they did

not aim to prevent Hitler from achieving his goals in Poland.

They thought a judicious threat would make Hitler orderly.

They were wrong. However, it may well have been that Sir

Thomas Inskip was anticipating a bluffing policy when he

told the House that the contemplated armaments increases

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[81]Ibid., 347.   [82]Ibid., 422.

[83]Ibid., 222.   [84]Feiling, 354.

would "make our diplomacy and defense march hand in hand as we desire."[85] Chamberlain may also have been thinking this when in the closing speech of debate on October 6th, he spoke of increased preparations "making our diplomacy more effective."[86]

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[85]Parl. Deb., 308.

[86]Ibid., 50.

CHAPTER III

MUNICH TO WAR. THE LATER PHASES:

OCTOBER 7, 1938-SEPTEMBER 3, 1939

Chamberlain in his final speech in the House debate
had given a qualified pledge not to hold a general election
on Munich.[1] This decision did not end Parliament's part in
the Munich debate. For after the House gave Chamberlain a
366 to 144 vote of confidence and adjourned,[2] Members con-
tinued to use the machinery of representative government to
discuss Munich and its effects on the future. When the
Commons met again on November 1, the Tory Rebels spoke out
in debates on defense against the inadequacy of British arms
in the Czech Crisis. Their actions moved an exasperated
Chamberlain to liken the Rebels to "a bird fouling its own
nest."[3] He and the Conservative Central Office retaliated
by encouraging the constituents of Rebels to harass their
Members. Consequently, Paul Emrys-Evans, J. R. L. Thomas,

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[1]Parl. Deb., CCCXXXIX, (1937-38), 548.

[2]Wheeler-Bennett, Munich, 189.

[3]Parl. Deb., CCCXL (1937-38), 74.

Ronald Cartland, Sir Derrick Gunston, Lord Cranbourne,
Harold Nicolson, and Winston Churchill were bitterly attacked
in their local associations. Churchill was only able to stop
such attacks by threatening to resign and fight a bye-elec-
tion if the Epping Conservative Association carried a motion
of censure against him.[4]

A number of bye-elections did take place in the
months just after Munich. In October Quintin Hogg entered
Parliament as a Chamberlainite after his victory in the
Oxford City Division, but his majority was smaller than that
of the Conservative candidate in the last General Election.
November bye-elections in Walsall, West Lewisham, and the
Fylde Division (Lancashire) showed a similar result. By
contrast, in November Labour won a formerly Conservative
seat at Dartford, and increased its majority at Doncaster.
A bigger reversal for the Government came at Bridgewater
(Somerset). There the journalist Vernon Bartlett, running
as an Independent on a platform which criticized Munich's
effect on British security, reversed a previous 10,000
vote Conservative majority, and won by 2,000 votes. Because
of the ambiguous Labour stand on Munich, the October and
November results could not be interpreted as a consistent
public repudiation of Munich. They did, however, indicate

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[4]Wheeler-Bennett, _Munich_, 5; Churchill, 330; Eden,
32; Cooper, _Old Men Forget_, 252.

some reaction to the hysteric adulation of Chamberlain in
the days just after Munich. This trend of decreasing support
for the Prime Minister ended in December. Then the Duchess
of Atholl resigned the Kinross and Perthshire seat which she
had held as a Conservative, and ran in the subsequent bye-
election there as an anti-Munich Independent. She lost.
No further evidence appeared of strong public dissatisfaction
with Munich.[5]

The pattern of bye-election results and also the
selection of articles in quality periodicals reflect an im-
portant movement in British public opinion. In October and
November 1938 many Britons were deeply worried about the
impact of the Munich changes on Britain's safety; but from
December to March public interest in Munich lapsed. In
magazines prepared for publication before December--in the
October issues of the weekly New Statesman and Spectator
and in the November and December issues of the monthly
Contemporary Review, Fortnightly Review, International
Affairs, The Nineteenth Century and After, and Round Table--
a total of fifty-one articles appeared dealing with Munich
and Britain's post-Munich future. In the January, February,
and March issues of the same magazines only five such articles
appeared. Interest shifted to speculation on future German
economic penetration in Europe. The apparent reason for the
change was a growing conviction that Munich would work.[6]

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[5]Rock, 200-02. [6]See Appendix.

German actions in October and November caused the
British concern. The Germans immediately exploited their
own prestige and declining French influence by securing
highly favorable trade agreements all over Eastern Europe.
The Germans, it was widely predicted in Britain, would
soon have economic and political control of Eastern Europe.
Many writers were unimpressed by the new Chamberlainite
argument that such control did not matter; Britain was not
really a European power. Critical writers pointed out that
Hitler was already abusing his new power, and would probably
use it against all of Europe. Hitler's representatives on
the commission drawing a new Czech-German frontier forced
through a line which ignored ethnic boundaries. Hitler's
speeches seemed to claim a right to dictate the membership
of British Cabinets. The November pogroms in Germany under-
lined the brutality of Nazism. The House of Commons pro-
phecies of the Tory Rebels seemed to be coming true. Con-
sequently, more and more writers came to reject the morality
of revisionism. Unlike the Tory Rebels, few periodical
writers said explicitly that Munich was avoidable. However,
they did tend to see Munich and the German utilization of
its terms as a disastrous turning point in British history.
They did not consider that perhaps Munich only revealed an
existing German supremacy. This attitude was to continue.
It was to be one element of the emotionalism traditional in
British historiography of Munich.

In December public discussion of Munich stopped.
The interests of periodical writers shifted to speculation
on future German economic expansion. Apparently the German
trade missions which initially made a sinister impression
finally convinced writers that Germany would achieve domina-
tion of Eastern Europe, perhaps of all Europe, without war.
While the general public grew disinterested in Munich, a
small group of Czechophil writers were preparing books on
Munich. Unlike most Commons and periodical critics, the
Czechophils stated dogmatically that Munich was both immoral
and unnecessary. The Czechophil opinions were not typical
of British judgments in the months before Prague. Yet their
books were read by many future polemical writers. These
later writers accepted the Czechophil view that Britain had
an alternative at Munich. Belief in choice combined with
the continued view of Munich as a downward turning point
were the sources of later British emotionalism about Munich.

The British discussion of Munich revived somewhat
after Prague. Some writers remained bitter despite the change
in British diplomacy which began with the guarantee of Poland.
They insisted that the disastrous effects of Munich could
not be undone. They further insisted that Britain had a
choice at Munich. These charges stirred Chamberlainites to
present still a third explanation of Munich: they now em-
phasized that British unpreparedness alone had made Munich
necessary. Not all appeasement supporters joined the Chamber-
lainites in claiming that the Government had always been

hostile to Germany. One writer maintained that both Munich
and the present Anglo-German enmity were the result of mis-
understandings, not irreconcilable conflict. Another ap-
proach to Munich at this time came from those writers who
were critical of Munich but who now supported Chamberlain's
foreign policy. Apparently confident of the success of the
new course, such writers did not see Munich as a irremed-
iable disaster. Consequently, they described Munich with
an unwonted tolerance of the Government's actions and mo-
tives. Neither their tolerance nor the retrospective belli-
cosity of the Chamberlainites would survive the frustrations
of the Phoney War.

October and November 1938

In early October, while the House of Commons was
still debating Munich, Dr. Walter Funk, the German Minister
of Economics, began a month long tour of the capitols of
Southeastern Europe. The tour was publicized in Britain.
Britons knew of Funk's promise of "great economic construc-
tion plans" for Germany and Eastern Europe.[7] British writers
initially interpreted Funk's remarks as evidence of German
intentions to make Munich a turning point in European his-
tory. A New Statesman leader writer predicted that "in a
few months the new Germany will dominate a vast economic
Empire from the North Sea to the Aegean--a block of 145,000,000

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[7]Wheeler-Bennett, Munich, 295.

people with greater resources than any nation the modern

world has ever known."[8]   Other writers pointed out that the

British-French domination of post-war Europe was now des-

troyed. So too was the basic axiom of British foreign policy

since the Peace of Utrecht that "this country should...pre-

vent any single Power from obtaining the mastery of Europe."[9]

All the writers implied that the terms of Munich and German

exploitation of the terms formed the turning point. None

conceded that perhaps Munich formalized an existing physical

reality of British decline and German predominance. This

attitude was to remain characteristic of British critical

writing on Munich.

In October and November most British writers in

periodicals foresaw even further extension of German domi-

nance after the realization of Funk's economic plans. Most

Government apologists predicted mainly German economic hego-

mony in Eastern Europe on the model of the Funk plan. The

Government publicist J. A. Spender also admitted that "we

are not at the end of Treaty revision."[10]   Other more crit-

ical observers forecast political as well as economic domina-

tion of all Europe.[11]   A few of these implied, as had the

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[8](anon.), "Policy for a National Opposition," New
Statesman, XVI (October 22, 1938), 596.

[9]Nicolson, 521.

[10]J. A. Spender, "Munich--Before and After," Contem-
porary Review, CLIV (November 1938), 521.

[11]J. L. Hammond, "British Policy Now," Spectator, CLXI
(October 14, 1938), 595; (anon.), "The New Europe," New
Statesman, XVI (October 8, 1938), 516; (anon.), "Crisis and

Tory Rebels in the House, that Germany would finally try to conquer Britain militarily. However, some of those critical of parts of Munich were already sufficiently impressed with the peaceful nature of German expansion to foresee accomodation of a dominant Germany without war. The editors of the New Statesman, were apparently willing to accept the new situation. They took up Attlee's proposal for more appeasement in an international conference "to deal with the causes of war, the wrongs of Versailles and minorities...the colonial question and questions of raw materials."[12] Whether optimistic or pessimistic about avoiding war with Germany, writers of all political beliefs--ironically considering the course of British policy only a few months later--warned against British opposition to the all powerful Reich at any time soon: "we must...make no promises..encourage no resistance," wrote Harold Nicolson.[13] Sir Arthur Salter, an independent M. P. critical of Munich cautioned: "we shall merely provoke, and fail alike in either appeasement or resistance if we prepare a combination that will threaten /Germany7 with encirclement."[14]

Such opinions suited the Chamberlainites who now

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the Future," Round Table, XXIX (December 1938), 1; R. W. Seton-Watson, "Munich and After," Fortnightly Review, CXLIV (November 1938), 526.

[12]"The New Europe," New Statesman, 517.

[13]Nicolson, 519.

[14]Sir Arthur Salter, "British Policy Now," Spectator, CLXI (October 21, 1938), 643.

presented a new explanation of Munich. Writing in periodi-

cals, Government apologists--in contrast to Chamberlainite

speakers in the Commons--admitted the existence of grandiose

German ambitions. Germany was the strongest nation in

Europe. She aimed to control Eastern Europe. She might

eventually fight the U.S.S.R. However, they contended,

the interests of Britain and Germany should not conflict.

Britain was still the strongest power in the world outside

Europe. Nothing in Mein Kampf indicated that Hitler intended

to challenge this power. He had already renounced rivalry

on the sea in the Anglo-German Naval agreement of 1935.

Why then had war almost come over what Spender called the

"dangerous makeshift" of Czechoslovakia?[15] Because of the

agitation of a strange alliance of left-wing ideologues in

the Labour Party, who believed war between despotisms and

democracies inevitable, and old-fashioned imperialists such

as Churchill and other Tory Rebels, who wrongly saw every

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[15]Spender, "British Policy Now," Spectator, CLXI
(November 18, 1938), 839. See also John Armitage, "The Peace
Approach," Fortnightly Review, CXLIV (November 1938), 522-
25; Lord Elton, "Mr. Chamberlain and His Enemies," Fortnightly
Review CXLIV (December 1938) 686-92; Lord Esher, "Colonies
for Germany," Fortnightly Review, CXLIV (December 1938),
641-50; George Glasgow, "Twenty Years of Czechoslovakia,"
Contemporary Review, CLIV (November 1938), 532-43; Glasgow,
"Foreign Affairs," Contemporary Review, CLIV (December 1938),
737-48; H. Powys Greenwood, "Germany after Munich," Contem-
porary Review CLIV (November 1938), 523-31; Spender, "Munich--
Before and After," 513-22; Sir Arnold Wilson, "British Policy
Now," Spectator, CLXI (October 28, 1938), 703-04.

German profit as a British loss. The Prime Minister, the
Chamberlainites pointed out, had resisted the "war mongers"
at the time of the September Crisis.[16] The British people
should not listen in the future when such agitators tried
"to invoke all the sentiments which have gathered about
ancient States...for the benefit of twenty year old treaty
creations."[17] If they did listen to Chamberlain's opponents,
they would get in the way of Hitler's ambitions in Eastern
Europe. A terrible war would result. The only one to pro-
fit from the war, Lord Esher wrote in the only public remark
of its sort, would be "the spreading wave of Bolshevism."[18]

Many critics in October and November rejected these
publicized reasons for the Government's acquiescence in Ger-
man expansion: they saw such acceptance as a symptom of
either isolationism, decadence, or an abnegation of Great
Power status; any of these attitudes, they felt, was a por-
tent of disaster. The difference in interpretation was partly
a matter of perspective. Whereas Chamberlainites emphasized
British power outside Europe, some critics stressed Britain's
increasing inability to influence events in Europe itself.

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[16]George Glasgow, the foreign affairs writer for
Contemporary Review, wrote that "the fire-eaters, the war-
at-any-price people, the Ribbentrop's and the Churchill's
in every country...are disgruntled. The peace-makers are
in the ascendant." Glasgow, "Foreign Affairs," 521.

[17]Spender, "Munich--Before and After" 521.

[18]Lord Esher, 644.

The Government's lack of concern about this was evidenced, they felt, in the November shift in air production priorities from attack bombers to defensive fighters. Isolation from Europe, they contended, was impossible for Britain, "the most vulnerable of all the Great Powers."[19] Seemingly aware of a discrepancy between the public and private statements of Government supporters, other critics believed that the Government no longer really cared if Britain were a Great Power. Several periodical writers as well as diarists mentioned privately expressed Chamberlainite gratitude to Hitler as a barrier against Bolshevism. Such feelings, Arnold Toynbee maintained in a Chatham House address, showed a decaying governing class, "too effete and poor-spirited" to keep Britain great or even independent.[20] Toynbee and the Tory Rebel M. P. Emrys-Evans also described a private Chamberlainite wish to sink to the supposedly safe status of a second-rate Power: "if only we could find ourselves in the position of Holland or Sweden," Toynbee reported the Chamberlainites as saying, "how happy we should be."[21] Such fantasies, Emrys-Evans wrote, could not come true:

> Complete military and economic control of
> Europe under one authority would soon reduce
> these islands to a state of vassalage. It
> would, of course, bring peace, but the peace
> of submission and poverty, and the extinction

[19]Nicolson, 522.

[20]Arnold Toynbee, "After Munich: The World Outlook with Discussion," International Affairs, XVIII (January 1939), 18. This article is a reprint of an address given by Toynbee at Chatham House, November 15, 1938.

[21]Ibid., 14.

of all freedom. There is no halfway house.
The existence of small, well governed countries
such as Sweden and Holland is no guide. They
exist because the Western democracies are
powerful.[22]

Many critics believed that such decline was already

well under way and was almost irreversible. As a result of

Hitler's October and November speeches, they felt that they

were about to see the extinction of British liberty. In

these speeches Hitler repeatedly criticized Churchill, Anthony

Eden, and Duff Cooper. At Saarbrucken on October 9th, he

seemed to threaten Britain with immediate war if such men

ever held office.[23] Kingsley Martin, the New Statesman edi-

tor, interpreted Hitler's statements as "calculation not

bombast."[24] Hugh Dalton, the Labour M. P., saw the Saarbrucken

speech as a "foretaste" of "surrenders of all kinds."[25] The

historian J. L. Hammond noted that, "as Hitler turns this

way or that there falls upon his neighbours the shadow of a

terrible silence."[26] The fears expressed in October and

November seemed a fulfillment of the prophecies of some

Labourite and Tory Rebel Members in the House of Commons

-debate.

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[22]P. V. Emrys-Evans, "Facing the Issues," Fort-
nightly Review, CXLIV (December 1938), 680.

[23]Hitler, 1532-37.

[24]Kingsley Martin, "Stock-Taking," New Statesman,
XVI (October 8, 1938), 556.

[25]Hugh Dalton, "The Crisis in Retrospect," New
Statesman, XVI (October 15, 1938), 562.

[26]Hammond, 595.

Other events at this time converted many Britons to the Tory Rebel view that Nazism made revisionism a sham. Germany dominated the International Control Commission charged with drawing a new Czech-German frontier. The line upon which the German delegates successfully insisted ignored existing ethnic boundaries, and gave Germany even greater strategic and economic advantages than had been originally envisaged. The result was to put 800,000 Czechs in the Third Reich.[27] This was a smaller figure than the number of Sudeten Germans formerly in Czechoslovakia. However, Britons were becoming less and less impressed with such facts. Also Germany's highly publicized anti-Semitic pogroms on the night of November 9-10 convinced many that British connivance in putting even one person in Nazi Germany was morally wrong. Nazi barbarism, a writer in The Nineteenth Century and After declared, "stinks in the nostrils of all decent people."[28] A writer in the normally pro-Government Round Table protested that, in the light of the fresh Nazi atrocities, calling Munich, "'self-determination' or 'repairing the blunders of Versailles' seems to the ordinary man a mockery."[29] Such remarks showed that the emotions favoring Munich were beginning to become unintelligible in retrospect even before the change in British policy following Prague.

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[27]Paul Anderson, "The Expansion of Germany," The Nineteenth Century and After, CXXIV (November 1938), 550-59.

[28]Alex Glendinning, "Commentary," The Nineteenth Century and After, CXXIV (December 1938), 732.

[29]"Crisis and the Future," Round Table, 5.

These protests were not made with the idea of re-
sisting Germany. Writers continued to emphasize that Britain
could do nothing as a result of Munich. But Chamberlainite
writers recognized the force of such feelings. Somewhat
defensively, in contrast to the tone of such statements in
the House of Commons debate, they tried to remind their
readers of the morality of revisionism. Nazi actions, they
admitted, made the worst possible atmosphere for agreement,
but they did not make either future conciliation or the past
agreement at Munich any less imperative.[30]

Although the changing popular perspective on Munich
did not immediately result in a policy change, the anxiety
and disillusionment were partly responsible for increasingly
widespread criticism of Chamberlain's handling of the Czech
crisis. Memory of the gratitude at release from war was
apparently dimming. Both critics and nominal Government
supporters in October and November wrote of the Government's
blundering defense preparations in the September crisis with
a bitterness as intense as any of the Tory Rebels in the
Commons and in complete contrast to later critical writers
who have frequently stressed Chamberlain's rigid competence.
To the writers of October and November 1938, Chamberlain's
defense policies were "dilatory...incompetent...inadequate."[31]

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[30]Lord Noel-Buxton, "Settlement with Germany," Con-
temporary Review, CLV (January 1939), 1-2; Lord Elton, 686-
87; Spender, "British Policy Now," 839.

[31]Salter, Is It Peace? The Nettle and the Flower
(London: Spectator, 1938), 5.

Critics pointed out that the Government sent War Office

observers to Czechoslovakia who could speak neither Czech

nor German. They sent naval reservists to ports where there

were no ships and no duties to perform. The Government dis-

patched Home Office instructors to teach citizens to use

non-existent air raid protection equipment. It also ordered

anti-aircraft gun batteries to guard areas with weapons

which had not yet been manufactured.[32] The conviction of

Government ineptness was strengthened by the apparently wide

spread belief--again in contrast to later opinion--that the

Government had large sums of money available for defense.[33]

It led Sir Arthur Salter to call for "a radical reconstruc-

tion of the Government at least on a basis of competence and

if possible on a national basis."[34]

December to March

For the time being the discussion of Munich in per-

iodicals ended almost completely after the publication of

December issues of the monthlies. In the months remaining

before Hitler's occupation of Prague, only five articles

appeared in quality magazines dealing with Munich, and at

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[32]Sir Charles Hobhouse, "The New Deal in Europe,"
Contemporary Review CLIV (December 1938), 656.

[33]Dalton, 562; Martin, 556; "Policy for a National
Opposition," New Statesman, 596; John Shand, "What People
Are Saying," The Nineteenth Century and After, CXXIV (Decem-
ber 1938), 742.

[34]Salter, "British Policy Now," 643.

least one of these seems to have been written much earlier.[35]

Instead, the attention of periodical writers on foreign

affairs turned to speculation on future German economic pen-

etration.[36] This selection of articles suggests that poss-

ibly Britons were coming to believe that Munich would be

the basis for a permanent European settlement. Apparently

the peaceful nature of the Funk mission and the absence of

any new crises convinced even strong critics of appeasement

that German expansion would be primarily economic. The Ger-

mans would use their economic power to extort some kind of

political subservience from the rest of Europe but other

countries would not be invaded. The fears expressed about

the future of British freedom and Britain's status as a first

class power indicated that many Britons disliked the new

situation. But, critics felt, Britain lacked the power to

change it.

Although resignation to Munich's seeming permanence

sharply curtailed public discussion of the Agreement in

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[35]G. P. Gooch, "Twenty Years of Europe," Contemporary Review, CLV (February 1939), 129-30; Liddell Hart, "The European Crisis and Britain's Military Situation," Contemporary Review, CLV (January 1939), 26-36; Noel-Buxton, 1-9; (anon.), "British Commonwealth after Munich," Round Table, XXIX (March 1939) 238-51; J. F. C. Hearnshaw, "The Franco-German Feud," Contemporary Review, CLV (February 1939) 160-68. See also Lewis Einstein, "The Munich Agreement: A Retrospect," History, XXIII (March 1939), 331-40. In a book published in 1939, Liddell Hart noted that his article for Contemporary Review had been actually written in October 1938. Liddell Hart, The Defense of Britain, 79.

[36]See Appendix.

December and afterwards, a few Britons continued to write
and think on Munich with unabated interest. These men and
women had strong personal ties to Czechoslovakia. They
included foreign correspondents who had been in Czechoslo-
vakia during the crisis: G. E. R. Gedye of the Daily Tele-
graph; Alexander Henderson of the Daily Herald; Sidney
Morrell of the Daily Express; and a free lance writing
couple, Joan and Jonathan Griffin. Also included was the
distinguished historian R. W. Seton-Watson, who could almost
claim to be a founding father of the Czech Republic. During
the months from October to March these Czechophils prepared
books on Munich.[37] The works were hastily written and highly
emotional. But they remained for years an important part
of the British literature on Munich. Those of the foreign
correspondents contained a wealth of primary source material
on Czechoslovakia during the September Crisis. The best
known and most accomplished of them, Gedye's Fallen Bastions,
continued to be the most detailed indictment of Chamberlain
as a conspirator with Hitler against the Czechs as long as
such conspiracy theories were popular. The account of Seton-
Watson, who was unwilling to concede Chamberlain the cleverness

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[37]G.E.R. Gedye, Fallen Bastions (London: Gollancz,
1939); Alexander Henderson, Eyewitness in Czechoslovakia
(London: Harrap, 1939); Sidney Morrell, I Saw the Cruci-
fixion (London: Peter Davies, 1939); Joan and Jonathan
Griffin, Lost Liberty: The Ordeal of the Czechs and the
Future of Freedom (London: Chatto and Windus, 1939); R. W.
Seton-Watson, Munich and the Dictators (2nd ed.; London:
Methuen, 1939).

to be a conspirator, remained the standard academic critique of Munich for almost ten years. Seton-Watson was able to use most of the documentation available before the Nuremberg trials of 1945-6. His interpretation of the pre-Nuremberg documentation greatly influenced most British writers on Munich until after 1945, and traces of Seton-Watson's influence is apparent in the work of A. J. P. Taylor in the 1960's.

One of the striking characteristics of Seton-Watson and Gedye's writing was their assumption of German weakness and Allied strength. Gedye underestimated German military power. Seton-Watson ignored it. Neither writer mentioned the British unpreparedness which so appalled Commons and periodical critics. Instead, they lauded Czech and Soviet military strength, and insisted that the forces on Britain's side were invincible. Hitler knew this, and contrary to appearances of peremptoriness, he only announced his demands when he was sure that Britain would accept them without resistance. He launched the May crisis after Chamberlain's intimation at a May 10 press conference that Czechoslovakia could not survive in its present form. Although prompt Czech action, Gedye and Seton-Watson agreed, prevented a German invasion in May, Chamberlain's press conference remarks encouraged Hitler not to give up hope of subverting Czechoslovakia.[38] When Hitler renewed his efforts in

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[38]Gedye, 358, 363-70, 408; Seton-Watson, <u>Munich and the Dictators</u>, 23-45, 87-94.

September, Gedye continued and here he diverges from Seton-Watson, the German leader found Chamberlain a willing confederate. The two decided at Godesberg to cooperate in destroying Czechoslovakia. Hitler then made threats which he knew he would not have to carry out. Chamberlain for his part bullied the French and frightened the British people into agreeing to Hitler's demands. The conspirators were successful. Hitler won power in Central Europe which, Gedye thought, he might well want to use later to dismember the British Empire. By the bogus reputation he gained as a champion of peace Chamberlain opened the way to becoming a dictator.[39]

In discussing the events from the end of the May crisis to the signing of the Munich Agreement, Seton-Watson had the advantage of a much greater personal knowledge of English politicians than Gedye. Consequently, Seton-Watson had a higher, or at least different, opinion of Chamberlain's motives and a lower opinion of the Prime Minister's abilities. Seton-Watson did not believe Chamberlain to be a cunning traitor; he was an incompetent and ignorant old man. Chamberlain was not Hitler's co-conspirator. Rather, he was the dupe of Hitler's lies. Along with his assistant Sir Horace Wilson and The Times editor Geoffrey Dawson, Chamberlain blunderingly sabotaged the good intentions of his Cabinet.[40]

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[39]Gedye, 381, 456, 483, 365.

[40]Seton-Watson, Munich and the Dictators, 83, 147-50.

Seton-Watson saw The Times September 7 editorial as
the turning point of the crisis. Just prior to it, the
warning to Germany in Sir John Simon's August 27 Lanark
speech had sobered the Sudeten German leaders and made them
negotiate with the Czechs in good faith. Seton-Watson ap-
parently felt that Chamberlain was not responsible for the
Lanark speech; he implied that The Times editorial was the
work of Dawson and Chamberlain. The editorial which advo-
cated the cession of the Sudetenland to Germany undid the
effect of Simon's speech. The Sudeten leaders broke off
talks with the Czechs. Hitler made his demands for self-
determination in his Nuremberg speech on September 12.
Despite the many violent phrases of the speech, Seton-
Watson pointed out in a conclusion which still finds echoes
in the work of A. J. P. Taylor, Hitler still did not di-
rectly threaten war nor reject further negotiations. How-
ever, Chamberlain paniced and flew to Berchtesgaden. There,
Seton-Watson admitted, the Prime Minister received an ulti-
matum, though one on which Hitler could now tell he was
unlikely to have to make good. After Berchtesgaden and
until Munich, Hitler was again and again able to play upon
Chamberlain's ignorance of foreign affairs. By so doing,
he caused Chamberlain to override Cabinet and Foreign Office
opposition--here Seton-Watson hinted of his inside informa-
tion of the complex maneuverings behind such events as the
September 26 Foreign Office communique--throw away a position

of unchallengable strength, and make the ignominous Munich surrender.[41]

The conclusions of Seton-Watson and Gedye differed from those of the Commons and periodical critics in their dogmatic certainty of the moral validity of Czechoslovakia and in their assumption of German weakness. Several critics in the House qualified their belief in the efficacy of bluffing by conceding that Britain's defense weaknesses imposed some restraints on British foreign policy. Save for Churchill, those who did not make this admission showed evident relief that they were not facing the German bombs which might have fallen if Chamberlain had acted on their suggestions. Magazine critics were angry at Chamberlain's incompetence in preparing Britain's defenses, but none of them proposed that under such circumstances Britain should have threatened Hitler with war. Gedye ignored such considerations. Seton-Watson only discussed what he considered the ineptness of Chamberlain's diplomacy, and did not mention defense. Similarly, Labourites both in and out of Parliament were confused by the conflicting morality of supporting German revisionist claims and resisting Nazi aggression. Those Tory Rebels and magazine critics who had either never favored revisionism or found it an increasingly hypocritical slogan nevertheless seemed to recognize in some measure revisionism's power to delude

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[41]Ibid., 50-51, 54, 55, 63-4, 73-86, 98-9, 101.

men. Seton-Watson and Gedye admitted no such ambiguity. To
them Czechoslovakia was an historic and sovereign state.
Her relatively slight deviation from one principle of inter-
national justice was no ground for her abrupt dismemberment.
Those who felt otherwise were either ignorant or criminal.[42]

Although Seton-Watson and Gedye's views were atypical,
they were the ones read by later writers researching the
numerous polemical works against Munich in the war years.
By then, Seton-Watson and Gedye's 1938 view of Czechoslovakia
was a commonly held opinion of a gallant ally. Their conclu-
sions on the 1938 arms situation were ones that in retrospect
critics liked to believe true. Seeing them in Seton-Watson
and Gedye's work confirmed the later critics' illusion that
a conviction of Western arms superiority was a widely held
judgment in 1938.

Prague to War

On March 14, 1939, Monsignor Tiso, the Premier of
the autonomous province of Slovakia, responded to a request
made in Berlin, and declared Slovakia's complete independence
from the Second Republic of Czecho-Slavakia. On March 15,
German troops marched into those parts of Bohemia and Moravia
not already taken at Munich. The Germans announced that
rump-"Czechia" was now a protectorate of the Third Reich.
Although Chamberlain initially accepted the March 14-5 events
without demur, an "underground explosion" of public and Par-
liamentary opinion soon forced him to change his mind. On

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[42]Ibid., 23-38; Gedye, 358, 369-70, 399, 409.

March 17 in a Birmingham speech he raised the question whether Hitler's latest action did not reveal an attempt to dominate the world by force. On March 31, with great popular support he announced a British guarantee of Poland. In April Chamberlain introduced a bill for peacetime conscription. This revolution in British diplomacy turned out to be more apparent than real. The Government only languidly pursued negotiations for a military alliance with the Soviet Union. Privately it showed itself eager for Polish concessions to Germany. Apparently Chamberlain hoped that the threat of war would make Hitler amenable to orderly discussions. The Prime Minister's hopes were not realized. Hitler greatly strengthened his position by concluding a non-aggression pact with the Soviet Union on August 23. He then invaded Poland on September 1. Chamberlain and the French sought every chance to avoid fulfilling the Polish guarantee. Parliamentary opinion intervened decisively, and on September 3 Chamberlain was obliged to announce a British declaration of war on Germany.[43]

Although other events now definitely succeeded Munich in the center of public attention, a number of Britons remained interested in the Agreement. The thoughts of some were still bitter even in the perspective of British resistance. Two writers, Sheila Grant-Duff and Wickham Steed,

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[43]Wheeler-Bennett, 349-428.

criticized the slowness in building up the anti-German coalition, and particularly noted the Government's continuing failure to secure an alliance with the Soviet Union. They also feared that Germany had become too strong to be bluffed successfully. Such unfortunate conditions were the result of Munich. Other European nations distrusted Chamberlain because of Munich, and Germany had built up her strength with the resources of Czechoslovakia. In retrospect, Grant-Duff and Steed saw Munich as a time when the obviously right decision could have saved Britain from her present difficulties.[44] After Stalin signed the Nazi-Soviet Pact, the New Statesman immediately attributed his action to fear of "another Munich."[45] The New Statesman, Grant-Duff, and Steed all continued the tendency of seeing Munich as a cause of all contemporary ills. This attitude combined with a continuation of Grant-Duff and Steed's retrospective view of Munich as a time of choice would become much more widespread when the war with Germany floundered in the "Phoney War."

Chamberlain never replied publicly to such charges. Privately he admitted during this time that he "would bear the mark of Munich...to the end of his days."[46] However,

[44] Wickham Steed, "What of British Policy," Contemporary Review, CLV (June 1939), 641-50; Sheila Grant-Duff, "The Fate of Czechoslovakia," Contemporary Review, CLV (May 1939), 552-9.

[45] (anon.), "Peace in the Balance," New Statesman, XVIII (August 26, 1939), 298.

[46] Feiling, 401.

Chamberlain's admirers did feel that some public defense
was necessary in the light of Prague. Chamberlainites had
once justified Munich by ethics; they now justified it by
expediency. When the House met on the afternoon of March
15, just after the Members had learned the news from Prague,
a Chamberlainite made the first statement of what was to
become the standard defense of Munich. Britain's unprepared-
ness, Annesley Sommerville said, caused Munich.[47] The Prime
Minister could not afford to try to bluff Hitler. Spender
made a similar apology in Contemporary Review, and completely
reversed his position of November. Previously Spender had
called Czechoslovakia a "dangerous makeshift."[48] He had advo-
cated British disengagement from Central and Eastern Euro-
pean affairs. He now claimed that lack of preparedness
dictated Munich. As a result of the Agreement, Chamberlain
obtained a "breathing space" for Britain to make good her
arms deficiencies.[49]

Other appeasement supporters were more uncertain
than Spender about the sudden new course in foreign affairs.
In a book written during this time, Ward Price, the Daily
Mail Central European correspondent and the representative
of Lord Rothermere's personal foreign policy, maintained

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[47]Parl. Deb., CCCXLV (1938-39), 479.

[48]Spender, "British Policy Now," 839; Spender, "The
Ideal and the Real," Contemporary Review CLV (May 1939),
513-21.

[49]Spender, "The Ideal and the Real," 520.

that both the British humiliation at Munich and the present

hostility in Anglo-German relations were the result of fail-

ures in communications, not irreconcilable conflict.[50] The

Germans, Price wrote, wanted to dominate Eastern Europe and

divide the world into spheres of influence. But accidents

often created an erroneous impression of much greater Ger-

man ambitions. Also, Price pointed out, as Anglo-German

contacts only came during crises when prestige was at stake,

misimpressions could not be corrected.

The Munich Crisis, Price wrote, best illustrated his

contention. Hitler said in March 1938 that he had no claims

against the Czechs; the next September he took the Sudetenland.

Britons reasoned that he had lied in March. They further

concluded that he was lying when he said that he did not aim

at world domination. Such conclusions, Price maintained,

were false. Hitler had told the truth in March 1938. But

soon afterwards the hypocritical President Benes of Czecho-

slovakia engineered the May Crisis to bolster weakening

Western support. The picture the Western press painted

of the May Crisis as a humiliation of Hitler, Price wrote,

so infuriated the German dictator that he determined to annex

the Sudetenland in September even at the cost of war. Only

in September did Chamberlain really intervene. The timing

of his intervention meant that he could not talk or negotiate

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[50]George Ward Price, _Year of Reckoning_ (London:
Cassell, 1939), 9.

with Germany. He could either surrender or fight. Chamberlain chose surrender because Britain was unprepared for war. However, the shame of Munich, Price went on, made Britons want a war in the future. British preparations made Germans feel they were being encircled. Consequently, they prepared for war themselves. Price resigned himself to the hopelessness of resolving British and German misconceptions. Once war did come, and Britons faced the seemingly futile Phoney War, other writers, less fatalistic than Price, would elaborate on this interpretation of Munich. They would offer it as evidence of Anglo-German misunderstanding. They would offer it in implicit support of an immediate compromise peace.[51]

Price's reservations about resisting Germany and those of such critics as Steed about Chamberlain's competence represented only part of the reaction to the National Government's actions. Many critics of Munich now joined the Chamberlainites in support of the Prime Minister. They did not necessarily accept the new Chamberlainite explanation of Munich, but confidence in the new course in bluffing Hitler made them look at the Government's past policies somewhat detachedly. In a work written at this time, Alexander Werth, the Manchester Guardian Paris correspondent, tended in retrospect, and in complete contrast to his work on later

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[51]Ibid., 223, 272-85, 323-4.

Anglo-French relations, to blame France for Munich.[52] Brit-

ish policy, Werth wrote, had many faults, principally because

of Chamberlain's insularity. But Czechoslovakia was France's

ally, not Britain's, and the French did nothing to protect

Czechoslovakia. They consistently left decisions to the

British. British provincialism and French passivity, Werth

believed, combined throughout the Crisis to produce a Western

diplomacy which repeatedly dropped inadvertent hints to Hit-

ler that he could bid up his requirements without fear of

retaliation.

Werth emphasized the events of September 12-15 as

the best example of the peculiar interaction of British,

French, and German policies and also as the turning point

of the Crisis. On September 12, Hitler made his Nuremberg

speech. Behind Hitler's facade of recklessness in the

speech, Werth agreed with Seton-Watson, the German dictator

was deliberately cautious in stating such demands as that

for a plebiscite in the Sudetenland. He and Henlein felt

encouraged to go much further, first by the continued French

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[52]Alexander Werth, France and Munich, Before and After
the Surrender (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1939), 218-9, 222.
This work is reprinted Werth, The Twilight of France (New York:
Harper and Bros., 1942), 123-336. In Werth's later work he
has tended to blame Britain for problems in Anglo-French
relations. Werth, France, 1940-55 (London: Robert Hale,
1957), xxiv-xxvi. Other 1939 writing with the same point
of view as Werth include: (anon.), "The Grand Alliance
against Aggression," Round Table, XXIX (June 1939), 441-55;
(anon.), "National Unity," Round Table, XXIX (June 1939),
607-10.

failure to mobilize and Chamberlain's flight to Berchtesgaden. This last came as a "pleasant surprise," Werth quoted Hitler as saying.[53] Consequently, Hitler and Henlein demanded "_for the first time_" on September 14 and 15 the inclusion of the Sudetenland in the Reich.[54] A succession of such incidents made Munich. Werth did not approve of the Agreement but apparently seeing a safe future with the new British policy of threatening Hitler he was in retrospect tolerant of the Government. Unlike the pre-Prague work of Seton-Watson, whose conclusions his own otherwise resembled, Werth was sympathetic to the part played by self-determination in the British Government's decisions:

> In spite of all the arguments about the Czech
> Maginot Line and the Bohemian Bastion, France
> and Britain (and in large measure, French and
> British opinion) were led by the ethical argu-
> ments used with such tremendous effect by
> German propaganda. But it was an ethical argu-
> ment the futility of which was terribly diffi-
> cult to demonstrate--until the day when the
> Germans demonstrated it themselves by walking
> into Prague. The most that could be said
> against it in September was what Low said.
> He hit the nail on the head with his cartoon
> on "Procession of Nightmares"--the Nightmares
> being Germans in Czechoslovakia, Germans in
> Rumania, Germans in Hungary, Germans in Alsace,
> German-speaking Swiss, Germans in America, and
> so on. Nevertheless the case for defending
> the integrity of Czechoslovakia was, if not
> exactly an unconvincing one, at least not
> sufficiently clear.[55]

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[53]Werth, _France and Munich_, 219.

[54]_Ibid._, Italics the author's.

[55]_Ibid._, 223-4.

After Prague, Seton-Watson himself came to back the
National Government. He did not qualify or revise his ear-
lier conclusions about Munich--perhaps because of lack of
time. But in an appendix to his Munich account written in
late August 1939 for a later edition of the work, he wrote
that the present was "no time for controversy and still less
for recrimination." No government, he went on, "has ever
faced imminent danger with so unanimous a country behind
it."[56]

The tolerance of Seton-Watson, Werth, and others
for the Chamberlain Government's past performance proved
temporary. It did not survive the frustrations of the Phoney
War and the disaster of Dunkirk. In the light of first one
and then the other of these two events, writers unhappy with
the present increasingly saw Munich as a time of choice in
British foreign policy, a time in which the obviously right
decisions would have averted future troubles. Other writers
in the time of the Phoney war, equally unhappy with the
present, would see Munich as Price had, a symbol of the

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[56]Seton-Watson, From Munich to Danzig (3rd. revised
ed.; London: Methuen, 1939), 277-8. The two previous edi-
tions of this work were Seton-Watson, Britain and the Dicta-
tors (London: Cambridge University Press, 1938)--which was
published just before the German occupation of Austria--and
Seton-Watson, Munich and the Dictators, which is discussed
in this chapter. The third edition includes all the mater-
ial from the second with only one footnote changed plus
material bringing the narrative up to the summer of 1939.
Presumably with more time Seton-Watson would have written
the material on Munich differently, because the new mater-
ial in the third edition is much more sympathetic to the
Government's actions. Seton-Watson, From Munich to Danzig,
180-278.

misunderstandings in Anglo-German relations which led to

an unnecessary and futile war.

CHAPTER IV

WAR TO DUNKIRK: SEPTEMBER 3,

1939-May 10, 1940

The months from the declaration of war to the German

attack in the West form a distinct period in British history,

that of the "Phoney" or "Great Bore" War.[1] Militarily, it

is remembered as a time when, except for the unsuccessful

British expedition to Norway, the British Army sat in the

Gort Line trenches in France, and the Royal Air Force bombed

Germany with propaganda leaflets. However, the period was

more than simply an inactive phase in military operations.

Rather, the modest scale of operations, by design, corres-

ponded to equally modest war aims. The Government, as well

as could be determined, did not seek to defeat Germany tot-

ally, to reverse the Pan-German part of German expansion,

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[1] The phrase "Phoney War" was coined by the late Sena-
tor Borah of Idaho, and is the usual name for the period in
Great Britain today. The phrase "Great Bore War" came from
a contemporary British joke that Britain in the twentieth
century had first had the Boer War, then the Great War, and
now the Great Bore War. It seems to have been an equally
popular title at the time. E. S. Turner, The Phoney War on
the Home Front (London: Michael Joseph, 1961), 180; Evelyn
Waugh, Put out More Flages (2nd ed.; London: Chapman and
Hall, 1948), 11.

or to destroy the Nazi ideology. Instead, it expected limited

operations and an economic blockade to force Germany to nego-

tiate a compromise peace.[2] The impact of the Government's

efforts gave a peculiar quality to life in Britain from

September to May. The long predicted air attacks on British

cities did not take place. There were no new Paschendaeles

on the Western Front. But Poland, whose protection was the

ostensible cause for Britain's going to war, disappeared

as a national state at the end of September, and the Govern-

ment's other war aims and its method of presenting them

were not inspiring. Without the compensation of either

aroused idealism or anger at destruction, the war-time domes-

tic policies, the population evacuations, the black-out, the

gasoline and, eventually, food rationing, seem on the basis

of social history, to have caused mixed feelings of relief,

annoyance, and defeatism.[3]

Munich during this period could be seen as one of

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[2]The Chamberlain Government's precise war aims re-
main a subject of conjecture, for they were never stated.
However, on the basis of subsequently published diaries and
letters, the above seems an accurate statement. Feiling,
418, 424-27; Templewood, 405-06.

[3]Turner, 180-201. Demands for an immediate negotia-
ted peace with German became frequent after the defeat of
Poland. Lloyd George made such a proposal in the House of
Commons on October 3, 1939. The Prime Minister received a
large correspondence on the subject. The topic was appar-
ently discussed so widely in private that Harold Nicolson
wrote one book discussed in this chapter to combat such
talk. Parl. Deb. CCCLI (1939), 1870-6; Feiling, 424;
Nicolson, Why Britain Is at War (Harmondsworth, Middlesex:
Penquin Books Ltd., 1939), 126-41.

a definite sequence of events, those leading up to war. His-
torians and other analysts now had the task of determining
exactly what caused the war and what was Munich's relative
importance as a cause. Six well-known writers took up these
questions from September to May: their answers fell into
two categories. In the first category were E. H. Carr, Sir
Nevile Henderson, and W. N. Medlicott, who wrote the first
lengthy apologia for the Government's foreign policy up to
the outbreak of the war.[4] These writers favored the then
limited war, and saw appropriately modest causes for it.
The second category of writing, represented in works by
Robert Dell, A. B. Keith, and Harold Nicolson, exemplified
the other main political trend of the period, the growing
opposition to Chamberlain and his conduct of the war.[5]
Dell, Keith, and Nicolson's present dissatisfaction appar-
ently colored their examination of the war's origins, for
they emphasized the responsibility of Chamberlain's pre-war

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[4]Edward Hallett Carr, Britain: A Study of Foreign
Policy from the Versailles Treaty to the Outbreak of the War
(London: Longmans, 1939), and Carr, International Relations
since the Peace Treaties (2nd ed; London: Macmillan, 1940);
Sir Nevile Henderson, Failure of a Mission, Berlin 1937-1939
(New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. 1940); William Norton Medli-
cott, British Foreign Policy Since Versailles (London:
Methuen, 1940), and Medlicott, The Origins of the Second
Great War (London: Bell and Sons for the Historical Asso-
ciation, 1940).

[5]Robert Dell, The Geneva Racket, 1920-1939 (London:
Robert Hale, 1941); Arthur Berriedale Keith, The Causes of
the War (London: Nelson, 1940); Nicolson, Why Britain is
at War, and Nicolson, "The Diplomatic Background," The Back-
ground and Issues of the War, H. A. L. Fisher (ed.) (London:
Oxford University Press, 1940).

policies for what they considered the unsatisfactory present
conditions. Both groups of writers treated Munich as a
turning point in the inter-war period. The conclusions of
both showed the influence of the muted billigerency of the
war effort and the unique tempo of contemporary British life.

The Apologists for Munich: Carr, Henderson, and Medlicott

Except for a common apologetic tone, Carr and Medli-
cott's studies do not at first glance seem to have much in
common with Henderson's work. Carr and Medlicott, from the
respective viewpoints of the Foreign Office and academic
life, examined what was now a separate segment of British
history--the years, 1919-39--in order to trace Germany and
the West's drift into war. Henderson, a very social diplo-
mat who equated foreign affairs with personal relationships,
depicted the war's coming in relation to the failure of his
1937-39 Berlin embassy. However, the three writers' con-
tinued support of Munich separated their work from the re-
newed criticism of the Agreement. More important, the anal-
ysis of all three was affected by one common reaction to
the Phoney War. At a time when there were no air raids in
Britain and the casualties from traffic accidents at home
exceeded those from war in France, none of them wrote with
any great resentment towards Germany. During a limited war
which was expected to end with a negotiated settlement, they
all three ascribed Munich and the war to the irrational,

irrelevant, but not irreversible actions and attitudes of both Britain and Germany. Their conclusions were in effect a 'revision' of exclusive German war guilt in the first months of conflict.[6]

Carr, Henderson, and Medlicott's discussion of the background to the Czech crisis reflected, or perhaps explained, the prevailing official attitude towards Anglo-German relations. Carr believed that Britain did not need to stop completely German revision of Versailles after 1933. She was not, he claimed primarily a European trading power, and her one continental strategic interest--the requirement since the advent of air power that France's eastern frontier remain defensible--only involved Germany by implication.[7] More important for policy purposes, all three insisted, Britain lacked the power to arrest German expansion. Henderson was convinced that Pan-German unification was inexorable. Britain would exhaust herself by fruitlessly trying to stop complete German reunion simply because it represented a "hypothetical danger" and a different ideology.[8] Carr and Medlicott were more blunt. Britain was declining. Her resources were fewer, and the Italian and Japanese threats

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[6]Medlicott at least seemed to be aware of the aptness of this description. He introduced his topic with a revisionary view of the origins of World War I which closely resembled his interpretation of the causes of World War II. Medlicott, British Foreign Policy, 1-10.

[7]Carr, Britain, 126.

[8]Henderson, 18.

prevented her from committing all available resources in Europe.[9] Nevertheless, all agreed, limited interests and limited means could not permit isolation from Europe. Germany, Carr pointed out, was in an ugly mood because of the injustices of Versailles. The passive British following of former French harrassment made Britain partly the object of Germany's anger.[10] Under such circumstances the task of British diplomacy was to placate Germany. With friendly relations German expansion could be kept orderly and well within the elastic requirements of Britain's continental interests. The British Government, they were sure, saw in a satisfactory settlement of the Czech question an opportunity for a necessary Anglo-German detente.

The Government's Czech policy, they agreed, failed to bring an improvement on Anglo-German relations. Indeed, partly as a result of what soon became a Czech crisis, Britain and Germany were at war by the fall of 1939. In explaining why this happened, Carr, Henderson, and Medlicott all emphasized the influence of irrational human attitudes and of accidents. To Carr, British public and parliamentary opinion hampered the consistent application of a Czech policy in the national interest, and then brought war by misinterpreting

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[9]Carr, _Britain_, 26, 58, 133; Medlicott, _British Foreign Policy_, 1-2, 218-19.

[10]Carr, _Britain_, 159.

the Government's eventual limited success as a disastrous failure.[11] Medlicott's conclusions somewhat resembled those of Carr. The British Government and public, Medlicott wrote, equated certain kinds of behavior with threats to Britain. For quite different reasons than aggressive intent towards Britain, Hitler's actions in the Czech Crisis conformed perfectly to the British idea of how a menace to Britain should behave, and determined that Britain should resist him.[12] Henderson saw the immediate pre-war years as a Greek tragedy with Hitler, despite questions in Henderson's own mind, as the fatally flawed hero. Hitler's admiration for England struggled with his resentment for her. His original selfless desire to serve Germany struggled with his increasing megalomania, and his upright advisers struggled with sycophants and extremists. In this conflict, Henderson felt, chance brought the triumph of evil and war.[13] Carr and Medlicott agreed with Henderson that one particular accident, the crisis that followed a false rumor of a German mobilization in May, 1938, played a large part in influencing the outcome of the Czech crisis and, consequently, was in some measure responsible for the war.[14]

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[11]_Ibid._, 172-3.

[12]Medlicott, _British Foreign Policy_, 222.

[13]Henderson, ix, 22, 56, 279.

[14]Carr, _Britain_, 170; Henderson, 136-47; Medlicott, _Origins_, 12.

<u>Carr</u>--Morality and the national interest, Carr

believed, clearly indicated the correct 1938 policy for

Britain.[15] The nation required peace, and "in interna-

tional politics you cannot keep the status quo and keep the

peace."[16] Consequently in the Czech question, the British

Government had to obtain wide concessions for Germany by

satisfying the 3,250,000 Germans cut off from the Reich in

Czechoslovakia.[17] However, Chamberlain lacked the bi-

partisan support necessary for quick implementation of such

a policy. His opponents showed no awareness of the weak-

nesses dictating the British course of action. Instead, in

a highly emotional atmosphere, the product of a "legacy

of excitability" from the Great War,[18] the opposition

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[15]Edward Hallett Carr, ed. Merchant Taylors', Trinity Cambridge; Foreign Office, 1916-36. After leaving the For- eign Office, Carr went into academic life, where he has re- mained. His publications to this time included a study of Alexander Herzen's life in exile, a biography of Michael Bakunin, and a 1937 history of international relations; Carr's best known work to this time, one completed just before the war, was Carr, <u>The Twenty Years Crisis</u> (London: Macmillan, 1939), an introduction to the study of inter- national relations. Carr had not yet fully developed his later reputation for uncritical admiration of the Soviet Union. Instead, his work which expresses great annoyance at the harrassment of diplomats in a democracy, reflects Carr's twenty years in the Foreign Office rather than his then recent translation into academic life. Carr's Foreign Office background and the admiring introduction by Lord Halifax make his Britain a semi-official account of inter- war foreign policy.

[16]Carr, <u>Britain</u>, 100.

[17]<u>Ibid</u>., 174-75.   [18]<u>Ibid</u>., 19.

demanded that Britain play the role of world policeman and resist Germany. The emotionalism at home, he was convinced, created Chamberlain's problem with Germany over Czechoslovakia. In May, after unfounded rumours of a German mobilization against Czechoslovakia, the British Government repeated to Hitler the March 24, 1938 formula of British involvement. Then, as Hitler did not invade Czechoslovakia, the British press noisily connected the absence of German invasion and the British warning. They claimed that Britain had made Hitler retreat. With his prestige threatened, Hitler determined on May 28 to settle the Czech question by force. From this point, the situation deteriorated. Britain tried to get both Germany and Czechoslovakia to accept a large measure of autonomy for the Sudeten Germans, but, when it became apparent in September that only a Czech cession of the Sudetenland could save peace, Chamberlain at Munich accepted the partition of Czechoslovakia.

Munich, Carr believed, was a settlement in Britain's national interest. The Prime Minister, rightly, he felt, wanted a peaceful solution. He obtained one though "people were shocked afterwards that a peaceful solution where some other power is first means pleasing the stronger."[19] The territorial grant to Germany was one "no serious British statesman would have threatened war to prevent."[20] Moreover,

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[19]Ibid., 172.   [20]Ibid., 174.

at the time of Munich no British strategic interest was
threatened. Yet, paradoxically, Carr believed, Munich did
cause the war. Attitudes were created in Britain and Ger-
many about it which made war inevitable:

> The Munich Agreement was not only the high
> water mark of...conciliation, but its death
> blow. Germany could hardly fail to perceive
> that substantial concessions had been made only
> when Germany had become strong enough to
> threaten....British public opinion, once the
> first relief was over, reacted in the inevit-
> able way by seeing in...Munich...both a defeat
> and a threat. A general demand arose for re-
> armament on a scale which would discourage
> any repetition of the threat. British rearma-
> ment was treated by Herr Hitler as a provoca-
> tion; and recriminations soon began in the press
> and on political platforms. In the first weeks
> of 1939, there seemed some relaxation in the
> tension. But any prospect of renewed under-
> standing between Britain and Germany vanished
> with the disruption of Czechoslovakia and the
> incorporation of Bohemia and Moravia in March,
> 1939. From this moment preparations went for-
> ward on both sides for the war which broke out
> almost exactly six months later.[21]

Medlicott--Medlicott's conclusions about Munich

somewhat resembled Carr's.[22] Like Carr, Medlicott des-
cribed the drift into war not as a gradual revelation of
conflicting interests but as a creation of conflict in a
series of emotional experiences. In this progression,
Medlicott emphasized two of the same episodes as Carr--

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[21]Ibid., 172-3.

[22]William Norton Medlicott, now Stevenson Professor
of International History at London University, had at this
time only published his study of the Congress of Berlin.

the May crisis of 1938 and the Munich Agreement itself. Both
episodes created attitudes which were irrational in that
they had little relation to either nation's interest or to
the events' actual meaning. Nevertheless, the attitude's
cumulative effect was to bring an Anglo-German war. However,
Medlicott did not share Carr's Foreign Office background.
Consequently, the tolerance Carr reserved for Germany, Med-
licott extended to both the Germans and the British public.

In the inter-war period, Medlicott believed, Hitler's
ambitions were difficult to determine, especially for the
British people. Hitler had a German's mania for theories
about foreign affairs, and his theorizing supplied a "pro-
fusion of ambitions--many of them mutually exclusive."[23]
From Hitler's "moonshine"[24] as Medlicott called it, two not
entirely compatible goals emerged. Hitler wanted all Germans
united in one state plus some further enlargement of Germany
at Russia's expense. Another more important aim of Hitler
expressed the morbid psychology of inter-war Germany. He
wished for "some half-mystical, ill-defined, stroke of poli-
tics which could produce tremendous glory for Germany and
her Fuhrer."[25] Possibly, Hitler's aims would finally become
Napoleonic. No one really knew; "perhaps," Medlicott

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[23]Medlicott, _British Foreign Policy_, 161.

[24]_Ibid._

[25]Medlicott, _Origins_, 23.

wrote, "not even Hitler himself."[26]   Whatever Hitler's ulti-

mate ambition, Medlicott was sure that throughout the years

before the war, he wanted an alliance with Britain.   Such

an understanding would have required British acceptance of

German expansion in Central Europe.   The British attitude

towards this remained confused until after Munich.   Britain

had no real tradition of resisting Germany and she recog-

nized that the Germans had legitimate grievances over Ver-

sailles.   On the other hand, Hitler had the same diplomatic

heavy-handedness which had made William II so misleadingly

sinister in Britain.   The British people feared that satis-

fying Hitler's immediate demands would simple create others.

Also between the wars vague feelings of responsibility for

the succession states of Central and Eastern Europe rein-

forced the long tradition of sympathy for small nations.

The British always identified aggression towards small

countries as ultimately aimed at Britain.[27]

In contrast to the public's confusion about Germany

in 1938, the Government, Medlicott thought, clearly wanted

to satisfy Germany on the Czech question and link a Czech

settlement to a general Anglo-German detente.   However, any

British hope for improving relations could not survive the

May crisis.   Then the tone of the foreign press gave Hitler

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[26]Medlicott, British Foreign Policy, 165.

[27]Ibid., 222-23.

the "brainstorm" of using force against Czechoslovakia.[28]
The humiliation of his opponents became more important than
the practical gains in territory and population he could
achieve by more peaceful means. Unfortunately, as a result
of the May crisis and, slightly later, of the Runciman mis-
sion, Britain appeared more and more as Germany's primary
opponent in the eyes of the world. Through August Germany
made extensive and conspicuous military preparations. The
British Government, correctly Medlicott felt, realized that
war or capitulation had become Britain's alternatives. In
some circumstances, the Government decided, Britain would
go to war over Czechoslovakia. Such a possibility, Medlicott
was sure, did not affect Hitler. In his September 12, 1938
speech at Nuremberg, Hitler showed that he again wanted the
"half mystical, ill-defined...glory"[29] for Germany and him-
self at the expense of others' prestige--in this case Bri-
tain's. Britain now had to choose war or humiliation. Over
Czechoslovakia she chose loss of face. After September 12,
at Berchtesgaden, Godesberg, and Munich, Hitler underlined
his success with typically teutonic humorlessness and heavy-
handedness.[30]

The events culminating in Munich, Medlicott believed,
created the attitudes that led to war. Chamberlain initially

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[28]Medlicott, Origins, 12.

[29]Ibid., 23.

[30]Medlicott, British Foreign Policy, 227-52.

tried to put a good face on the Munich transaction. However,

British public opinion, despite the impression of timidity

given by the post-Munich rejoicing, had decided that Nazi

Germany challenged British courage and standards of inter-

national conduct. The public now decided to resist Germany.

As a measure of Anglo-German mutual incomprehension, Medli-

cott pointed out, Hitler misinterpreted British actions immed-

iately after Munich as evidence of limitless tolerance for

his behavior. He still wanted an Anglo-German alliance, and

after March 15, 1939 "was genuinely bewildered at the ten-

dency of the British public to discover in his Central Euro-

pean policy a German threat to Great Britain."[31] Indeed,

his actions, Medlicott believed, were not a menace, but

merely gave the appearance of one in Britain. Actually,

Hitler's decision for a triumph by a show of force in the

Munich Crisis had been emotional and unreflective. He had

aimed at damaging Britain only to the extent that the German

glory would be at the expense of British prestige. His

enunciation of the policy of Lebensraum at the time of the

occupation of Prague was, Medlicott thought, equally inno-

cuous--it was simply a German's insistence on theorizing

about any step in foreign policy. Hitler considered his

demands on Poland moderate. In August, 1939 he would have

happily allied himself with Britain at the same time he made

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[31]Ibid., 222.

a settlement with Russia. British democracy could not change policies so quickly. Therefore, Britain went to war with Germany. The ostensible cause was Poland. The real cause was German mismanagement of power policy at the time of Munich.[32]

Henderson--The lack of animosity towards Germany which made possible Medlicott's portrait of Hitler was characteristic of the Phoney War period. Such physical and emotional remoteness from the war ended with Dunkirk, and it was not until 1961 that another British historian, A. J. P. Taylor, described Hitler and Munich with assumptions similar to Medlicott's.[33] However, even during this earlier time one analyst, Sir Nevile Henderson, was already somewhat confused in his interpretation of the events of Munich, which proposed modest causes for a modest war.[34] A supporter of

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[32]Ibid., 302.

[33]Taylor, Origins, 151-86.

[34]Henderson (1882-1942), G. C. M. G., P. C., was educated at Eton, and was with the Foreign Service from 1905 to 1939. His avidity for cultivating leaders in the countries to which he was posted earned him the sobriquet, "the uncrowned king of Yugoslovia," when he was at Belgrade; a similar enthusiasm during his 1937-9 Berlin embassy ended his career after September, 1939, three years short of retirement and despite his own request for further assignment. Consequently, his work was mainly a defense of his embassy. His efforts were not entirely successful. Henderson's book was criticized at the time (see Keith, ix, 503); and after the British documents appeared and historians realized the extent of his influence on British diplomatic tactics (see footnote 37 for one example), Henderson received even heavier criticism. Sir Lewis Namier described him as "conceited, vain, self-opinionated....obtuse enough to be a menace and

appeasement and of Chamberlain's war policies, Henderson

generally saw the immediate pre-war years as a Greek tragedy

in which accidents, or more accurately fate, brought war.

At the same time he wondered in retrospect about the valid-

ity of his tragic theme. War, however limited, had come.

With it had also come failure in his embassy, abrupt ter-

mination of his career, and criticism of his actions while

in Berlin. Thus, he wondered if Hitler had not planned all

along to turn on Britain and if, on Hitler's part, "the

tragedy was not accidental but calculated."[35] Henderson's

ambivalence about his central theme strongly affected his

description of Munich and the origins of the war.

The Czech question, Henderson believed, had offered

the Government a chance to disprove the German complaint

that Britain always opposed German expansion. In this in-

stance morality was on the German side, and Britain could

demonstrate her sympathy with the legitimate German aspirations.

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not stupid enough to be innocuous." However, more recently,
A. J. P. Taylor, whose conclusions resembled Henderson's as
well as Medlicott's, has assessed Henderson's embassy some-
what differently; complimenting Failure of a Mission, Taylor
accepted the validity of two of the points he believed in-
fluenced Henderson's views: the moral strength of Germany's
case over Czechoslovakia and the problem of Britain's de-
clining power. Sir Lewis Namier, In the Nazi Era (London:
Macmillan, 1952), 162; and Taylor, 158, 200, 282. Other
discussions of Henderson are Felix Gilbert, "Two British
Ambassadors: Perth and Henderson," The Diplomats, 1919-1939,
Gordon Craig and Felix Gilbert (ed.) (Princeton: Princeton
University Press, 1953), 537-554; Sir Orme Sargent, Diction-
ary of National Biography; D. C. Watt, "Sir Nevile Henderson
Reappraised," Contemporary Review CCI (March, 1962), 151-54.

[35]Henderson, 110.

The German reaction to his démarche in early May indicated,
he felt, recognition and appreciation of active British
help. The May crisis changed everything. This chance
event following erroneous reports of a German mobilization
created the attitudes which led to Munich. First, an acci-
dent made Ribbentrop a bitter enemy of England. A British
newspaper reported, incorrectly Henderson pointed out, that
Henderson had questioned the Army about the rumoured mobili-
zation rather than the German Foreign Minister, Joachim von
Ribbentrop. Ribbentrop's vanity was wounded, and he abused
Henderson in an interview on May 21, 1938. As a result of
his behavior, Ribbentrop temporarily lost influence with Hit-
ler. The double blow made him seek revenge on Britain in
September by telling Hitler that the British would never
fight. The May crisis had an even worse effect on Hitler.
The British press jeering at his supposed retreat infuriated
him. Feeling his prestige threatened, Hitler decided to
settle the Czech question by force. Unhappily, Henderson
noted, the Czechs, who had been honestly misled by routine
German troop movements, now faced an impatient Germany with
a stubbornness caused by false confidence. This combination
of a newspaper's mistake angering Ribbentrop and the paradox
of false charges of aggression creating an aggressive intent
would seem to fit Henderson's theme of tragedy. However,
the theme was flawed. Looking back, Henderson also wondered
if the May crisis were not "an excuse for Hitler to come

down on the side of his extremists and approve a solution by force."[36]

In the perspective of subsequent events, Henderson doubted that any Czech concessions would have stopped Hitler from taking his revenge on Benes after May. At the same time Henderson confusedly suggested that Britain should have immediately declared herself in favor of autonomy in May. This would have convinced the Germans of forthcoming definitive action. In any case, by August, he recalled, the German Army was obviously preparing for war. Hitler was looking for an excuse for using force. It was Henderson's job to keep Hitler from having either the mood or the pretext to attack the Czechs. Therefore, he followed Hitler and his entourage to the Nazi Party Congress at Nuremberg. Apparently aware of the criticism of his actions there, Henderson wrote that at Nuremberg he emphasized to the various Nazi cliques the British intention to resist aggression. He did not warn Hitler personally because "the effect would have been to drive him off the deep end and...made... immediate aggression against Czechoslovakia unavoidable."[37] Henderson's

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[36]Ibid., 143.

[37]Ibid., 149. On September 9, 1938, Lord Halifax instructed Henderson to warn Hitler personally that if Germany attacked Czechoslovakia and France then fulfilled her obligations to the Czechs, Britain would go to war as well. From Nuremberg, Henderson wrote Halifax back advising against this course. Halifax accepted Henderson's advice. Duff Cooper, as First Lord of the Admiralty, saw this particular correspondence. A note in Cooper's diary at the time showed

approach, he felt, was partially justified by Hitler's Nurem-
berg speech of September 12. Despite his truculent tone,
Hitler only demanded Sudeten self-determination. Neverthe-
less, this was enough for the Sudetenlanders. Acting inde-
pendently, Henderson seemed to think, they began rioting.
The Czechs replied by declaring martial law.

The Prime Minister at this point, Henderson went
on, set in motion a plan for meeting Hitler personally.
After the British rejection of the demands Hitler made at
Godesberg, Sir Horace Wilson warned Hitler on September 27,
seemingly without effect, of Britain's intentions if war
came, and war indeed seemed imminent. Then a chance event,
Henderson thought, helped save peace. Hitler saw the gloom
with which Berliners watched a mechanized division pass up
the Wilhelmstrasse, and he hesitated. The next day, Septem-
ber 28, Goring's energetic support of the fresh Anglo-French
proposals, an action which, Henderson noted, tragically pre-
cluded him from favoring peace again, and Mussolini's call

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that he was furious with Henderson for his action; and Cooper,
without mentioning Henderson's name, spoke of the failure to
warn Hitler at Nuremberg in Parliament on October 3, 1938.
Reactions like Cooper's from others are probably the reason
Henderson made such a point of defending his actions. When
the record of his action was published with the British docu-
ments, Namier wrote that because Henderson "helped to baulk
whatever feeble attempts were made to stand up to Hitler,"
he was "one of the chief artificers of Munich." Halifax to
Kirkpatrick (Berlin), September 9, 1938, D. B. F. P., 277-78;
Henderson to Halifax, September 10, 1938, Ibid., 283-4;
Halifax to Henderson, September 10, 1938, Ibid., 285; Cooper,
Old Men Forget (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1954), 226; Parl.
Deb., CCCXXXIX (1937-38), 34; Namier, 162.

for a Four Power meeting appealed to Hitler's hesitant mood.
He invited Chamberlain to yet a third meeting at Munich.[38]

Henderson, unlike Carr and Medlicott, did not believe
that war became inevitable after Munich. Rather, Munich
marked the limit of British acquiescence in German terri-
torial expansion. After Munich, Hitler was more than ever
of two minds about England. He was grateful to Chamberlain
for having saved him from a general war. On the other hand,
his admiration was mixed with resentment for England as an
obstacle to him. His own impulses and his extremist ad-
visers had told him that he could have had a short war with
the Czechs without outside interference. He also disliked
sharing the favorable attention of the German people with
Chamberlain. In this mood, chance again intervened to make
him alienate Britain by occupying Prague. Henderson thought
this might never have happened if the Czechs had not acted
so clumsily or if the British Government mission for arrang-
ing economic cooperation had come to Berlin earlier. Yet,
Henderson also wondered if Hitler's basic dishonesty, which
the British had glimpsed at Godesberg, and the need of main-
taining his tenuous position by even grander coups had not
made other triumphs by force inevitable. In either event,
the occupation of Prague destroyed the Munich Agreement and
broke faith with Chamberlain. Britain now resisted Hitler
by guaranteeing Poland. Even after the Polish guarantee,

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[38]Henderson, 148-75.

chance still played a part in bringing war. Although Hitler
was set on war, Henderson believed that it still might have
been averted if the Germans had understood that Britain in-
tended to fight for Poland, if the Poles had been less stub-
born, if Ciano had visited Berlin earlier before the exchange
of bitter notes with Warsaw in August, or if Ribbentrop's
influence had not been so great during the last days before
the conflict.[39]

Henderson, Carr, and Medlicott's writings were a
distinctive, though not entirely original, contribution to
the historiography of Munich.[40] They offered mainly a
different interpretation of Hitler's actions than did critics
of Munich. Medlicott emphasized an emotional rather than
political pattern in Hitler's acts. Hitler's behavior in
the Czech crisis, Medlicott believed, was not a stage in a
plan for conquering Czechoslovakia and ultimately Britain.
Instead, it expressed an emotional need for an exhiliarating
but politically pointless triumph. To support his assump-
tion, Medlicott pointed out that all Hitler's actions, his
heavy-handedness, his neurotic yearning for prestige, and

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[39]Ibid., 176-301.

[40]J. A. Spender and Lord Elton, in the period between
Munich and Prague, protested against any connection of Hit-
ler's actions towards Czechoslovakia and his attitudes to-
wards Britain. Czechoslovakia, they insisted, was an arti-
ficial state, and no had no right to the same usages as
established nations. Equally, between Prague and the de-
claration of war, Ward Price emphasized the disastrous effect
of the May crisis on Hitler. Spender, "Munich and After,"
521-22, and Spender, "British Policy Now," 839; Lord Elton,
686-92; Price, 223.

his mania for such principles as <u>Lebensraum</u> were typically

German and, the context of German culture, relatively harm-

less. Similarly, he suggested, the equation of Hitler's

actions in Czechoslovakia with his disposition towards Bri-

tain voiced a subjective attitude of British culture. Hit-

ler, he wrote, by no means made the same identification.

Henderson, though with reservations, also explained Hitler's

behavior differently than critics. It was, he insisted, the

result of chance. Henderson contended that Hitler had no

plan for conquest before the May Crisis; and then only an

accident had caused Hitler to behave as he did in the Munich

crisis in September. The apologists' descriptions owed part

of their distinctiveness to the relative detachment about

Germany, which was possible during the Phoney War. Perhaps

more important, their distinct emphasis on misunderstanding

and chance complemented exactly the contemporary hope for a

negotiated settlement of a limited war.

This connection between the writers' conclusions and

the politics of the time of their writing raises a question

of determinism. Certainly, the three men believed, Britain

could not afford to fight the all-out war which would prob-

ably seem necessary if one believed strongly in German war

guilt. Their conclusions about Hitler were only slightly

based on substantial evidence; even Henderson had very little

contact with Hitler personally.[41] The three writers'

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[41]"Except for a few brief words at chance meetings,"
Henderson wrote," I never met /Hitler_7 except upon official
and invariably disagreeable business." Henderson, 34.

contention about the May crisis was equally unverifiable at

the time. Henderson was in the best position to know that

the reports of a German mobilization were false, but even

the Prime Minister had not believed him at the time.[42]   Also,

their connection of the May crisis and Hitler's attitude in

September rested only on a later statement of the German dic-

tator. Hitler on this occasion seems to have been telling

the truth, but he was a dubious source.[43] The subsequent

treatment of their work suggests that their interpretations

were the product of the Phoney War mood in Britain. The

three writers themselves later described Munich differently.[44]

Historians for years ignored Carr and Medlicott's works even

before document publications made them obsolete.[45] Henderson's

work remained essential reading as a primary source,[46] but

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[42]Ibid., 137-8. The correctness of Henderson's con-
clusions was proven with the appearance of the German foreign
policy documents after the war (See Namier, 155). However,
in a letter of May 28, 1938, Chamberlain wrote, "I have no
doubt...that the German government /sic/ made all preparations
for a coup.../and/ that...they decided after getting our warn-
ings that the risk was too great." Feiling, 354.

[43]Hitler, 1530-32.

[44]Carr, International Relations between the Two World
Wars, 1919-1939 (London: Macmillan, 1947), 267-73; Henderson
Water under the Bridges (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1945),
211-24; Medlicott, "The Coming of the War in 1939," From
Metternich to Hitler, Aspects of British Foreign Policy, 1814-
1939, Medlicott (ed.) (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul for
the Historical Association, 1963), 231-56.

[45]Neither of Carr's works written in the Phoney War
period have ever appeared in bibliographies on Munich. Med-
licott's work also went unnoticed by historians until listed
in Taylor's bibliography in 1961. Taylor, 283.

[46]Of the seven men usually assumed to be most closely
associated with the planning and implementation of appeasement,

was also the basis for harsh criticism of Henderson person-

ally. Indeed, after Dunkirk and until A. J. P. Taylor's

work in 1961, no British historian described Hitler as

Medlicott had--as a figure of low comedy--or gave as large

a part to chance in the Munich Crisis as did Henderson.

Although one cannot say that after Dunkirk no British

historian could possibly have regarded Hitler and the ori-

gins of the war as Carr, Henderson, and Medlicott did, it is

significant that for twenty-one years no British historian

agreed with them.

<div align="center">

The Critics of Munich: Dell,
Keith, and Nicolson

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Dell, Keith, and Nicolson's conclusions about Hitler,

Munich, and the war's origins contrasted sharply with those

of Carr, Henderson, and Medlicott. They interpreted the back-

ground of the Czech crisis differently.[47] They also detected

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Chamberlain, Lord Halifax, Sir John Simon, Sir Samuel Hoare, Geoffrey Dawson, Sir Horace Wilson, and Henderson, only Hoare (afterwards Viscount Templewood) and Henderson wrote memoirs of any value for writers on Munich (see Templewood, 285-326). Lord Halifax and Simon (afterwards Lord Simon) did write memoirs; "/their7 efforts," Taylor wrote correctly, "are best passed over in silence." Earl Halifax, Fulness of Days (London: Collins, 1957), 184-211; Lord Simon, Retrospect (London: Hutchinson, 1952), 238-54; Taylor, 282.

[47]Dell, the former Manchester Guardian correspondent in Geneva, had written several books on German, French, and British politics. Keith, a professor of Constitutional Law at Edinburgh, was the author of numerous works on the British constitution and the British Empire. Nicolson, the son of a Permanent Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office, was himself in the Foreign Service for ten years; he was at this time a Member of Parliament. In 1939 he was best known for a biography of his father, Lord Carnock, and a work on the evolution of diplomacy.

a different relationship between the various episodes of the Czech crisis. Whereas Carr, Henderson, and Medlicott believed that Munich created irrational forces in both Britain and Germany which caused the war, the critics saw Munich creating an irrevocable impression of British cowardice in Germany. This and the impression of British bad faith in Russia made war inevitable on terms unfavorable to Britain.

Dell, Keith, and Nicolson believed that by 1938 Germany had a determination to conquer Czechoslovakia and all of Europe. This opinion rested on different conclusions about Hitler's writings, the character of the German people, and the meaning of Hitler's actions up to 1938. Mein Kampf, which Medlicott dismissed as mostly "moonshine,"[48] showed Nicolson that Hitler was an "almost demented fanatic" whose limitless ambitions included the conquest of Britain and France.[49] While to Carr, Henderson, and Medlicott Versailles only temporarily soured the German character, the critics felt that the Germans had always been brutal and aggressive.[50] Also, Hitler's actions from 1933 to 1938, they were sure, did not fit Medlicott's picture of spasmodic and otherwise

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[48]Medlicott, British Foreign Policy, 161.

[49]Nicolson, Why Britain Is at War, 106, 31-44.

[50]Dell, 196; Keith, 47-192; Nicolson, "Diplomatic Background," 96-102.

meaningless expressions of a craving for prestige. Rather,
Hitler's behavior demonstrated his limitless greed and deceit.
In view of such circumstances, the British national interest
and, Dell and Keith added, Britain's obligations under the
League Covenant demanded the defense of the Czech democratic
and strategic fortress. Dell, Keith, and Nicolson did not
concede any inadequacy of British resources for the necessary
resistance to Germany. Presumably if they felt that such a
problem existed, and there is no evidence that they did,
they believed that the impossibility of accomodating Germany
made it irrelevant. Possibly as a result of their sureness
of Russian cooperation with the West, they assumed that the
anti-German forces were stronger than Germany, and that the
Germans knew it.[51] Thus, whereas Carr, Henderson, and Medli-
cott considered resistance in 1938 as unnecessary and impos-
sible, the critics deemed it both imperative and tenable.

Dell, Keith, and Nicolson's conception of Hitler and
their conviction of German weakness made them see quite dif-
ferent relationships between the various events culminating
in Munich than did Carr, Henderson, and Medlicott. They re-
jected the latter's belief that initial British sympathy
with Germany gave hope of a peaceful settlement of the Czech
question. Instead, they contended that Chamberlain's May
10th hint that the West would not fight for the Czechs en-
couraged Hitler to try seizing Czechoslovakia at the end of

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[51]Dell, 273; Keith, xii; Nicolson, Why Britain Is at
War, 88, 118.

May. Then only the promptness of the Czech mobilization
checked Hitler temporarily.[52] In contrast, Carr, Henderson,
and Medlicott thought, the press jeering at his supposed
retreat in the May Crisis drove Hitler to settle the Czech
question by force. Nicolson argued that Hitler only started
the Munich crisis after the September 7th _Times_ leader con-
vinced him that he could take Czechoslovakia without a gen-
eral war.[53] Dell was sure that Hitler only began the Munich
crisis after he and Chamberlain had planned it together.
Chamberlain then scared the British people into accepting
the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia.[54] Keith and Nicolson
agreed that Hitler skillfully bluffed Chamberlain at Munich,
and beguiled him with lies about self-determination and the
end of German demands in Europe.[55] None of the critics ac-
cepted Medlicott's contention that British prestige and in-
terests were only accidentally and somewhat irrelevantly
involved at Munich. Rather, they insisted, British honor
and interests suffered a great defeat.

Dell, Keith, and Nicolson's disapproval of Munich
was not retrospective and it was not original. All three
had spoken out against the Agreement in 1938 and their views

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[52]Dell, 265-6; Keith, 347; Nicolson, _Why Britain Is at War_, 80.

[53]Nicolson, _Why Britain Is at War_, 81.

[54]Dell, 265-79.

[55]Keith, 484; Nicolson, _Why Britain Is at War_, 95.

had not changed a great deal.[56]   Unlike Carr, Henderson, and

Medlicott, the peculiar perspective of the Phoney War did

not inspire them to original or striking contributions to

the historiography of Munich.   Keith's account drew almost

entirely on the Seton-Watson and Werth books; and as Keith

did not contribute any equivalent special knowledge or com-

pilation of primary sources, his work is no longer much con-

sulted.[57]   Similarly, Dell's charges of British collusion

with Hitler were much like Gedye's, though without primary

source material comparable to Gedye's descriptions of

Czechoslovakia.[58]   Alone of the three, Nicolson's Why Britain

is at War is still listed in bibliographies in the 1960's.

Two parts of his work were a contribution to the primary

source material.   His humorous comparison of Hitler with

George Smith, the "brides in the bath" murderer,[59] and his

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[56]Dell, letter to the editor, 523; a September 30,
1938 article of Keith's in The Scotsman is quoted in Keith,
362-4; Nicolson, "After Munich," 513-24.

[57]Seton-Watson, Munich and the Dictators, 23-179;
Werth, France and Munich.

[58]Gedye, 356-494.

[59]Nicolson, Why Britain Is at War, 7-30. Nicolson,
who was a member of the Versailles committee which drew up
Czechoslovakia's frontiers, recalled the factors which prompted
the committee's decisions. Also, as an M.P. present at the
time Nicolson described Chamberlain's September 28, 1938
speech in the House of Commons. Nicolson's account contra-
dicted that of Seton-Watson, who was also present. Whereas
Seton-Watson maintained that Chamberlain was obviously ex-
pecting an invitation from Hitler, and was purposely draw-
ing out his speech until it arrived, Nicolson was sure that
the invitation to Munich was a complete surprise to Chamber-
lain. Ibid., 76, 90-91; Seton-Watson, 98-99.

portrayal of Chamberlain and Sir Horace Wilson inaugurating appeasement "with the bright faithfulness of two curates entering a pub for the first time" were also memorable.[60] However, Nicolson's narrative too resembled Seton-Watson's closely, and did not provide any new interpretation to the development of the Crisis.

The significance of Dell, Keith, and Nicolson's work lay, rather, in their description of Munich's impact on subsequent events. They attributed to Chamberlain's Munich decision the responsibility for the war itself and what they considered Britain's unfavorable wartime position. Munich, Dell insisted, made war inevitable because it "served to increase Hitler's arrogance and impel him to make further demands."[61] Also, as a consequence of Munich, Hitler became convinced that Britain lacked the courage ever to oppose him: "the disastrous effect of /Chamberlain's/ action," Keith wrote, "was to be seen in September /1939/ when Herr Hitler, almost to the last moment could not believe that Mr. Chamberlain would keep to Poland a pledge which he had dishonoured for Czechoslovakia."[62] More important, all three agreed, war only became strategically possible for the Germans when they exploited the Russian

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[60]Nicolson, _Why Britain Is at War_, 106.

[61]Dell, 273.

[62]Keith, 379.

distrust of the West over Munich, and obtained the Nazi-Soviet Pact.[63] According to Dell, though he admitted there was no evidence as yet for the story, Ribbentrop in August, 1939 took to Moscow a phonograph record of Hitler and Chamberlain's Berchtesgaden conversations with which to show the Russians how Chamberlain had plotted against them.[64] Munich, Keith pointed out, also alienated America from sympathy with Britain's cause.[65] This lack of effective allies combined with the strengthening of Germany's western fortifications in the year between Munich and the war meant, they believed, that as a direct result of the Prime Minister's 1938 action, Britain had to fight isolated and without hope of decisive victory on behalf of the Poles, whom Dell and Keith at least found militarily inefficient and politically distasteful.[66]

Dell, Keith, and Nicolson's depiction of Munich's influence betrayed their frustration with Britain's present situation. The main source of this frustration seems to have been a feeling, not so much that disasters were coming to Britain, but that the decisive victory, which their description of Germany suggested was necessary, was in fact impossible in the present stalemate.[67] Exactly why they

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[63]Dell, 273; Keith, xii; Nicolson, _Why Britain Is at War_, 88, 118.

[64]Dell, 273.   [65]Keith, 370.

[66]Dell, 207; Keith, 387.

[67]None of the critics seemed concerned that Britain's position might worsen.

decided on Munich as the source of their discontent is difficult to determine. The agreement was then nearly two years distant, and had been succeeded by other dramatic events. The writings of Carr, Henderson, and Medlicott, which saw no strategic effect by Munich on the present limited war, indicated that such conclusions as Dell, Keith, and Nicolson's did not automatically present themselves to all analysts. Further, in the light of events since Munich, some of the 1938 arguments for bluffing Germany were now challengeable. Henderson contended that the Germans would have defeated the Czechs as quickly as they did the Poles.[68] The Soviet Union's reliability and, after the Finish War, efficiency as an ally were at this time debatable.[69] However, to these questions and others with which the defenders of Munich did not deal, such as the possibility that the Western Powers would have mounted an offensive in 1938 or that the German generals would have deposed Hitler, Dell, Keith, and Nicolson apparently gave answers which pointed to disastrous results of a wrong British policy over Czechoslovakia. A possible explanation for their doing so is that their present exasperation with Chamberlain and the state of the war predisposed them

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[68]Henderson, 170.

[69]Sir Charles Petrie, "Twenty Years of British Foreign Policy," Quarterly Review CCLXXIV (January 1940), 16.

to emphasize the responsibility of his past acts for the conditions of the present.

Whatever the reason for their conclusions, many others agreed with them. Such thinking apparently had some effect on British politics at the time, and its continuance was to have enormous impact on the subsequent historiography of Munich. In the May 7-9, 1940 House of Commons debate, several Members brought up Chamberlain's Munich decision as an argument for his resignation.[70] On May 10, 1940, Chamberlain, feeling that Munich, not the Norway campaign, was the reason for his fall, did resign as Prime Minister.[71] On the same day, the Phoney War ended with the German invasion of Holland and Belgium. Before the end of May, the British Expeditionary Force was fleeing the continent from Dunkirk and other ports. Other writers regarded Dunkirk as Dell, Keith, and Nicolson regarded earlier British defeats. They connected it with Munich.[72] Their efforts and the new climate of opinion in Britain abruptly ended approaches to Munich like those of Medlicott and Henderson. Instead, Munich once more became a political issue.

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[70]Parl. Deb., CCCLX (1940), 1178, 1180, 1265, 1281-83, 1283, 1300-01, 1308, 1324.

[71]Margot Asquith to Geoffrey Dawson, May 11, 1940, Evelyn Wrench, Geoffrey Dawson and our Times (London: Hutchinson, 1955), 415.

[72]Cato, /Michael Foot, Peter Howard, and Frank Owen7, Guilty Men (New York: Frederick A. Stokes, 1940), 51-73.

CHAPTER V

DUNKIRK TO THE GENERAL ELECTION:

1940-45

The Summer and Fall of 1940

The German offensive of May 10, 1940 began an unprec-
edented series of disasters for Great Britain. Before the
month of May was out, the British Expeditionary Force hurr-
iedly evacuated the Continent at Dunkirk and other ports,
leaving behind almost all Britain's military stores and
some 60,000 soldiers in German hands. Before the end of
June, the French surrendered to Hitler. Nearly all of Europe
up to the Russian frontier came under German domination. In
the months that followed, Britons could actually watch the
Royal Air Force and the Luftwaffe battle for control of the
skies over England. Then, without knowing that the R.A.F.
had won and that the invasion of Britain would not come, the
British people endured the bombing of British industrial and
civilian targets which is remembered as the "Blitz." At the
same time at sea the Royal Navy with the Merchant Marine
fought for control of the shipping lanes to North America.
In these battles Britain fought alone, without real hope of

victory over the coalition aligned against her. Britain

did receive increased American aid in 1940, but neither

the United States nor the Soviet Union chose to intervene

militarily.

A number of internal political changes also took

place at this time. On May 10, a genuine coalition govern-

ment was formed under Winston Churchill. Chamberlain re-

signed as Prime Minister the same day. Soon afterwards,

Sir John Simon resigned as Chancellor of the Exchequer,

and Sir Samuel Hoare gave up his position as Secretary of

State for Air. Only Lord Halifax, the fourth member of the

1938 Foreign Policy Committee of the Cabinet, stayed on in

his old job of Foreign Secretary; he too was to quit in

December 1940. Replacing these men and other National Gov-

ernment ministers were mainly former Tory Rebels, Labourites,

and Liberals.

It has often seemed to later writers that the sum

of these resignations and replacements meant the absolute

end of the rule of Chamberlain and his "decayed serving

men."[1] Contemporaries, on the other hand, believed that

only a few alterations had been made. Chamberlain, after

all, remained in the Cabinet as Lord President of the

Council until his final illness in late September 1940.

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[1]Leo Amery in Gilbert and Gott, 350.

Simon also stayed on as Lord Chancellor. Simon's replace-
ment at the Exchequer was another Chamberlainite, Sir

Kingsley Wood. Although Hoare and Halifax left the Cabinet,

they went on to important ambassadorial posts in Madrid

and Washington. All these men remained in office because

the National Government supporters were still the strong-

est party in the Commons. They had lost sixty votes in the

May 9 division which precipitated Chamberlain's resignation.

They might reluctantly give up Chamberlain in exchange for

a coalition, but they had no intention of proscribing them-

selves. This continued Conservative power in Parliament

convinced one shrewd, contemporary observer that Churchill

would be merely a front man for continued Chamberlainite

dominance.[2]

The idea of a Chamberlainite fall is only one partly

incorrect element of the legend which has grown up about

this period. Writers have also created the impression that

once Chamberlain left the Premiership the British people

immediately became brave and noble from the inspiration

of Churchill's speeches. They were full of tough Cockney

humour in the face of the Blitz. And they were in irra-

tionally high spirits at the prospect of fighting Hitler

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[2]Thomas Jones to Violet Markham, July 13, 1940,
Thomas Jones, 464-65. In this letter Jones reports his
agreement with remarks made to him by David Lloyd George.

alone. This is partially true; however, it is often forgotten that many Britons recognized the desperation of the nation's position and that men of all parties now turned in fury on those whom they felt were responsible for Britain's plight, the leaders of the 1931-40 National Government. Lord Baldwin spent his last years in misery because of a stream of abusive letters and the destruction of property on his estate. Chamberlain received similar letters. In the press, in periodicals, and in books, angry writers criticized the National Government policies. They called upon Churchill and the nation to drive its surviving members from office.

The critics mainly concentrated on Neville Chamberlain who lived on until November 1940. They could choose any number of Chamberlain's actions to criticize, because in 1940 it seemed to many that all of Chamberlain's ministry had proven a disastrous failure. Chamberlain had repeatedly promised the British people invincible military power. In 1940 the British Army suffered an ignominious defeat, and the R.A.F. had not yet finally proven its quality.[3] Chamberlain had tried appeasing Italy and Ireland. Italy now entered the war against Britain. The Irish Government's refusal to modify its neutrality caused the death of many British seamen in the U-boat war.[4]

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[3]Cato, 11, 73.

[4]Feiling, 309-11; Eden, 68-70; Churchill, 276-78.

No one mentioned at this time the effect of Chamberlain's

policies on Britain's relations with the U.S.S.R. But some

hinted that the United States remained neutral because

Chamberlain's policies had alienated the Americans.[5]

Most of the anger centered on Chamberlain's Munich

policy. More people of all parties were angry about Munich

than ever before, and the final depth of many Briton's dis-

content with the Agreement came at this time. The accusing

phrase, "Men of Munich," appeared and passed into general

use.[6] Chamberlain went to his grave haunted by memories

of Munich, not Dunkirk.[7] There were several reasons for

this concentration of wrath. As the Germans bombed England

a number of writers remembered with bitter irony the "fatuous

complacency" of Chamberlain's promises of "peace with honour"

and "peace in our time."[8] "Such criminal nonsense," the

historian, D. W. Brogan wrote, now reminded him of "a bucket-

shop circular boosting a salted gold mine."[9] Too, British

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[5]D. W. Brogan, "The Policy of Munich," Spectator, CLXV (October 4, 1940), 340.

[6]The phrase "Men of Munich" was apparently first used in Morrell, 281. This little known work by a Daily Express correspondent appeared in March 1939. The phrase appears nowhere else until the summer of 1940 when A. L. Rowse used it. It then passed into popular usage. A. L. Rowse, "End of an Epoch," Political Quarterly, XI (July 1940), 260.

[7]Margot Asquith to Geoffrey Dawson, May 11, 1940, Wrench, 415; Feiling, 446, 456.

[8]Rowse, 255, 259.

[9]Brogan.

writers had been attributing the cause of grievances to
Munich since shortly after the signing of the Agreement,
and they continued to do so now. The hesitation of America
to become a belligerent was seen as the result of Munich.[10]
Writers also saw a connection between the recent debacle
in France and Munich. Most of the German tanks in France,
it was reported, were products of the Skoda Munitions Works
which Germany had taken at Munich.[11]

The sources of British anger over Munich also in-
cluded a belief in British choice at Munich. Appeasement,
writers now contended, was Chamberlain's personal policy.
It was partly the product of the "extraordinary smugness
and self-righteousness" of his Non-conformist background.[12]
Too, he approached Hitler in the spirit of a Buchmanite or
Oxford Group follower, "who is guided to eschew cut-throat
competition and come to terms with his business rival what-
ever his morals or methods."[13] In doing this, Chamberlain
ignored "his Foreign Secretary, his Under-Secretary and the
corporate accumulated wisdom of the Foreign Office."[14] He

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[10]Ibid.

[11]Cato, 143; Keith, 503. Keith's mention of the
Skoda Works appeared in an appendix to his work written in
July 1940.

[12]Rowse, 266. Another historian to emphasize the
personal element in Chamberlain's foreign policy was a former
supporter and now critic, Sir Charles Petrie, Twenty Years
Armistice--and After: British Foreign Policy since Ver-
sailles (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1940), 179-80, 217. 250.

[13]Kingsley Martin, "Notes on the Anglo-Saxon Char-
acter," Political Quarterly XI (July 1940), 215.

[14]Rowse, 256.

was too great a fool to see Hitler's duplicity. Instead, he

trusted Hitler and "sighed with satisfaction," when he forced

the "distasteful scheme" of Munich on the Czech rulers in

order to please the German dictator.[15] Thus, he threw away

the Skoda works, the four Czech armored divisions, an Anglo-

Soviet alliance, and a chance to fight "the present war...

on a smaller scale...for the same cause of world freedom."[16]

The Chamberlainite reaction to such charges was

equally emotional. In September 1940, after D. W. Brogan

commented on the Republican use of Munich against Roosevelt

in the American Presidential campaign, Stanley Reed, a

Conservative M. P., wrote the Spectator and demanded "an

embargo on cheap sneers against the policy of Munich."[17]

In November when a Spectator contributor wrote a respectful

obituary of Chamberlain--one which claimed an honored place

for the ex-Premier in British history and whose only criti-

cism was a comment that Chamberlain was "not...fortunate in

speech"[18]--a reader protested "nauseated disgust" at such

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[15]Cato, 55.

[16]Ernest Woodhead, Letter to the Editor, Spectator, CLXV (September 27, 1940), 316. See also Cato, 134; Rowse, 258; Robert M. Bradbury, Letter to the Editor, Spectator, CLXV (November 22, 1940), 527.

[17]Stanley Reed, "The Policy of Munich," Spectator, CLXV (September 20, 1940), 292.

[18]Wilson Harris, "Mr. Chamberlain," Spectator, CLXV (November 22, 1940), 257.

"vitriolic criticism of Mr. Chamberlain."[19]   The content

of the Chamberlainite protests at this time was slight.

They justified Munich as a breathing space for British

rearmament.   They attributed the origins of the crisis

to the foolish French policy of East European guarantees.

The Wartime Pamphlets

After 1940, Britain's fortunes improved greatly.

In June 1941, the Soviet Union was drawn into the war against

Germany.   In December of that year, the United States inter-

vened as well.   The entry of these two powers into the anti-

Nazi alliance seemed to assure ultimate triumph, and vic-

tory in Europe did finally come in May 1945.   Shortly after-

wards, even before the surrender of Japan, Britain held her

first General Election in ten years.

During the years from the formation of the Coalition

Government to the General Election most of the traditional

forms of British political activity stopped.   Under the

Coalition agreement there were to be no contested bye-

elections; the party which had held a seat nominated a

successor candidate who ran unopposed.   Both Parliamentary

debates and Question Time became less crucial.   Collective

Cabinet responsibility for all Coalition decisions, the in-

terests of security, and the public veneration for Churchill

discouraged any meaningful discussion of current policies on

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[19]J. Horatio Fraser, Letter to the Editor, *Spectator*,
CLXV (November 22, 1940), 527.

party lines. However, partisan feelings did exist. Labour-
ites and Conservatives disagreed on such war questions as
the opening of a second front in France and the ethics of
strategic bombing in Germany. Labourites continued to re-
sent the presence of Chamberlainites in the Government; as
late as January 1942 a group of Labour M. P.'s demanded that
Churchill fire all Ministers who had voted for the Munich
Agreement.[20] Probably most important, many Labourites be-
lieved that the Conservatives were exploiting the Coalition
for their own electoral benefit.[21]

In the atmosphere of frustrated partisanship--and
with wartime affairs ruled out as a debate topic--first
Labourites and then Conservatives took to writing polemical
pamphlets on British foreign policy in the years before the
Coalition. The pamphlet writing began in the summer of
1940. Then three Labourites wrote the first and best known
of the pamphlets, Guilty Men in a vain attempt to have the
Chamberlainites purged from the Coalition.[22] Through the
years after 1940, Labourites continued to write about pre-
Coalition times. They increasingly did so looking for
ammunition for a postwar general election.[23] A number of

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[20]Parl. Deb., CCCLXXVII (1942), 604-5; Churchill,
The Second World War, Vol II: Their Finest Hour (Boston:
Houghton Mifflin, 1949), 10.

[21]William John Brown, So Far (London: G. Allen and
Unwin, 1943), 243-55.

[22]Cato, 144.

[23]A partial bibliography of Labour pamphlets in-
cludes Cassius /Michael Foot/, The Trial of Mussolini

Conservative writers accepted the Labourites assumption that
prewar foreign policy would one day be an election issue.[24]
As the end of the European war drew closer, the pamphlet
movement gained momentum. The largest volume of pamphlets,
as distinct from local election addresses and party central
office handouts, appeared in connection with the 1945 Gen-
eral Election itself. By this time normal political life
had resumed. But apparently five years of charge and counter-
charge had convinced both Conservative and Labourite writers

(London: Gollancz, 1943); Brendan and Beverly, An Extra-
vaganza by Cassius (London: Gollancz, 1944); Cato; Diplo-
maticus /Koni Zillicaus/, Can the Tories Win the Peace?
And How They Lost the last one (London: Gollancz, 1945);
Tiberius Gracchus /pseud7, Your M.P. (London: Gollancz,
1944); Geoffrey Mander, We Were not all Wrong (London:
Gollancz, 1941). Biographies, memoirs, and academic studies
by both anti-Chamberlain Conservatives and Labourites share
the Labourite pamphleteers' point of view on Munich. See
Viscount Cecil, A Great Experiment (London: Cape, 1941);
Geoffrey Gathorne-Hardy, A Short History of International
Affairs, 1920-1939 (3rd revised ed.; London: Oxford Uni-
versity Press, 1942); G. P. Gooch, Studies in Diplomacy
and Statecraft (London: Longmans, 1942); Stuart Hodgson,
Lord Halifax, An Appreciation (London: Christophers, 1941);
Alan Campbell Johnson, Viscount Halifax (New York: Ives
Washburn, 1941); Seton-Watson, History of the Czechs and
Slovaks (London: Hutchinson, 1943); Seton-Watson, Twenty-
five Years of Czechoslovakia (London: The New Europe
Publishing Company, 1945).

[24] A partial bibliography of Conservative pamphlets
includes Candidus /Herbert Sidebotham7, Labour's Great Lie
(London: Hutchinson, 1945); Dexter /pseud.7, Will You Be
Left (London: Hutchinson, 1945); Cedric Garth, The Party
that Runs Away (London: Hutchinson, 1945); Hadley, Quintin
Hogg, The Left Was Never Right (London: Faber and Faber,
1945); Viscount Maugham, The Truth about the Munich Crisis
(London: Heinemann, 1944); E. D. O'Brien, Big 3 or 2½? The
Choice in Foreign Politics (London: Hutchinson, 1945);
Talus /pseud7, Your Alternative Government (London: Eyre
and Spottiswoode, 1945); Basil Webb, The House Divided
(London: Hutchinson, 1945). See also Spender, Between
Two Wars (London: Cassell, 1943).

that the Election outcome might well be decided by voters'
opinions on questions now seven, ten, or, in the case of
the Manchurian Crisis of 1931, fourteen years distant.

The quality of the pamphlets varied greatly, but
they all shared a fierce party feeling. "Cato's" Guilty
Men, once called the "most famous British political pam-
phlet of the twentieth century," was a polished, bitterly
humourous performance.[25] It held Chamberlainites who were
still Ministers of the Crown up to such ridicule that sev-
eral of the nation's booksellers refused to stock it.[26]
W. W. Hadley's work included a survey of press reactions
to Munich which is still of great interests to students of
the Crisis.[27] However, one of the later pamphlets was re-
searched and written in thirty-six hours.[28] Many of the
others revealed a similar lack of care. They were often
simply collections of prewar statements showing opponents
off to great disadvantage in the light of subsequent events.
The partisanship of the pamphlets often produced a great
lack of taste. In a work published just before the Gen-
eral Election, Quintin Hogg compared the war records of
Labour and Conservative M.P's and concluded that Labourites
were cowards.[29] Hogg's violent partisanship extended back

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[25]Gilbert and Gott, 418.

[26]Cato, xi.

[27]Hadley, 93-110.

[28]Times Literary Supplement, June 16, 1945, 277.

[29]Hogg, 6.

to the events of the 1930's and was common with both Labour
and Conservative pamphlet writers. Commenting on this, The
Times Literary Supplement complained that the pamphlets
seemed to call for a "smelling out of traitors" rather than
a peaceful British General Election.[30]

Although the preoccupations of the pamphleteers were
not completely uniform, Munich was generally the most im-
portant theme for both Labourites and Conservatives. One
Labour M. P. seemed mainly concerned with the damage done
by the National Government's policy over Manchuria in 1931.[31]
Another emphasized Tory duplicity in the Abyssinian crisis
and the Spanish Civil War.[32] Most Conservative writers in-
cluded a general condemnation of Labour pacifism in the
1930's. Just before the General Election, they also con-
centrated on the bleak, socialist prison a Labour Govern-
ment would make of England.[33] However, Munich stands out.
It is the only foreign policy event discussed by "Cato."[34]
Koni Zilliacus, writing under the pseudonym "Diplomaticus,"
called Munich the "crowning betrayal" of the 1930's.[35]

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[30]Times Literary Supplement, June 16, 1945, 277.

[31]Mander, 1-111.

[32]Cassius, 59-70.

[33]Hadley, 16-17, 27-43; Hogg, 43; Candidus, 1.

[34]Cato, 46-65.

[35]Diplomaticus /Koni Zilliacus7, 88.

The three principal Conservative pamphleteers, Hogg, Hadley, and Lord Maugham, all treated Munich as an important and unjust cause for the downfall of a Prime Minister whom they admired greatly.[36] Also, all three feared that widespread acceptance of the Labour version of Munich would do the Conservatives great electoral harm:

> If there be such a thing as a High Command
> among the Left, it is evident that the order
> has gone forth that the word "Munich" should
> become a legend...or scalping knife for Tories
> ....All such as are not particularly attracted
> by the ordinary watchwords like "Nationali-
> sation," "Socialism," "public ownership,"...
> are to be swept along to the poles and by
> one magic word made to vote...against the
> party to which Churchill and Eden have been
> loyal throughout....If the people do not want
> Socialism they must be misled into voting
> Socialist by a side-issue....All else is to be
> forgotten, long lives given in the service of
> the country, decorations on the field....To
> be a member of the party of Churchill and Eden
> is to be a Man of Munich and to be a Man of
> Munich is to commit political suicide....Its
> success depends on the belief that you can
> fool all the people some of the time.[37]

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[36]Maugham, Lord Chancellor at the time of Munich, was and remained a fervant admirer of Chamberlain. He and his brother, Somerset Maugham, the novelist, apparently quit speaking to each other as a result of their quarrels over Munich. Hadley, as editor of Lord Kemsley's Sunday Times, helped carry out the Kemsley chain's support of appeasement. During the course of his activities, he came to know and admire Chamberlain. Hogg first entered Parliament as a Chamberlainite after an October 1938 Oxford City bye-election in which Munich was an important issue. Hogg finally did vote against Chamberlain in the May 9, 1940 division. However, he apparently did so quite literally in tears. Lockhard, Comes the Reckoning (London: Putnam, 1947) 76-77; Hadley, 27-28.

[37]Hogg, 183.

The Labour pamphleteers were also defensive about parts of their party's record in the 1930's, and consequently neither Labour nor Conservative writers were particularly candid. Labour writers ignored the deep ambivalence of Labour thinking on the German problem in the late 1930's. They deplored the strategic impact of Munich. They did not mention that in the House of Commons debate following Munich the Labour leader, Clement Attlee, proposed more, not fewer, territorial concessions to Nazi Germany.[38] The Conservative pamphleteers were even less frank. None of them recalled Chamberlain's September 27, 1938 description of Czechoslovakia as "a far away country...people of whom we know nothing."[39] Only Hogg discussed Chamberlain's other famous gaffe: that Munich had given Britain "peace in our time."[40] Hogg concluded that only the most tasteless partisan would jeer at the irony of the remark. Also, all the Conservative pamphleteers claimed that Chamberlain alone saved the British Empire at Munich. He gained a year's grace for the completion of rearmament. At the same time they wished to refute any charge of cowardice against Chamberlain. Therefore, they emphasized that Chamberlain would have gone to war after Godesberg if the French, whom they insisted, the Prime

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[38]Parl. Deb., CCCXXXIX (1937-38), 65-66.

[39]The Times (London), September 28, 1938.

[40]Hogg, 198.

Minister made no attempt to influence, had decided that
honor demanded the fulfillment of their obligations to the
Czechs.[41]

Although the Labourite and Conservative equivoca-
tion was partly the product of their fears of losing votes,
it was also probably caused by honest confusion. Britain
lost 350,000 military dead during the course of the war.
Civilians endured the Blitz and then V-bombs. Under such
circumstances, it was apparently difficult for either
Chamberlainites or Labourites to remember that they had
ever accepted the morality of claims of "self-determination"
for the Sudeten Germans. This was especially so, because
such Czech sufferings as the Lidice massacre were well pub-
licized in Britain. President Benes was one of the most
highly respected of the leaders of the numerous governments-
in-exile in London. Further, the Czech units serving in
the British Army fought gallantly.[42] Similarly, the Soviets
were immensely popular in wartime Britain. Their forces
received credit for destroying much of Hitler's Army and

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[41]Hadley, 147; Hogg, 193, 207-08; Maugham, 26-7, 35.

[42]Lockhart, 92, 110, 114, 115. The admiration the
Czechs won was not in itself enough to secure a British
repudiation of Munich. The final decision on repudiation
only came after a much-publicized Soviet repudiation; the
Soviets had not been among the original signers of Munich,
but had acceded to it at the time of the Nazi-Soviet Pact.
The British Government announced itself no longer bound
by the terms of the Munich Agreement on August 5, 1942.
Lockhart, 113-4, 187; Wheeler-Bennett, Munich, 429-37.

they were not uncomfortably present in Britain as were the
Americans. Knowing the wartime contribution of the Czechs
and the Soviets, Britons might easily find it incredible
that they could ever have questioned their value as British
allies. This was particularly true if one remembered Bri-
tain's brush with destruction in 1940.

Such thinking influenced the writing of the best
known of the Labourite pamphleteers in the 1945 Election
campaign, Koni Zilliacus. Zilliacus set out to prove that
the Chamberlain Government had had a clear choice of policies
in 1938. The wrong choice had brought disaster to Britain.
In asserting British choice at Munich, Zilliacus described
repeated Soviet offers of alliance with Britain. He implied
that a Soviet pact would have been as valuable in 1938 as
it had been since 1941. He also noted the availability of
the Czech Army which he estimated at 2,000,000 men.[43] The
British rejection of the Soviets and desertion of the Czechs
made Dunkirk. The Germans would have fallen without a fight
in 1938. When they took Czechoslovakia, Zilliacus wrote,
they gained 15,000,000 rifles, 43,000 machine guns, 1,500
planes, and 500 anti-aircraft guns. They also took 469
tanks--more than Britain produced before Dunkirk--and the
production facilities of the Skoda Works.[44] With these

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[43]Diplomaticus /Zilliacus7, 96.

[44]Ibid., 96-7.

plus the thirty German divisions released from the former

Czech-German frontier, Hitler attacked the British and French

in 1940.[45]

Zilliacus insisted that the reasons behind Chamber-

lain's decision disqualified all Conservatives from public

office. He ignored the possible influence of revisionism.

Rather, he insisted that Chamberlain conspired with and

encouraged the Nazis because he wanted to turn Hitler east

against the Soviets. Chamberlain was not pro-Nazi. He

simply equated the cause of capitalism with the British

national interest. All Conservatives, he went on, thought

this way. The Chamberlainites and such "balance of power"

Conservatives as Churchill and Anthony Eden differed only

in their techniques for defending Tory money interests.[46]

The leadership of either clique, Zilliacus concluded, would

make possible a postwar alliance with the Soviets--the

necessary corner-stone to British foreign policy.

Zilliacus's explanation of Munich disagreed with

that of such earlier Labour pamphleteers as the pseudonymous

"Cato." "Cato" wanted only the resignation of the holdover

Chamberlainite Ministers. He presented Munich as a personal

product of the stupidity of Chamberlain and his entourage.[47]

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[45]Diplomaticus /Zilliacus7, 96.

[46]Ibid., 74-5, 85-103.

[47]Cato, 144.

His emphasis on a collective Conservative guilt for Munich

complemented his desire for the electoral defeat of the

whole Conservative party.

Electoral considerations influenced the Conserva-

tive pamphleteers, though at the same time they shared part

of Labour's point of view on 1938. They charged Labour

with a large measure of the responsibility for the admitted

"humiliating reverse" at Munich.[48] Labour pacifism, they

claimed, caused the British unpreparedness which made Munich

necessary. However, they had some of the same values as

the Labourites. The Conservatives also professed an unqual-

ified hostility to Germany dating back to 1938 and before.

They also expressed affection for the Soviets. Chamberlain,

they contended, had not invited the Soviets to Munich be-

cause of the press of events. The Soviets might well resent

this exclusion, but the British had earnestly tried to get

an Anglo-Soviet alliance after Prague. It failed because

the Soviets decided that they needed time for rearmament.

They made their "Munich" in the Nazi-Soviet Pact.[49] Further,

Conservatives claimed a retroactive friendship with the

Czechs. The Czechs were a "gallant race."[50] The Versailles

Treaty was just. The 1938 complaints of the Sudeten Germans

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[48]Hogg, 193. See also Maugham, 56.

[49]Hogg, 208-9; Hadley, 143. See also Garth, 42.

[50]Maugham, 9.

were "grossly exaggerated."[51] They emphasized that the Anschluss made Czechoslovakia indefensible against German might. Neither the still unprepared British and Russians nor the decadent French could have saved the Czechs in 1938.

In elaborating their theme of British military unpreparedness, the Conservatives presented the British war experience in a different light than the Labourites. Whereas the Labourites contended that Munich made Dunkirk, the Conservatives claimed that without Munich Dunkirk would have been much worse. They insisted that war had been the alternative to Munich. A war in 1938 would have proceeded along much the same lines as the war in 1939-40. The Germans would have quickly beaten the Czechs. The British and French armies would have been defeated in the field. Geography and arms weakness would have kept the Soviets from helping much; they would have had no way of passing through Poland and Rumania to the battlefield. A catastrophe would have come. Britain, the pamphleteers emphasized, would have nad neither the plans nor the trained airmen to win the Battle of Britain. "The consequences," Lord Maugham wrote, would "have been events which we hardly dare to contemplate."[52]

Despite their concern over the possibilities of Labour's success with Munich, the Conservative pamphleteers

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[51]Hadley, 56.

[52]Maugham, 63. See also Hogg, 207-8.

were not willing to sacrifice Chamberlain's posthumous reputation for votes. Perhaps the two were inseparable, but in any event the Conservatives showed the same strong personal devotion to Chamberlain as some Chamberlainite writers in 1940. The pamphleteers expressed their loyalty by stressing Chamberlain's noble aim to obtain peace by "every honorable means:" "we have had years of war since /Munich7, who doubts that /peace7 was...worth almost any price short of dishonour. The patience and persistence with which the policy was pursued was not weakness but strength.[53] At the same time the pamphleteers somewhat inconsistently maintained that Chamberlain's public optimism about Hitler in the months after Munich did not reveal gullibility or stupidity. Rather, the arms situation was desperate. The truth could not be told. All the Chamberlainite defenses showed much maudlin sentiment. Hogg's epitaph for Chamberlain was, "in death, if not in life, may Neville Chamberlain have peace with honour."[54]

Despite their emotionalism, the Conservative and Labourite pamphleteers apparently did not succeed in making Munich an important election issue. References to local Conservative M.P.'s votes on Munich did appear in opposition

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[53]Hadley, 150.

[54]Hogg, 187.

election addresses in some constituencies.[55] Commenting

on the radio talks of Eden and Ernest Bevin on foreign

policy, the Manchester Guardian on May 21, 1945 declared

that the Conservative speech did not break sharply enough

with the discredited tradition of Munich.[56] However,

neither the leaders nor the central offices of the parties

emphasized Munich. Labour stressed its programs for Bri-

tain's future. Conservatives tried to trade on Churchill's

prestige. Also, the numerous, much more obvious and direct

reasons for the Conservative defeat make it unlikely that a

prewar foreign policy decision was a significant factor.

This conclusion is strengthened by the absence of any posi-

tive correlation between support for Munich and loss of a

seat in Parliament. Leo Amery, the Coalition Secretary of

State for India and a prominent 1938 critic of Munich, lost

his Birmingham seat. Hogg, who had entered the Commons in

October 1938 Oxford City bye-election in which Munich was

almost the only issue, was returned to Parliament.[57]

The emotionalism created by the wartime pamphleteering

did affect Keith Feiling who wrote the official biography of

Chamberlain during this time.[58] Feiling's work was and

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[55]R. B. McCallum and Allison Readman, The British
General Election of 1945 (London: Oxford University Press,
1947), 102-3.

[56]Manchester Guardian, May 21, 1945.

[57]McCallum and Readman, 160-1.

[58]Feiling, vi. A note in the introduction tells
that the work was completed in November 1944. Publication

remains an indispensable primary source for Munich study.

Feiling was the only historian ever to have access to

Chamberlain's private papers and letters, and he included

long extracts from these in the book. Feiling was a great

admirer of Chamberlain. Like the Conservative pamphleteers,

he was stung by the charges of the opposition. Consequently,

Feiling too was defensive, and his prose was as maudlin as

that of Hadley, Hogg, or Maugham. These characteristics of

his writing have made some later historians question the

honesty of his scholarship.[59] Feiling could in some meas-

ure refute such charges. Unlike the Conservative pamphle-

teers, he did not try to ignore Chamberlain's numerous,

unfortunate public statements.

In at least one known instance, however, Feiling did

distort the meaning of an incident. Like the Conservative

pamphleteers, Feiling wanted to show that despite Chamber-

lain's public remarks the Prime Minister was not fooled by

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was probably delayed until after the Election. Earlier bio-
graphies of Chamberlain include Stuart Hodgson, The Man Who
Made the Peace, Neville Chamberlain (New York: E. P. Dutton,
1938); Sir Charles Petrie, The Chamberlain Tradition (New
York: Frederick A. Stokes, 1938); Duncan Keith-Shaw, Neville
Chamberlain (Wells and Gardner, 1939); Derek Walker-Smith,
Neville Chamberlain, Man of Peace (London: Robert Hale, 1939).
None of these earlier works nor the 1961 biography of Ian
McLeod contain primary source materials. Ian McLeod, Neville
Chamberlain (London: Frederick Mueller, 1961). A collection
of Chamberlain's 1937-9 speeches is found Neville Chamberlain,
In Search of Peace (New York: G. P. Putnam;s Sons, 1939).

[59]For a discussion of the criticism of Feiling, see
Taylor, Politics in Wartime and other Essays (London: Hamish
Hamilton, 1964), 190-5.

Hitler at Munich. He tried to do this when he reported

Chamberlain's observation to Halifax as the two drove back

to London from the Croydon air field on September 30, 1938.

"No, he was not deceived, neither by Hitler's moods nor by

the exultant relief of London; 'all this will be over in

three months,' he said as their car struggled through the

crowd.'"[60] When Churchill wrote his memoirs, he included

Feiling's quotation and suggested that Chamberlain had de-

liberately lied to the British people after Munich.[61] Later,

Halifax wrote his own autobiography. He accused Churchill

of impugning Chamberlain's character by distorting the

statement. Chamberlain's remark, Halifax claimed, did not

refer to Hitler at all; Chamberlain was only talking about

the London crowd's enthusiasm.[62] Halifax's annoyance with

Churchill was misplaced. Feiling was responsible for the

distortion. Halifax had told him the story. Feiling's re-

counting of it made Churchill's interpretation a natural

one. His use of evidence in this instance lends substance

to the reservations of other historians about the candor of

his work, for it suggests that he may also have presented

in a misleading light some of the material to which he alone

had access.

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[60]Feiling, 282. Italics mine.

[61]Churchill, The Gathering Storm, 318.

[62]Halifax, 198-99.

The pamphlets and other public discussion of Munich in the years 1940-5 had other more general effects on the historiography of the crisis. The most crucial was the continuation of one element of British emotionalism about the Agreement: Munich as the source of subsequent British difficulties. If the pamphleteers and other writers had not constantly emphasized Munich's impact on the present, the crisis might well have seemed remote in the war years. The traditions of British writing helped create the wartime preoccupation with the Agreement. From the months just after the signing of the Agreement through the "Phoney War," British historians had been attributing the origin of current problems to Munich. Thus, the pamphleteers were continuing an intellectual custom. Chance also had a role. The reports of Skoda Works tanks in France reinforced the habit of relating Munich to the present. Another important factor was the continuation of the Chamberlainites in office. The Cabinet Ministers who were held responsible for Dunkirk had also been in office in 1938. Because of this, writers were more likely to see a continuity of cause and effect between the actions of 1938 and the events of 1940. Thus, anger over Dunkirk became in part anger over Munich.

The wartime polemics also perpetuated the other element of British emotionalism over the Agreement: the idea that Britain had a choice at Munich. This notion continued because the perspective on the various aspects of the 1938 decision changed, and historical writers tend to

judge past decisions by current values. The Soviets and the
Czechs-in-exile made valuable contributions to the Allied
war effort. Statistics were produced which showed that the
Czech Army in 1938 was strong in the weapon the Allies so
conspicuously lacked in 1940--tanks. Also, it was appar-
ently difficult for writers to recall that morality ever
seemed to be on the side of the enemy, Nazi Germany, and
not the friend, Czechoslovakia. Part of this wartime per-
spective on Munich decision-making continued into the post-
war era.

The wartime writing had two other incidental effects.
The controversy crystallized the strong Chamberlainite affec-
tion for their fallen leader. These emotions too endured
in the years after 1945. Lastly, the wartime debate in-
fluenced one group which did not take part in it, the former
Tory Rebels. In 1940-5 these men made their peace with the
Chamberlainites. Their renewed party loyalty did not affect
their judgment of Munich when they wrote about it after the
war; they remained bitterly critical. But at the same time
part of their reason for writing was resentment at the Labour
pamphleteers attempt to use Munich as an election issue in
1945.

CHAPTER VI

THE DOMINATION OF THE CONSERVATIVE

CRITICS: 1945-61

The years from 1945 to 1961 were momentous ones for

Britain in foreign affairs. Within less than two years of

the Nuremberg trials of major German war criminals, which

opened the period, the Royal Air Force and the United States

Air Force were flying food, not bombs, to blockaded West

Berlin to save that city from Soviet control. They were

also beginning the ritual of the "Cold War" confrontation

which was to be the main feature of European affairs through

1962. The British Labour Government took the lead early

in such nascent Cold War policies as assistance to Greece

and Turkey, but as the crisis in Soviet-Western relations

continued, the control of Western policy passed increas-

ingly to the United States. Although one British histor-

ian remarked in 1948 that Britain had become a "pensioner"

of the United States,[1] British policy makers did not rec-

ognize until 1956 the extent to which Britain's financial

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[1]Taylor, "Munich Ten Years After," New Statesman,
XXXVI (October 2, 1948), 278.

dependence on America had limited her independence in foreign policy. That year in the Suez Crisis, the United States swiftly and with humiliating ease used financial pressure to stop Britain's last attempt to act as an independent world power.

During these years, many British politicians, diplomats, journalists, and historians, continued to be preoccupied with Munich. In 1948 alone, two major works on the crisis appeared, and that fall the British Broadcasting Corporation produced nine "Third Programme" talks on Munich.[2] For the period as a whole, Munich figured prominently in the writings of six former parliamentary opponents of Chamberlain.[3] The three surviving members of the Foreign Policy Committee of the 1938 Cabinet wrote

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[2]Sir Winston Churchill, The Gathering Storm, 279-339; Wheeler-Bennett, Munich, 3-199; Frank Ashton-Gwatkin, "The Personal Story of the Runciman Mission," Listener, XL (October 21, 1948), 595-97; Cooper, "A Cynical Act of Cold-Blooded Butchery," 757-88; Captain Cyril Falls, "Should the Democracies Have Fought in 1938?" Listener, XL (November 11, 1948), 717-18; Agnes Headlam-Morley, "Was Neville Chamberlain's Policy Wrong?" Listener, XL (October 14, 1948), 551-53; Lockhart, "September Crisis and After," 635-37; Namier, "Munich Survey," Listener, XL (December 2, 1948), 835-36; Nicolson, "The Commons and the 1938 Crisis," Listener, XL (November 25, 1948), 795-6; Templewood, "The Lessons of Munich," Listener, XL (December 9, 1948) 879-80; Vansittart, 675-77.

[3]Amery, 229-95; Sir Robert Boothby (afterwards Lord Boothby), I Fight to Live (London: Gollancz, 1947), 172-229; Churchill; Cooper, "A Cynical Act of Cold-Blooded Butchery," Cooper, Old Men Forget (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1954) 224-42; Hugh Dalton, Memoirs; Vol. II: The Fateful Years, Memoirs, 1931-45 (London: Frederick Muller, 1957) 192-207; Nicolson.

their memoirs.[4] Four highly placed British diplomats wrote

of their parts in the crisis.[5] Also, nine of Britain's

best known historians wrote on Munich.[6] Miscellaneous

works, in which Munich was discussed at length, included

a biography of Hitler,[7] a two volume summary of the research

on Munich,[8] a history of Soviet Foreign policy,[9] a history

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[4]Halifax, 192-207; Simon, 238-54; Templewood, "The Lessons of Munich;" Templewood, Nine Troubled Years (London: Collins, 1954), 285-326, 372-82. Keith Feiling's valuable, though much criticized, biography of Neville Chamberlain, which was written in 1944, was also published in this period. Feiling.

[5]Ashton-Gwatkin; Ivone Kirkpatrick, The Inner Circle (London: Macmillan, 1959), 110-34; Lord Strang (formerly Sir William Strang), At Home and Abroad (London: Deutsch, 1956), 121-55; Strang, Britain in World Affairs (New York: Praeger, 1961), 285-330; Vansittart.

[6]Carr, International Relations between the Two World Wars (3rd ed. rev.; London: Macmillan, 1947), 266-73; M. R. D. Foot, British Foreign Policy since 1898 (London: Hutchinson, 1956), 124-39; C. L. Mowat, Britain between the Wars (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955), 414, 589-93, 605-16, 625-31; Namier, "Munich Survey;" Namier, Europe in Decay, A Study in Disintegration (London: Macmillan, 1950), 171-204; Namier, In the Nazi Era, 148-67; P. A. Reynolds, British Foreign Affairs in the Inter-War Years (London: Hutchinson, 1954), 130-50; A. L. Rowse, All Souls and Appeasement (London: Macmillan, 1961), 57-90; Taylor, "Munich Ten Years After;" Taylor, "Munich Twenty Years After," Manchester Guardian Weekly LXXIV (October 2, 1958), 7; Taylor, "Ancient Lights," New Statesman LVI (October 4, 1958), 456-7; Taylor, From Napoleon to Stalin, Comments on European History (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1950), 130-8; Taylor, Rumours of Wars (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1952), 184-203; Taylor, The Trouble-makers, 167-200; Sir Charles Webster, "Munich Reconsidered: A Survey of British Policy," International Affairs XXXVII (April 1961), 137-53; Wheeler-Bennett, Munich; Wheeler-Bennett, The Nemesis of Power, 395-426.

[7]Alan Bullock, Hitler, A Study in Tyranny (London: Odhams Press, 1952), 336-9, 397-434.

[8]R. G. D. Laffan, et al., Survey of International Affairs, 1938, II-III (London: Oxford University Press for the Royal Institute of International Affaird, 1951-3).

[9]Max Beloff, The Foreign Policy of Soviet Russia,

of The Times (London),[10] a biography of the 1938 editor of

The Times,[11] and a British Marxist history of Munich.[12]

The unity of this great volume of work derived from

the dominance of the conclusions of former Conservative

opponents of Chamberlain. This group included principally

Sir Winston Churchill, Sir Lewis Namier, and Sir John Wheeler-

Bennett. It also included Leo Amery, Sir Robert Boothby (now

Lord Boothby), Bruce Lockhart, Sir Harold Nicolson, Lord Nor-

wich (formerly Duff Cooper), and Lord Vansittart (formerly

Sir Robert Vansittart). The career backgrounds of these men

academic life, diplomacy, and politics were various, and they

did not always agree among themselves. But they shared Con-

servative political opinions, a long standing dislike of the

Munich Agreement, opposition to postwar Soviet expansion, and

a lack of recognition of the reduction of British power, either

in 1938 or in the postwar era. In the years 1945-61 their

conclusions were virtually unchallenged. The few refutations

were mainly guarded, for the dominance of the Conservative

critics was the result of more than their eloquence and cogency.

It was also sustained in large measure by the veneration for

Churchill among all classes and, to a lesser extent, the spec-

ial esteem for Namier among historians.

1929-41 II (London: Oxford University Press for the Royal
Institute Affairs, 1949), 120-66.

[10]Editors of The Times (London), History of The
Times Vol. IV, pt. 2(London: The Times, 1952), 912-50.

[11]Wrench, 365-82.

[12]Andrew Rothstein, The Munich Conspiracy (London:
Lawrence and Wishart, 1958), 25-309.

Before 1945, the last Conservative politician's criticism of Munich had been Sir Harold Nicolson's Why Britain Is at War,[13] which was written and published in November, 1939. The reason for the long lapse and then the sudden renewal of writing lay in the wartime changes in British politics. After Chamberlain's fall in 1940, several of the Prime Minister's Conservative opponents moved into high positions in the Coalition Government and in the Tory Party itself. The responsibilities of office and a desire not to antagonize the remaining supporters of Chamberlain kept these men from writing about Munich. Similar discretion and other responsibilities kept silent those previously dissident Conservatives who did not reach high office. The coming of peace and the 1945 General Election gave many Conservatives the enforced leisure for contemplation.

After the General Election, although their new respectability in the Tory Party prevented them from writing on some aspects of Munich, the Conservative critics had several reasons for concerning themselves with the crisis. Neither Churchill, who was leader of the Conservative Opposition during the years when he was writing The Gathering Storm, nor Amery and Norwich, who both retired from active politics in 1945, chose to discuss their parts in the post-Munich discussions with Labour on forming an anti-Chamberlain

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[13]Nicolson, Why Britain Is at War (Hardmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1939).

coalition.[14] However, Czechlosovakia's fall to the Soviets in 1948 and the connection of its conquest with Munich provided a motivation for writing. Too, the critics had a lingering dislike for the wartime attempt of Labour pamphleteers to make Munich an election issue. The revelations at Nuremberg, the publication of the British diplomatic documents, and the apparent parallels between the expansionist policies of Nazi Germany and post-war Soviet Russia were also important. Transcending all these motives was the emotional recollection of Munich itself. To the dissenting Conservatives, Munich was one of the most important experiences in their lives. For some their subsequent careers had been disappointing, but for all, even Churchill, bitterness over Munich remained strong. This emotion expressed itself in such phrases as a "morally indefensible argument,"[15] "a cynical act of cold blooded butchery,"[16] and "the agreement reached by friends holding down the victim for the executioner."[17] Such feelings guaranteed that the Munich debate would continue against a background of emotionalism.

The Conservative critics' works which dominated interpretation contained two paradoxes. They led in the

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[14]Information of these negotiations was only made public when High Dalton, a Labour participant in the talks, revealed them in his memoirs. Dalton, 198-203.

[15]Vansittart, 675.

[16]Cooper, "A Cynical Act of Cold-Blooded Butchery," 757.

[17]Namier, "Munich Survey," 835.

interpretation of the large number of documents relating to
Munich that appeared after the war.[18] Yet, they used the

new material to confirm old opinions: Hitler was bent on

destroying Czechoslovakia from the beginning of the Munich

crisis, Britain had a choice of alternative policies in 1938

as a result of stategic advantage, and Chamberlain freely

made the wrong decision at Munich out of ignorance, pacifism,

and vanity. Also, paradoxically, the Conservative critics

created the essential "Munich Legend" by writing of the

analogies between the Munich and postwar periods. The ap-

parent parallels greatly influenced British and American

foreign policy makers. Yet, the Conservative critics wrote

of the parallels because Munich was more important to them

than the Cold War.

Most of the work of the Conservative critics was done

in the years 1945-9, but their conclusion dominated the en-

tire 1945-61 period. In the years 1945-9 theirs was nearly

[18]International Military Tribune, Trial of the Major
War Criminals before the International Military Tribune, 42
vols. (Nuremberg: International Military Tribune, 1947)
(referred to hereafter as I.M.T.); United States, Nazi Con-
spiracy and Aggression, A Collection of Documentary and
Guide Materials Prepared by the American and British Staffs
for the International Military Tribune 8 vols, 2 supps
(Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1946-
7) (referred to hereafter as N.C.A.); D.B.F.P. Also appear-
ing in this period but much less frequently used by British
historians because of duplications with earlier collections
or lack of important contents were Czechoslovakia, New Docu-
ments on the History of Munich (Prague: Ministry for Foreign
Affairs, 1958); Union of Soviet Socialists Republics, Docu-
ments and Materials Relating to the Eve of the Second World

the only work done in Britain on Munich, and it was accepted

almost uncritically. From 1949 to 1961, most historians

continued to agree with their interpretations and to share

many of their feelings, adding only an awareness of Britain's

decline. Those who did not agree with them wrote in order

to rebut the Conservative critics' arguments. Such writers

fell mainly into two classes. Some felt that Britain had

no choice in foreign policy in 1938. Necessity not ignor-

ance or vanity, forced Chamberlain to go to Munich.[19]

However, these apologists of Munich mainly favored opposi-

tion to the Soviet Union. They helped justify their con-

tention that Britain had no alternative to Munich by pointing

out that in the light of subsequent events the Soviet Union

could not be considered a reliable ally against Germany in

the Czech Crisis. Other writers disagreed with the policies

suggested by the "Munich Legend."[20] This latter group of

War 2 vols. (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House,
1948-9); United States, James Sontag, et al. (ed.) Docu-
ments of German Foreign Policy, 1919-45, Series D, I-II
(Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1949).

[19]Headlam-Morley; Halifax, 193-200; Kirkpatrick,
110-34; Simon, 238-54; Strang At Home and Abroad, 121-55;
Strang, Britain in World Affairs, 285-330; Templewood, "The
Lessons of Munich;" Templewood, Nine Troubled Years, 285-382;
Wrench, 365-92; A. L. Kennedy, "Munich: The Disintegration
of British Policy," Quarterly Review, CCLXXXVI (October 1948),
425-44; Robert Sencourt, "The Foreign Policy of Neville
Chamberlain," Quarterly Review, CCLXXXXII (April 1954), 141-
55; Sencourt, "How Neville Chamberlain Fought Hitler,"
Quarterly Review, CCLXXXXII (October 1954), 414-25.

[20]Rothstein, 40-309; Taylor, "Munich Ten Years
After;" /anon./, "Falling Dominoes," Spectator CCI (Septem-
ber 12, 1958), 374; /anon./, "Munich: The Fallacy of Slogans,"
Spectator, CCI (October 3, 1958), 424; Alex Comfort, Letter
to the Editor, Listener, XL (October 21, 1948), 607.

writers disliked the Munich Agreement. They also disliked

Britain's opposition to the Soviet Union, or, subsequently,

British armed intervention in the Middle East. Neither of

the two classes of writers challenged the Conservative

critics' contention, based on their reading of the docu-

ments of the Nuremberg trials, that Hitler was resolved to

destroy Czechoslovakia in 1938.

The Postwar Document Publications

The Nuremberg Trials provided the first postwar

documents on Munich. The major German war criminals' trials

before an American, British, French, and Soviet tribunal

lasted from September 1945 to October 1946. The trial rec-

ords ran to forty-two volumes, and were published in early

1947. The documentary and guide materials of the British

and American prosecution staffs, which comprised eight vol-

umes and two supplements, appeared in 1946-47. The Conser-

vative critics considered three parts of these collections

to have special relevance to the interpretation of Munich:

the publication of the "Hossbach Memorandum," the revelation

of the 1938 German "Generals' Plot," and the evidence of

German military unpreparedness. The Hossbach Memorandum,

they believed, was the final documentary proof of Hitler's

planning both the Munich Crisis and the Second World War.

The generals' conspiracy and the testimony on German arms

weakness strengthened their conviction that British leaders

had a military advantage over Germany in 1938. Both of

these conclusions, the Conservative critics considered,
put the 1938 decisions of the British policy makers in a
very unfavorable light.

The historian, Sir John Wheeler-Bennett, first
examined the Hossbach Memorandum in relation to Munich.
The Memorandum--the title comes from the name of the German
officer who copied it originally--was introduced by the pros-
ecution at Nuremberg as evidence of the complicity in Hitler's
aggression of Konstantin von Neurath, until February 1938
German Minister for Foreign Affairs. The prosecution claimed
that it was an accurate, though only partial, record of a
November 5, 1937 meeting at the Reich-Chancellery between
Hitler, von Neurath, and Germany's military chiefs. At this
gathering, according to the surviving fragment, Hitler gave
what he said was his last will and testament and his future
plans for Germany. Germany, Hitler is quoted as saying,
must have living space in Europe, and she must ultimately
be prepared to fight for it. The first blocks to such ex-
pansion were the independent states of Austria and Czecho-
slovakia. Therefore, Germany must look for opportunities
to subjugate these states. Hitler went on to discuss three
contingencies, each involving the distraction of France
from Central European affairs, in which Germany could move
against Austria and Czechoslovakia. The record ends here,
but a note in the Memorandum states that the meeting con-
tinued with a discussion of plans for rearmament. To

Wheeler-Bennett, the Memorandum revealed Hitler's intention
to conquer the world by force and to destroy Austria and
Czechoslovakia by force in 1938. It settled once and for
all the question of German bad faith in the Czech crisis.
It implicitly confirmed Chamberlain's ignorance, Wheeler-
Bennett pointed out. Within two weeks of the meeting at
the Reich-Chancellery, Chamberlain sent Halifax to see
Hitler with an offer of British help in revising Europe to
Germany's satisfaction.[21]

The public disclosure of the German generals' con-
spiracy of 1938 came mainly from the interrogation of Franz
Halder, former German Army Chief of Staff and the one sur-
viving principal participant in the plot. The conspiracy's
leader, Halder stated, was Colonel-General Ludwig Beck,
until August 27, 1938 Chief of the Army General Staff. Beck
was already angry at Hitler for his past humiliations of
the army. He believed that the execution of "Case Green"
the operations plan for invading Czechoslovakia prepared
for Hitler by the defense department staff in the summer of
1938, would precipitate a general European war with Czecho-
slovakia, Britain, France, and the Soviet Union. Beck was
unable to make his views prevail through regular channels.

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[21]Wheeler-Bennett, Munich, 11-14, 18-21; IMT XXV,
Doc 386-PS, p. 409. An account of the November 19, 1937
meeting between Halifax, then Lord President of the Coun-
cil, and Hitler is found in Documents of German Foreign
Policy, Ser. D, I, 55-67.

Therefore, he recruited strategically placed younger officers,
and plotted to prevent war with the already dissident leaders
of the _Abwehr_, or counter-intelligence service. When the
inevitable war seemed about to break out, two of the con-
spirators, the Police-President of Berlin and the Commander
of the Potsdam garrison, were to use their troops to surround
the Reich-Chancellery and the Berlin Government quarter.
They would capture Hitler and have him declared insane. The
plotters would then set up a provisional government which
would call off all military preparations. The coup never
took place. Explaining the failure, Halder claimed that
the two prerequisites for action, the imminence of war and
Hitler's presence in Berlin, were never achieved in conjunc-
tion. Consequently, the conspirators could not act.[22]

The Daily Herald and The Daily Worker gave wide
publicity to Halder's story in 1945,[23] but Churchill was
the first writer to examine the conspiracy in some detail.
Churchill emphasized that, although the German generals had
a poor record as conspirators, their 1938 plan had a good
chance of success. Churchill, like Wheeler-Bennett in
treating the Hossbach Memorandum, did not suggest that
Chamberlain could have known of the generals' plans, but
the implication of bungling was clear. If Chamberlain had

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[22] _N.C.A._, Supp. B 1547-75.

[23] _Daily Herald_, September 11, 1945; _Daily Worker_,
September 12-13, 1945.

not visited Hitler bent on appeasement, Churchill wrote,

the generals might well have succeeded, and the whole course

of European history might have been different. Of more

tangible importance, Churchill noted, was the result of the

generals' failure and Hitler's triumph. The generals lost

faith in themselves and ceased to resist Hitler's plans for

conquest. Thus, Munich made war certain.[24]

Churchill used other parts of Halder's testimony,

as well as that of other German generals, and material from

French memoirs to give his conclusions on the strategic

situation in September 1938 as compared with that of a year

later. This was a crucial question. Since Hitler's occu-

pation of Prague in March 1939, two important criteria for

judging Munich had been: did Chamberlain have any choice

of policies in 1938, and did Britain benefit from postponing

her confrontation with Germany? After March 1939, though

not before, defenders of Munich insisted that Chamberlain

had no choice at Munich and that he saved Britain by ob-

taining peace at Munich. Hitler's subsequent military

successes, the indefensibility of Czechoslovakia after the

Anschluss, the cowardice of the French, the weakness of

Britain in necessary radar and fighter aircraft, the de-

fenders maintained, all proved the necessity and the wis-

dom of Chamberlain's decision. Critics of Munich up to

Churchill's time had mainly regretted the loss of Czech

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[24]Churchill, The Gathering Storm, 310-13, 319.

and Soviet assistance as a result of Munich. Relying mainly
on German and French testimony, Churchill argued that the
strategic situation favored Britain in 1938 and gave her a
choice of policies. The situation greatly deteriorated by
1939.[25]

The German generals, Churchill contended, had no
hope of victory in 1938, but in 1939 Germany was greatly
strengthened. The generals knew that the German army was
unprepared to fight Britain, Czechoslovakia, France, and
the Soviet Union at the same time. The troops and forti-
fications in the West were inadequate to prevent a French
breakthrough. The Czechs' prepared mountain positions,
Churchill quoted the generals as saying, were amazingly
strong. Even the hastily constructed defenses on the for-
mer Czech-Austrian frontier were good. In any event, poor
lines of communication between Germany and that part of
Austria prevented the area from being an active front. The
French, Churchill went on, were eager for an offensive in
1938. The Soviets were faithful. Even if Soviet assis-
tance were limited to air support, the combined Czech
and Soviet air forces could stand off the _Luftwaffe_. Bri-
tain had no anti-aircraft defenses and no modern fighters.
However, in 1938 Germany lacked bases in the Low Countries

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[25]_Ibid._, 279-339. Churchill's conclusions were drawn
from the interrogations of the German generals, Halder, Jodl,
and Keitel and the memoirs of the 1938 French Chief of Staff,
General Gamelin. _NCA_, Supp. B, 1547-75; _IMT_, XV, 356-67; X,
509-22; Maurice Gamelin, _Servir_; v. II: _Le Prologue du
Drame: 1930-Aout 1939_ (Paris: Plon, 1947), 324-57.

with which to exploit the British weakness. Therefore, in September 1938 Germany's opponents had a choice of policies as a result of a great military advantage. A year later, Churchill concluded, a still unprepared Britain and a badly demoralized France alone faced a triumphant Germany.[26]

The publication of the British foreign policy documents in 1949, the year after Churchill's The Gathering Storm appeared, somewhat substantiated Churchill's contentions on strategy. Letters were printed which showed that in the summer of 1938 Sir Nevile Henderson, the British Ambassador to Berlin, believed that the military situation favored Britain.[27] The documents also added a new dimension to the problem of evaluating the generals' conspiracy. They revealed that the British Government had known of the generals' plan to overthrow Hitler. An emissary of the generals', Major Ewald von Kleist-Schmenzin, who, like most of the 1938 conspirators, was to be executed for his part in the July 1944 attempt to kill Hitler, came to London August 18-23, 1938. Von Kleist talked to Lord Lloyd, Vansittart, and Churchill. He informed them of Hitler's determination on war and of the generals' plan to depose Hitler. He urged that the British Government aid in speeding up the generals' plan by publicly threatening Hitler with war if he attacked Czechoslovakia. Von Kleist made a favorable impression.

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[26]Churchill, 279-339.

[27]Henderson in Namier, In the Nazi Era, 158.

Vansittart, then diplomatic adviser to the Cabinet, rec-

ommended that the Government carry out his request. Chamber-

lain rejected his advice. He wrote to Halifax that von

Kleist's story reminded him of the "Jacobites at the Court

of France in King William's time."[28] Von Kleist returned

to Germany with only a letter from Churchill. On August

27th, Chamberlain had Sir John Simon reaffirm the March

24, 1938 formula of conditional British involvement in a

speech at Lanark.[29]

Churchill never wrote his opinion of the Govern-

ment's action. The Official Secrets Act had prevented him

from discussing it in The Gathering Storm. However, a veiled

reference in his October 5, 1938 speech in the House of

Commons debate on Munich shows that he disapproved Chamber-

lain's action.[30] Other writers after 1949, notably Amery,

Norwich, and Rowse, criticized Chamberlain heavily.[31]

Amery had also known of the conspiracy in 1938. In his

memoirs he regretted that apparently the only effect of von

Kleist's visit was further to convince Chamberlain of the

necessity of seeing Hitler personally. Rowse maintained

that if Chamberlain had been wise enough to follow von

Kleist and Vansittart's advice, the generals would have

[28]Unofficial German Approaches, DBFP, 3rd Ser, II, 686.

[29]Ibid., 683-92.

[30]Parl. Deb., CCCXXXIX (1937-38), 363.

[31]Amery, 275, 288-90; Cooper, "A Cynical Act of Cold-
Blooded Butchery," 758; Cooper Old Men Forget, 244; Rowse,
7-8, 79, 81-82.

succeeded. The resulting military government would have
barred the Soviets from Central Europe.

Supporters of Munich rejected or ignored such con-
clusions.[32] Surprisingly two of the Conservative critics
also disagreed. Namier wrote that the generals' record of
ineptness at conspiracy precluded belief in the potential
success of their efforts in 1938.[33] In the most detailed
examination of the conspiracy written in English, Wheeler-
Bennett agreed with Namier. The conspirators, Wheeler-
Bennett wrote, were too rigid of mind to take the daring
chances required of a successful revolt. Also internal
evidence showed that they failed from lack of nerve. The
conspirators insisted that only the absence of threat of
imminent war and Hitler's absence from Berlin held them
back. Actually for several days in September, from after
Godesberg until Chamberlain's acceptance of Hitler's in-
vitation to Munich, both their stated preconditions were
present. Hitler was in Berlin; and war did seem likely.[34]

Part of the explanation for Namier and Wheeler-
Bennett's views was a desire for historical accuracy.
They were also motivated by a strong dislike for the con-
clusions drawn by German writers from the story of the

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[32]Kirkpatrick, 132-4; Sencourt, "The Foreign Policy
of Neville Chamberlain," 149.

[33]Namier, "Munich Survey," 836.

[34]Wheeler-Bennett, Nemesis of Power, 395-426.

generals' plot, conclusions which apparently did not so seriously disturb other critics of Munich. Hitler, German writers claimed, was the only German who wanted war. Since Chamberlain's action alone prevented the good Germans from acting to stop Hitler, the sole responsibility for Munich and the war belonged to Hitler and to Western statesmen. Much as Namier and Wheeler-Bennett disliked Chamberlain, they disliked the Germans even more. They were infuriated by any line of reasoning which seemes to absolve the executors of Nazi aggression from war guilt.[35]

Except for their disagreement over the generals' conspiracy, the reaction of the Conservative critics to the great amount of material in the published British foreign policy documents was uniformly one of anger at Chamberlain. The selections in the documents on the events leading up to Munich ran to two volumes of 1,348 pages with 1,231 pieces of correspondence and memoranda and nine appendices of irregular communications. The editors conformed to an existing British practice of examining the Munich crisis apart from other problems by inserting in chronological order only material on the Czech crisis. They were only allowed to include such papers as were in the Foreign Office archives.[36] The result was a detailed picture of British

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[35]Ibid.; Namier, In the Nazi Era, 3-108.

[36]DBFP, 3rd Ser., I-II.

diplomatic correspondence and of British meetings with French and German leaders. Namier examined these documents more closely than any other writer of the time. The record of Chamberlain's optimism about Hitler's intentions and the prospects of Anglo-German agreement and his refusal to involve Britain with Czechoslovakia led him angrily to write:

/Chamberlain7 firmly believed in the possibility
of a comprehensive agreement with the dictators,
and thought himself called upon to achieve it....
He was unversed in foreign politics, unimagina-
tive, unconscious of his own limitations, rigid
and doctrinaire. His reference...to the "quarrel
in a far away country"...truly expressed his own
feelings. He knew little about Austria, Czecho-
slovakia, or Danzig, and cared even less....They
were to him tiresome side-issues which could be
easily settled by "peaceful evolution" once
confidence was re-established between...Britain
and Germany. Even at Berchtesgaden he thought
he would be able to begin "conversations with a
general consideration of Anglo-German relations."
He had made himself a conception of Hitler, of
his schemes and intentions; and he adhered to it
whatever the evidence against it. For a long
time he refused to believe that Hitler meant
to destroy Czechoslovakia; and when told by him
at Berchtesgaden...that after/Hitler7and others
had obtained the territories they claimed what
was left of that country "would be so small that
he would not bother his head about it", Chamber-
lain accepted his word as security for the
nation which was being destroyed. At Munich
Hitler's proposals agreeably surprised him.37

Namier's findings were the culmination of a post-war trend to credit Chamberlain's dominance of both British policy and events, without, at the same time, accusing him of treasonable collusion with Hitler. Before and during the war, most critics of Chamberlain had thought, because

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37Namier, In the Nazi Era, 159.

of the obvious inadequacy of British civil defense measures in the September crisis and Chamberlain's gift for fatuous phrases, that Chamberlain simply wandered into the Munich Agreement from lack of courage, knowledge, or planning. After the war, Churchill credited Chamberlain with a "narrow sharp-edged efficiency within the limits of the policy in which he believed."[38] After reading the British documents, Namier concluded that Chamberlain was strong, rather than weak-willed in the Czech Crisis. Both Chamberlain and Hitler ruthlessly pursued their aims.[39] Each, Namier believed, got exactly what he wanted at Munich, although the result was a "solution so grotesque and so revolting that no one would have dared openly to suggest it at the outset."[40]

Several writers challenged Namier's views. Chamberlain's former colleagues, Halifax, Simon, and Templewood,[41] maintained that Chamberlain had no other choice than to go to Munich. The state of Britain's air defenses, the pacifism of the Dominions, the weakness of the French, the duplicity of the Soviets, and the indefensibility of Czechoslovakia eliminated any alternative course for British policy.

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[38]Churchill, 222.

[39]Namier, In the Nazi Era, 149-67.

[40]Ibid., 152.

[41]Halifax, 193-200; Simon, 238-54; Templewood, Nine Troubled Years, 285-326, 372-82. See also Headlam-Morley.

Chamberlain, they further agreed, was neither ignorant nor
domineering. He was a forceful and dynamic leader. He
acted only according to the best advice of military and
foreign affairs experts and after fully consulting his Cab-
inet. He was not fooled by Hitler; he hoped that Munich
would change him. Halifax and Templewood did concede that
the critics could easily get a misleading impression of
Chamberlain's abilities from such unfortunate phrases as
"peace in our time." Another even more ardent Conservative
admirer of Chamberlain, Robert Sencourt, wrote that Chamber-
lain not only saw through Hitler but anticipated the Cold
War as well. His wisdom led him to try to turn Hitler east
against Stalin. He did not want to depend on help against
Hitler from Russia and America, who between them had man-
aged to ruin Europe.[42]

Neither Sencourt, who deplored the efforts of "Sir
Winston and all his henchmen" to blacken Chamberlain's
name,[43] nor Chamberlain's former colleagues challenged
Wheeler-Bennett's evidence of Hitler's bad faith. Most
British writers also accepted the conclusions of Churchill
and Namier.[44] This meant widespread acceptance of traditional

[42]Sencourt, "The Foreign Policy of Neville Chamber-
lain," 141-55; Sencourt, "How Neville Chamberlain Fought
Hitler," 414-25.

[43]Sencourt, "The Foreign Policy of Neville Chamber-
lain," 149.

[44]Amery, 288-95, 292, 303, 304-5, 398; Dalton, 175-76,
183, 203-06; Foot, 124-29, 132-3; Mowat, 414, 592-93, 605,

critical views of Munich on a new basis of documentary proof.

For Churchill had maintained as early as October 1938 that

Hitler aimed to destroy Czechoslovakia, and that Chamberlain

had a choice which he used badly. Thus the result of the

Conservative critics lead in the researches into the mass

of newly available documents was, paradoxically, to confirm

old views of Munich.

The Cold War and Britain's Decline

The Conservative critics' writings in the late 1940's

were influenced by the Cold War as well as by the documents

and their continued strong feelings about Munich. When they

came to write, the major problem of British foreign policy

had become Soviet expansion and much of their writing was

done during the Soviet blockade of West Berlin from June

1948 to September 1949. The conservative critics were dis-

satisfied with both the British and American responses to

this expansion. They were anxious about the pro-Soviet

criticism of the Labour Government policies from within the

Labour Party itself. They were exasperated at what they

considered the slowness of America in taking an active part

in resistance. Consequently, they went beyond discussing

Munich as a specific problem of the 1930's. Munich, they

615-17; 625-32; Cooper, "A Cynical Act of Cold-Blooded
Butchery," 757-58; Cooper, Old Men Forget, 220-21, 244;
Reynolds, 129, 139-40, 148-49; Rowse, 7-8, 57, 63, 67, 79,
81-83, 87; Webster, 138, 141, 145, 149-53.

wrote, was also a case study in the relations between democ-
racies and totalitarian dictatorships. Democratic peoples
loved peace and hated the expense of armaments. They and
their leaders were apt not to see the indivisibility of
peace. Instead, they tried to buy off dictators with con-
cessions in distant lands. By such actions they encouraged
the rapacity of dictators who always interpreted concilia-
tion as weakness. They could not buy peace. They could
only make war inevitable. Worst of all, they sacrificed
"honour" and "principle."[45] These generalizations, the
Conservative critics claimed, described the West's policy
towards the Soviet Union since 1945 as well as Munich.
The parallel and lesson were clear. The West must rearm
and stand up to the Soviets or there would be more Munichs
and more wars.[46] The Conservative critics' analogies

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[45]Churchill, The Gathering Storm, 320-1; Cooper, "A
Cynical Act of Cold-Blooded Butchery," 758; Wheeler-Bennett,
Munich, 3-4, 7.

[46]Boothby, 9-10; Churchill, The Gathering Storm,
iv-v, 210-1, 255, 320-1; Cooper "A Cynical Act of Cold-
Blooded Butchery," 757-58; Namier, "Munich Survey," 836;
Vansittart, 67-5-7. The question has arisen in another
context as to whether Churchill did in fact aim to use
Munich as an argument in favor of resisting Russia. Arthur
Schlesinger Jr., in refuting Secretary of State Rusk's
frequent reference to Munich as a justification for the
present American policy in Southeast Asia, has suggested
that Churchill disclaimed any parallel between Munich and
the Cold War (speech of Schlesinger, Stephens College,
Columbia, Mo., February 22, 1966). And Schlesinger quotes
Churchill to that effect: "no case of this kind can be
judged apart from its circumstances. The facts be unknown
at the time, and estimates of them must be largely guesswork

created the "Munich Legend," the idea that the lessons of

Munich were a guide for all future Western foreign policy.

One of the Conservative critics, Vansittart, con-

tended that subsequent events showed that the Soviets would

have been a poor ally in 1938--though their defection would

not have eliminated Britain's miliary advantage[47]--but Van-

sittart's was the only such revision. Churchill and the

others still credited the sincerity and value of the Soviet

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coloured by the general feelings and aims of who is trying
to pronounce." (Churchill, The Gathering Storm, 319-20).
    Knowing Churchill's preoccupation with the Soviet
problem from at least the time of his "Iron Curtain" speech
in March, 1946, it would be surprising if he did not write
of Munich with the Soviet expansion in mind. In actual fact
he did. The then historical uniqueness of such generaliza-
tions taken with the following quotations strongly suggests
that Churchill did mean for his conclusions on what should
have been done at Munich to point to what should be done
with the Soviet Union:
> It is my earnest hope that pondering upon the
> past may give guidance in days to come, enable
> a new generation to...govern...the awful un-
> folding future. (Ibid., v).

> (after quoting an address made in the 1930's
> in which he had claimed that collective security
> could stop Germany without war) If we add the
> United States to Britain and France; if we
> change the name of the potential aggressor, if
> we substitute the United Nations Organization
> for the League of Nations...the argument is not
> necessarily without its application today.
> (Ibid., 255. Italics mine).

> If only the British people could have known...
> that...we were now disengaging ourselves...
> from the two might nations whose extreme efforts
> were needed to save our lives and their own....
> Now ten years later, let the lessons of the past
> be a guide. (Ibid., 255. Italics mine).

    However, Schlesinger's point is well taken in that
Churchill, because of his contined strong feelings about Munich,
regarded the crisis as much more than a guide for present ef-
fort. For Churchill and for all the Conservative critics,
Munich was unique in their own lives and in Britain's na-
tional experience.
    [47]Vansittart, 676-7.

cooperation in 1938 and 1939 as an important ingredient to the superiority over Hitler. They blamed Chamberlain for failing to secure agreement on both occasions.[48] Namier rejected the contention of one British military writer that continued appeasement would have turned Hitler east to fight Stalin.[49] Also, although both Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union were Communist states and therefore enemies, several of the Conservative critics wondered if the Soviet bloc's present hostility were not at least partly the last bitter legacy of Chamberlain's policy.[50] The Conservative critics showed no interest in the revisionary works of the Americans Langer and Gleason, who attributed most of the responsibility for World War II to the Soviets, nor in the products of the American war of incriminating documents with the Soviets.[51]

The use of Munich as a model for present action had several paradoxes. It was a guide for British action

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[48]Amery, 288-95; Churchill, The Gathering Storm, 363, 365, 391; Cooper, "A Cynical Act of Cold-Blooded Butchery," 758; Wheeler-Bennett, Munich, 106.

[49]Namier, "Munich Survey," 836; Falls, 717. See also General J. F. C. Fuller, The Conduct of War, 1789-1961 (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1961).

[50]Lockhart, 637; Cooper, "A Cynical Act of Cold-Blooded Butchery," 758; Wheeler-Bennett, Munich, 437.

[51]William S. Langer and S. Everett Gleason, The Challenge to Isolation, 1937-40 (New York: Harper and Bros., 1952), 105, 109-11, 113-21, 170-74, 176-83; U.S.S.R., Documents and Materials Relating to the Eve of the Second World War; United States, James Sontag and J. L. Biddle (ed.), Nazi-Soviet Relations, 1939-41 (Washington: Department of State, 1948).

against the Soviets, but one element of the legend was

Soviet fidelity to Britain. Equally, the Conservative

critics did not revise their conclusions about the origins

of the war as did the American revisionists. However, their

efforts greatly influenced British and American policy,

while those of the American revisionists did not. The

explanation for these incongruities is the most basic par-

adox of the "Munich Legend." The Conservative critics, by

writing of parallels and not revising their conclusions,

greatly influenced Western Cold War policy. Yet, they

wrote only of parallels because Munich was more important

to them than the Cold War.

Thus, the explanation for the creation of the "Munich

Legend" lies not in any accident of availability of docu-

ments but in the emotions of the Conservative critics. They

did not write about Munich in the years 1945-8 simply be-

cause proofs of Soviet perfidy were hidden. The two his-

torians, Namier and Wheeler-Bennett showed no interest

as such proofs appeared, but they devoted much attention

to documents on the 1938 confrontation between Britain

and Germany. Similarly, when Amery and Norwich wrote

their memoirs in the 1950's, they showed no interest in

the parallels between Munich and the Cold War. The drama

of the Berlin Blockade, when most of the writing creating

the legend had been done, was past. In fact they showed

no interest in the Cold War at all. But they still felt

strongly about Munich.[52] To them and all the Conservative

critics Munich was a much more important emotional experience

than the Cold War. Some, though not all, evaluated the Cold

War in terms of Munich. But to revise Munich in the light

of the Cold War would have implied that the Cold War was

the more important event. For the Conservative critics as

well as for a number of other British writers, this was

simply not true. "The British people," Lord Norwich wrote,

"have not forgotten the anxieties and the humiliations

of that fateful month of September."[53]

The reaction of other British writers to the Cold

War and Conservative critics' "Munich Legend" were various.

Several writers, mainly those who had either supported Munich

or found themselves identified with it, suggested that the

knowledge of Russia's postwar behavior proved the impossibil-

ity of an Anglo-Soviet pact in either 1938 or 1939. Thus,

Britain had no alternative to Munich.[54] At least one of

these writers, Lord Templewood, was at the same time en-

thusiastic about the "Munich Legend" as a call to action

against the Soviets.[55] Other British historians, who

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[52]Amery, 259-95; Cooper, Old Men Forget, 224-42.

[53]Cooper, Old Men Forget, 224.

[54]Sencourt, "The Foreign Policy of Neville Chamber-
lain," 141-55; Sencourt, "How Neville Chamberlain Fought
Hitler," 414-25; Strang, At Home and Abroad, 149, 153, 198;
Strang, Britain in World Affairs, 319; Templewood, Nine
Troubled Years, 341-52. See also Beloff, 120-66.

[55]Templewood, "The Lessons of Munich," 880.

disapproved of both Munich and Soviet expansion, accepted

the validity of the parallel between the 1930's and the

postwar period. Speaking at Chatham House shortly after

the Labour Party 1960 Conference at Scarborough, Sir Charles

Webster stated that Munich showed the dangers of "unilater-

alism" in the face of the dictators.[56] However, some Britons

disliked the "Munich Legend's" implications. If there were

any lesson at all to Munich, A. J. P. Taylor wrote, it was

of the permanence of the German menace to Europe and the

necessity of Anglo-Soviet cooperation in controlling Ger-

many.[57] The British Communist writer, Andrew Rothstein,

maintained that Munich showed British leaders conspiring

against their own people and the Soviet Union, however

much they might doctor documents to prove otherwise. The

lesson of Munich, Rothstein wrote, was that the British

people had to throw out their leaders if peaceful coexis-

tence was to be possible.[58]

A number of British politicians were impressed with

the parallel between Munich and not only the Soviet prob-

lem but also the autocratic regimes of the Middle East.

Many of these politicians were also slow in recognizing

Britain's inability to play an independent part in world

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[56]Webster, 153. See also Reynolds, 150, 167.

[57]Taylor, "Munich Ten Years After," 178. See also
Comfort, 607.

[58]Rothstein, 208-20, 265-90, 308-9.

politics. Both of these ways of thinking influenced British

policy in the Suez crisis of 1956. The debates of August 2,

1956 in the House of Commons and the Prime Minister's subse-

quent apologia for the Anglo-French invasion of Egypt both

revealed great anxiety to avoid another "Munich" in dealing

with Nasser.[59] Even after the embarrassment of Suez, British

politicians justified Anglo-American intervention in Lebanon

and Jordan by the lessons of Munich. Such talk led a Spec-

tator writer to complain that British statesmen had a "Munich

complex."[60] After 1958, Munich was still talked about as a

guide for action. As Britain's loss of autonomy in foreign

affairs became increasingly obvious, it also was a subject

of recrimination as a cause for Britain's reduced state.

Chamberlain and the other "men of Munich," A. L. Rowse

wrote in 1960, "ruined their country."[61] "The real deci-

sions" now, he concluded, "are made elsewhere."[62]

At the same time Rowse's book All Soul's and

Appeasement appeared in April, 1961, another work, A. J.

P. Taylor's The Origins of the Second World War, was also

published,[63] and Taylor's work was destined to end the

domination of Munich historiography by the Conservative

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[59]Parl. Deb., DLVII (1955-56), 1602-1722. Eden,
The Full Circle (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1960), 467-653.

[60]/anon._7, "Munich: The Fallacy of Slogans," 424.

[61]Rowse, 56, 87-8.

[62]Ibid., 4.

[63]A. J. P. Taylor, The Origins of the Second World
War (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1961), 7-278.

critics. However, the contribution of the Conservative
critics was in the 1945-61 period, and is still today,
immense. During the 1945-61 period their domination was
complete. Most historians accepted their conclusions;
those who did not wrote to refute them. Their work in the
interpretation of the masses of new documents, Wheeler-
Bennett and Churchill with the Nuremberg documents, Namier
with the Documents of British Foreign Policy, confirmed
old opinions with new material. In the first years of the
Cold War, they created the "Munich Legend" by writing of
the parallels between Munich and the postwar period. The
parallels influenced the Cold War policies of both Britain
and the United States, but the Conservative critics wrote
in terms of analogies because Munich was more important
to them than the Cold War.

CHAPTER VII

A.J.P. TAYLOR.   A MUNICH REVISION

AND ITS IMPACT: 1961-65

The word "revision," when applied to the twentieth
century study of war origins, means a shift in interpreta-
tion away from belief in the exclusive war guilt of the
former opponent.   Total or partial revisions of German
war guilt were written in both Britain and America after
World War I and in America after World War II.   Such revi-
sions were rarely the product of postwar detachment towards
the past, but rather of a revulsion with the costs and
results of a conflict.   British and American writers after
1918 compared the casualties with the apparent mockery made
of the wartime promises of a better world.   After 1945,
many Americans saw Soviet domination of Eastern Europe
as the only result of their efforts.   In such circumstances,
after both wars, more respectable historians considered
the wartime views of extremists on the causes of the war.
In England and America after World War I revisionist his-
torians accepted the wartime interpretations of the Union
of Democratic Control pamphleteers.[1]   They rejected the

[1]A.J.P. Taylor, The Troublemakers, 132-200.

war guilt of Germany. Instead, they blamed either blunders
on both sides or the leaders of the Entente. Similarly, in
America after World War II, the wartime interpretations of
extreme isolationists, who blamed President Roosevelt for
the war, and 1941-45 opponents of the Soviet alliance, who
blamed the coming of the war on the Nazi-Soviet Pact, gained
a wide audience among both historians and the public. After
both wars, such emotional conclusions also had practical
implications for current policy. If Germany had no special
responsibility for World War I or if she were the victim of
others, then the Versailles punishments should be revoked.
Or, in America after 1945, the Soviets should be mistrusted,
or the Americans should keep their presidents out of foreign
affairs.

After World War II, although the British found them-
selves impoverished by the war, betrayed by the Soviets,
and faced with nuclear destruction on the decision of others,
their view of the causes of the war remained for a long
time essentially what it had been in 1939. All British
writers agreed on the exclusive war guilt of Germany, and
the discussion of the war's origins centered on a debate as
to whether Britain might better have gone to war with Germany
earlier. In this debate, the most frequently argued event
was the Munich crisis of 1938. Critics of prewar British
policy maintained that the irreconcilable conflict between
Britain and Germany was obvious in 1938 and that the

conditions for British resistance were favorable. The weak-

ening the critics saw in Britain's position from 1938 to

1939, and in the years after, was, they believed, largely

the result of the government's failure to fight over Czecho-

slovakia. Defenders of the 1938 government agreed with the

critics' judgment of German intentions. However, they con-

tended that the British government could not have resisted

Germany in 1938 and gained much by postponing the war for

a year.

Until 1961 there had been only one revision of Munich,

at the very beginning of the war, and only two noticeable

changes of emphasis. During the "Phoney War," E. H. Carr,

Sir Nevile Henderson, and W. N. Medlicott saw only misunder-

standings as causes for a war they hoped would end by nego-

tiation. They viewed Munich as the creator of misconceptions

on both sides; these brought war a year later. After the

war, historians increasingly stressed the rigid competence

of Chamberlain's execution of British policy in the Czech

crisis. This was in sharp contrast to earlier studies of

Munich. Then the great majority of historians tended to

judge the National Government's diplomacy by the blundering

incompetence of its civil defense preparations in September

1938. The post-war publication of the British foreign

policy documents for the Munich period partly explains the

change. Sir Lewis Namier's interpretation of this written

record emphasized the continuity of the goals and outlook

of British diplomats throughout the crisis. The second change, a concession to postwar times, was the "Munich Legend." This involved no shift in the interpretation of the 1938 events. Historians and other writers simply pointed out that the mistakes of Munich were an object lesson in the proper policy for all dictatorships, particularly that of the Soviet Union.

In the light of Britain's dislike of the war's outcome and with the example of the former British reaction to such discontent, it might be expected that the older British view would one day be challenged. Not surprisingly, the challenger was A. J. P. Taylor. Taylor had the academic credentials to question orthodox opinion. A fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford, he held until 1963 a special lecturship at the university. He was the author of a number of works on nineteenth and twentieth century diplomatic history, which according to academic rumour, would have earned Taylor the Regius Professorship of history at Oxford were it not for his frequent appearances on television and his writing for the London tabloid, the Daily Express. Further, Taylor disliked Britain's postwar world position and the status of British historiography on the origins of the war, which he held partly responsible for that position. Taylor was a member of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, a critic of Britain's postwar subordination to America, and an advocate of Anglo-Soviet

reconciliation. Thus, although he had opposed the Munich
Agreement at the time of its signing, he strongly disapproved
the "Munich Legend" and its call for Anglo-American opposi-
tion to the Soviets, even at the risk of nuclear war. Also,
other historians' emphasis on Hitler's planning the war did
not fit Taylor's belief in the historical importance of the
accidental actions and blunders of statesmen, who were
neither "heroes" nor "villains."[2] Lastly, Taylor had the
reputation of enjoying controversy for its own sake. Munich
was "the most controversial episode in recent history."[3]
This taste often led Taylor into contradicting himself for
the sake of argument:

> One don recalled how he had found himself at
> a meeting of a Peace Congress behind the Iron
> Curtain and, glancing at the roster of speakers,
> had discovered Taylor's name there. 'In the
> first place...it was astonishing that Taylor
> should be there at all--it was a very Party-
> line conference. Then, that he should be
> speaking! But the miracle was the speech he
> gave, to a dumb stony house--it was dyed-in-
> the-wool conservative. And then he had the
> gall to come over to me and whisper in my
> ear, "I've been dreaming of giving a speech
> like that since God knows when!" In Oxford
> he would have delivered a stinging Left Wing
> harangue.'[4]

Whether joking or not, Taylor's revision, which
was recognized as such in 1961, was controversial.[5] It
was most so on the point upon which all British writers

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[2]Taylor, Origins, 17.

[3]Taylor, "Ancient Lights," 456.

[4]Ved Mehta, Fly and the Fly Bottle, Encounters with
British Intellectuals (Boston: Little, Brown and Company,
1962), 168.

[5]Taylor, Origins. Subsequent publications in which

had come to agree: Hitler's conspiracy to destroy Czecho-

slovakia as part of a blueprint for world conquest. British

writers on Hitler, Taylor contended, analyzed Hitler's pre-

war foreign policy too much in terms of his later actions.

They saw him as the creator of all the prewar crises through

the demonic force of his personality. He was a nihilistic

madman. Yet, his actions had an intellectual connection,

the unfolding of a plan for world power. Hitler, Taylor

admitted, did have the relatively modest goals of an eastern

empire and peace in the west. Through accidents he got

neither. The goals were, in any event, largely irrelevant

to his day to day conduct of foreign policy. Then, Taylor

insisted, he was a sane and patient man, too absorbed in

events to plan. Rather, success was his plan.[6]

Although Hitler's actions were important, Taylor

believed that the inter-war structure of Europe and acci-

dents were more important still in explaining his success.

Germany was the strongest nation in Europe. Britain and

France lacked the strength and the will to prevent her

Taylor has restated his thesis include Taylor, "Unlucky Find,"
New Statesman, LXII (December 1, 1961) 833-4; Taylor, "Old
Tunes," New Statesman, LXV (February 15, 1963), 238-40; Tay-
lor, "Flickering Figures," New Statesman, LXVI (July 13,
1963), 49; Observer, July 25, 1965; Taylor, Origins (5th
printing; London: Hamish Hamilton, 1963), "Second Thoughts,"
pages not numbered; Taylor, English History, 404-35; Taylor,
From Sarajevo to Potsdam (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1966),
134, 154-7. Excerpts from Taylor's remarks on his thesis
on television and in private interviews are found in Mehta,
120-22, 169-84.

[6]Taylor, Origins, 68-72, 103, 106, "Second Thoughts."

resurgence. This was Hitler's underlying opportunity for action. His immediate opportunities were various, but also not of his own making. In the Czech crisis, he had available the genuinely disaffected Sudeten German minority, which weakened the Czechs internally and discredited them morally with the British. Hitler's personal contribution in all this was the shrewdness with which he exploited his chances. He did not plan military conquest. At crucial moments, he announced that he was dissatisfied, and waited for concessions to be given him. As time went on, he became impatient. He took to threatening war, without meaning it, in order to speed things up. But for the most part, he was, paradoxically, a passive conquerer.[7]

Taylor's description of a passive Hitler waiting upon events conformed to Taylor's notions of historical development, and it also accounted for a number of discrepancies in previous British accounts. Other writers had suggested that Mein Kampf, Hitler's autobiography, was a warning of all his prewar conquests and his plans for world domination. If so, Taylor contended, why were only seven out of 700 pages in Mein Kampf devoted to Lebensraum? Why were Austria and Czechoslovakia not mentioned at all? Why was a war with the West, the war he fought in 1939, specifically rejected?[8] Equally, on the basis of the Nuremberg

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[7]Ibid., 18-39, 68-72, 151-53.

[8]Ibid., 69, 108, "Second Thoughts."

documents, Sir John Wheeler-Bennett had claimed that the
Hossbach Memorandum of a November 5, 1937 meeting of Hitler's
showed him plotting in detail the overthrow of Czechoslovakia
and Austria and the world.[9] The Hossbach Memorandum, Taylor
maintained, was worthless as an historical document. It
had been carelessly handled by the Germans and then probably
doctored by the American prosecution staff for use in the
Nuremberg trials. Even if it was authentic, it was no blue-
print for aggression. Hitler mentioned three contingencies
in which the immediate German occupation of Austria and
Czechoslovakia might take place. These were hardly a plan
as none of the contingencies were realized. Hitler, Taylor
admitted, did mention a major war in the future to speed up
German expansion, but he expected it for 1943-5, if at all,
not in 1939.[10]

Similarly, British historians had been puzzled after
the war to find no evidence of a German plan to attack Czecho-
slovakia in May 1938. Nearly everyone in Britain, including
the Prime Minister, had thought so at the time. Critics of
the British Government after Munich had claimed that the May
crisis had proved that Hitler was bent on aggression but
could be stopped by show of force. Most postwar historians
were either ignorant of the new evidence or ignored it.

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[9] Wheeler-Bennett, *Munich*, 11-14.

[10] Taylor, *Origins*, 131-4, "Second Thoughts."

Wheeler-Bennett who dealt with this explained the discrepancy between the opinion of the time and the postwar evidence. He proposed that Hitler's denials of German complicity were the "wrath of a man accused of a crime which he intends to commit but has not yet had the opportunity to carry out."[11] Taylor insisted that Hitler's denials were genuine. Until the May crisis, he had no criminal scheme nor indeed any clear plan at all for eliminating the Czech threat to Germany. It was only after the May crisis that he made his plans for military action, in revenge for his humiliating treatment in the British press. Even his military directives in May and June, Taylor pointed out, and historians had not before emphasized, were contingent on British and French non-intervention. This qualification suggested to Taylor that the only war Hitler planned to fight was one of nerves.[12]

It followed logically from Taylor's picture of Hitler that British policy was also quite different than previously imagined. If Hitler were sane and waiting upon events, Taylor wrote, then Chamberlain was neither stupid nor vain in thinking he could deal with him. If Hitler did not aim to conquer the West, then Chamberlain was neither insular nor ignorant in hesitating to resist him. Nor was he cowardly, Taylor believed. Britain and France

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[11]Wheeler-Bennett, _Munich_, 60.

[12]Taylor, _Origins_, 163-67.

simply lacked the power to stop Hitler in the East. Indeed,

Chamberlain was none of the things his critics had claimed.

Intelligent, well-informed people had supported his policies

of appeasement. His courage, not his cowardice, were the

undoing of the Czechs. For, if Hitler was passive in the

Czech crisis, it was Chamberlain who must surely have set

in motion the events which ended in the Munich Agreement.

Chamberlain, Taylor declared, was determined never again to

be surprised by developments in Central Europe after the

Anschluss; he did not realize that Hitler had been as sur-

prised as he by the conquest of Austria. He wanted peace

and an understanding with Hitler, both for its own sake and

to stop the wasteful expenditure on armaments. Prompt

concession would achieve his aims. Drift was contrary to

his nature and seemed impossible anyway. Therefore, ac-

cording to Taylor, Chamberlain, with his characteristic

energy, set out to speed concessions. He forced the Czechs

and the French to a course of conciliation. He encouraged

Hitler to make demands. Hitler had "screwed up the tension"

till then by encouraging the genuinely dissatisfied Sudeten

Germans,[13] waiting for something to turn up. Chamberlain's

opening was Hitler's opportunity. Chamberlain, Taylor wrote,

did not create the Czech problem. He did create the Czech

crisis.[14]

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[13]Ibid., 153.   [14]Ibid., 155.

Taylor's portrayal of German passivity and British energy resulted in a startingly different view of the interaction of British and German policy in the crisis of September 1938. All writers since the war had agreed on Hitler's initiative. Hitler's September 12th speech at Nuremberg, they were sure, was an ultimatum. Some British response was necessary. Authors only disagreed on the wisdom of the course chosen: Chamberlain's flight to Berchtesgaden to appease Hitler. In contrast, Taylor pointed out that Hitler made no specific demands at Nuremberg. The beginning of German military operations, if indeed Hitler planned to use force, was eighteen days away. Hitler merely announced that he was dissatisfied and awaited concessions. Chamberlain brought them. Again, in discussing the Chamberlain-Hitler meeting of September 22-23 at Godesberg, British historians had taken Hitler's refusal to accept Chamberlain's offer of the Sudetenland as evidence of his determination on war. Taylor insisted that it was not. The pressing of the Polish and Hungarian irridentist claims made it seem briefly that Czechoslovakia would collapse without war and that Hitler would get much more than a linguistic frontier. Instead, the Czechs stood firm. Hitler returned to waiting. Finally, writers had interpreted Hitler's calling of the Munich Conference as a reluctant decision against war, brought on by Mussolini's lack of nerve, the German generals' protest against war, the British mobilization of

their fleet, and the Berliner pacifism of September 27th.

On the contrary, Taylor contended, Hitler was merely shrewd.

He wanted no war. He had gotten what he wanted. He called

the conference to write up his victory.[15]

However, Taylor rejected any suggestion that Munich

was simply a product of misplaced British zeal and a German

confidence game. Whatever Munich was for the French, it was

for the British a moral decision. It was:

> a triumph for all that was best and most en-
> lightened in British life; a triumph for those
> who had preached equal justice between peoples;
> a triumph for those who had courageously de-
> nounced the harshness and short-sightedness of
> Versailles....This was the offense redressed
> at Munich. Idealists could claim that British
> policy had been tardy and hesitant. In 1938
> it atoned for these failings. With skill and
> persistence, Chamberlain brought first the
> French and then the Czechs to follow the moral
> line.[16]

Taylor's statement was, he later admitted, partly

a joke to annoy the orthodox, but not wholly so. It was

an important part of his criticism that previous British

writing on Munich had lost touch with the intellectual cli-

mate of the 1930's. At that time, Taylor noted, the

revisionist historians' ideas of Germany's innocence of

war guilt and of the wrong done to her at Versailles, ideas

which had originally been proposed in wartime by the left-

wing Union for Democratic Control, gained widespread accep-

tance in all parties. Appeasement of Germany was considered

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[15]Ibid., 17-86.   [16]Ibid., 189.

only just. Even Hitler's appearance did not discredit it.

His barbarism confirmed the need for ending the Versailles

treaty. The British public and its leaders accepted the

German occupation of the Rhineland and the Anschluss with

Austria, because they felt it immoral to oppose them.

Equally, Chamberlain went to Berchtesgaden to appease

Hitler because he believed it morally wrong for the Sudeten

Germans not to be given self-determination. Conversely,

the successor states like Czechoslovakia had no moral valid-

ity for the British people. The British public rejected as

cynical the pleas of Churchill to put British security

ahead of self-determination. Such ideas were the same dis-

credited power politics which had brought World War I.

Aside from Churchill and those around him the only group

who opposed giving the predominantly German Sudetenland to

Hitler was part of the Labour party. These men, somewhat

confusedly Taylor thought, admitted the justice of Germany's

claims, but felt that Hitler had no right to make them.[17]

Taylor further emphasized the importance of the

intellectual climate by re-evaluating the role of armaments

in foreign policy decisions. Taylor's argument in this

area was not entirely consistent. He contradicted himself

somewhat by admitting that fear of aerial bombing helped

make British foreign policy timid. At the same time he

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[17]Ibid., 189-90. See also Taylor, The Troublemakers,
167-200.

insisted that British policy-makers almost without exception, ignored considerations of arms strength. Leaders made decisions for activity or inactivity, and then justified them by the state of armaments. The British leaders let Germany have her way over Czechoslovakia in 1938 because they wanted to. They thought war over the Sudetenland would be wrong, but they did not fear losing such a war militarily. Rather, they feared the economic cost of victory. They also feared victory itself: it would bring the destruction of the Czechs and Soviet domination of East Europe without solving the German problem.[18]

In making their calculations of military victory, Taylor noted, the British overrated Germany--German arms strength was about one-half what the British thought--but they overrated themselves even more. They had exaggerated hopes for a blockade like that of World War I. They also confused a successful defense with imposing their will on Germany. They had sufficient power for a defense of the West even in 1940, but they had incompetent generals. They never had the power to force Germany to give up her conquests in the East.

Taylor also re-evaluated the role of Munich in the coming of war. In an important revision of earlier studies, Taylor suggested that the Polish crisis was a much more important event than Munich. Previously, wartime and

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[18]Taylor, _Origins_, 60-61, 77, 115-20.

postwar British writers, though with some reluctance among
Chamberlain supporters, had treated Munich as the main
prewar drama. All the elements of conflict had been pres-
ent; clear German intent on world conquest, the challenge
to a basic British interest, British recognition of the
challenge, and, critics maintained, the resources at hand
for meeting it. From this perspective, the Polish crisis
was simply an epilogue to Munich with the Government at
last facing its responsibilities. Taylor did not agree
with this view. Hitler, he believed, was not set on world
conquest either in 1938 or 1939. The war was the result
of blunders on both sides in 1939. The progression of events
was complex, but the essential blunder was Hitler's "launch-
ing on 29 August $\underline{/1939/}$ a diplomatic manoeuvre which he
ought to have launched on 28 August."[19] Thus, by Taylor's
reasoning, the main concentration of the revised study of
the origins of World War II should be August 1939, just as
that of World War I was August 1914.[20]

However, Taylor pointed out, Munich did have an im-
portant secondary interest; the emotions it created deter-
mined in part the blunders of 1939. Hitler, logically
enough Taylor thought, came away from the Munich Confer-
ence convinced that Britain had given him a free hand in
Eastern Europe. Equally, his success at Munich was a blow
to his old patience in achieving his ends. He thought

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[19]Ibid., 278.   [20]Ibid., 187-247.

afterwards that he could get what he wanted much more

quickly than in the past simply by threatening the "little

worms" whom he had met at Munich.[21] What Hitler wanted re-

mained unclear: he occupied Prague only to check Hungarian

expansion, and his demands towards Poland began as a desire

to tie up loose ends in relations as a prelude to alliance.

His impatient bluffing and his inability to avoid bragging

on Munich as a victory for the German force made his actual

goals irrelevant. For, contrary to what Hitler thought,

the British had in the course of the Munich crisis, through

the guarantee to rump-Czechoslovakia given to calm the

French on September 18th, committed themselves to the status

quo in Eastern Europe.[22]

Because of Munich the British Government was finally

forced to fight for this status quo. When the exaggerated

hopes for "peace for our time" seemed to be destroyed by

the occupation of Prague, an "underground explosion" of

British public opinion demanded that the government stand

firm against further German expansion. The people now saw

Hitler as immoral and out to conquer the world. The leaders

themselves, Taylor thought, did not change much; the public

had to push them into war. But "with the narrow moralism

of a reformed drunkard,"[23] the leaders refused to urge upon

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[21] Ibid., 219.   [22] Ibid., 177.

[23] Ibid., 226.

the Poles concessions which they had demanded of the Czechs
and which would have saved peace. Moreover, Taylor pointed
out, the needed concessions were ones that the thinking of
the times counted just. They were ones the British could
not keep Germany from taking by force. The Poles them-
selves played out their part in the light of their reading
of Munich. In addition to the characteristic Polish delu-
sion of Great Power status, Colonel Beck, the Polish Foreign
Minister, had the unfortunate example of President Benes of
Czechoslovakia to keep him from making any concession to
German demands.[24]

The British reaction to Taylor's analysis of the
Polish crisis, Munich, and the coming of the war was vari-
ous, but on the whole highly unfavorable. Taylor's The
Origins of the Second World War received a very complimen-
tary notice in the Times Literary Supplement.[25] A New
Statesman reviewer wrote that Taylor was "the only English
historian writing who can bend the bow of Gibbon or
Macauley."[26] However, Elizabeth Wiskemann, the historian
or the Hitler-Mussolini alliance, wondered if the work were
not another of Taylor's jokes.[27] If so, most British

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[24]Ibid., 204, 215-78.

[25]Times Literary Supplement, April 21, 1961, 244.

[26]David Marquand, "The Taylor Doctrine," New
Statesman, LXI (April 21, 1961), 627.

[27]Elizabeth Wiskemann, Listener, LXV (April 21,
1961), 707.

historians were not amused. In criticizing the book, P. A.
Reynolds argued that Hitler did have clear plans in foreign
policy and recognized that he could not achieve them without
war. Reynolds particularly disliked Taylor's contention
that Henlein's Sudeten German Party had genuine grievances
and was not under Hitler's complete control.[28] A number of
other historians wrote critical letters to the Times Literary
Supplement. Many of the writers limited themselves to point-
ing out contradictions in Taylor's descriptions of events
in the 1920's and early 1930's, but the emotionalism of
their letters derived mainly from anger at Taylor's comments
on Hitler and Munich. Such work, some writers claimed, en-
couraged neo-Nazi movements by absolving Hitler.[29] A. L.
Rowse complained that Taylor's "astonishing and deplorable
reconstruction" took "pains to whittle down moral consider-
ations."[30]

The most lengthy and most highly critical review of
Taylor's The Origins of the Second World War was by Hugh
Trevor-Roper, the Regius Professor of history at Oxford. In
an exchange with Taylor in Encounter and in a television

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[28]P. A. Reynolds, "Hitler's War," History, XLVI
(October 1961), 212-17.

[29]Times Literary Supplement, May 5, 1961; May 21,
1961; May 26, 1961; June 2, 1961, 277, 325, 341, 357. The
writers included Isaac Deutscher, W. N. Medlicott, A. L.
Rowse, David Thomson, Hugh Trevor-Roper, and Elizabeth
Wiskemann.

[30]Times Literary Supplement, May 21, 1961, 325.

debate with him on July 9, 1961,[31] Trevor-Roper criticized
the effect of Taylor's work, its content, and Taylor's mo-
tives for writing. He repeated the charge that Taylor's
work encouraged neo-Nazi movements. Taylor, he claimed,
accomplished this dubious goal by selectively quoting or
by dismissing as irrelevant material in <u>Mein Kampf</u> and the
Hossbach Memorandum which refuted his thesis. The proper
way to study such material, Trevor-Roper suggested, was to
keep one's own emotions of the 1930's intact. Taylor used
documents too much, his feelings of the time too little.
Taylor also equated appeasement of Germany with "realism,"
and equated both with "morality."[32] The result was intol-
erable. Taylor suggested that Churchill's ideas on pro-
tecting Czechoslovakia were cynical, that Munich was a
"triumph of all that was best...in British life,"[33] and
that Hitler "in principle and doctrine...was no more wicked
and unscrupulous than many other contemporary statesmen."[34]
Why did Taylor make such claims? It was partly a joke. It
was partly a "gesture of posthumous defiance of his former
master, Sir Lewis Namier."[35] On Namier's recommendation,

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[31]Hugh Trevor-Roper, "A.J.P. Taylor, Hitler, and the
War," <u>Encounter</u>, XVII (July 1961), 88-95; Taylor, "How to Quote:
Exercises for Beginners," <u>Encounter</u>, XVII (September 1961),
73-74; Trevor-Roper, "A Reply," <u>Encounter</u>, XVII (September
1961), 74-75. Because of the British Broadcasting Corpora-
tion rule, whereby television scripts are destroyed three
years after their use, copies of the Taylor-Trevor debate
are no longer in print. However, excerpts from the debate
are quoted in Mehta, 120-22.

[32]Trevor-Roper, "A.J.P. Taylor, Hitler, and the War," 89.

[33]<u>Ibid.</u>, 89.   [34]<u>Ibid.</u>, 92.

[35]<u>Ibid.</u>, 95.

Trevor-Roper reported, Taylor had been passed over by Trevor-Roper himself to become Regius Professor. Mainly, Trevor-Roper thought, Taylor's object was to make a case for the appeasement of Soviet Russia in the 1960's. The Soviets, he accused Taylor of implying, were ordinary statesmen. The moral and realistic course for dealing with them was unilateral disarmament and large scale concessions.

Many of Trevor-Roper's criticisms were ill-founded, for he persistently quoted Taylor out of context. Taylor had written that "in principle and doctrine Hitler was no more wicked and unscrupulous than other contemporary statesmen,"[36] but Trevoe-Roper tendentiously omitted Taylor's next sentence, "in wicked deeds he outdid them all."[37] Equally, Taylor did not write that in his own opinion Churchill's ideas were cynical or that Munich really was a "triumph."[38] Rather, he pointed out that the intellectual climate of the 1930's judged them so. Also, there was no indication that Taylor himself equated appeasement with either realism or morality. Trevor-Roper's suggestion that Taylor's work was a "gesture of posthumous defience" of Namier was also wrong.[39] All the controversial elements of Taylor's analysis had been in print for at least two

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[36]Taylor, Origins, 71.

[37]Ibid.   [38]Ibid., 189-90.

[39]Trevor-Roper, "A.J.P. Taylor, Hitler, and the War,"
95.

years before Namier's death in 1960.[40] Moreover, Namier's

closest colleague, John Brooke, speculated that Namier

might well have agreed with many of Taylor's conclusions,

particularly his description of Hitler's relations with the

German people.[41] Whatever support Taylor's conclusions

might receive in Germany, his work was not an exoneration

of Hitler or the German people. Taylor did point out that

Hitler's ideas and tactics were prosaic enough. The suc-

cesses Hitler achieved were disastrous for the world, for

the "terrifying literalism" of Hitler's ideas on the Jews

were willingly carried out by the German people.[42] In

reality Taylor's conclusions made a case for collective

German war guilt. They reflected his feeling that the

postwar preoccupation with Hitler aimed at letting the West

Germans assume an undeserved equality among the nations of

Europe.

Trevor-Roper's charge that Taylor was promoting

unilateral disarmament and concessions to the Soviet Union

had more substance. The original motivation for Taylor's

study was a dislike of the Cold War uses of Munich, and his

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[40]Taylor, "Munich Ten Years After," 278-79; Taylor, "Munich Twenty Years After," 7; Taylor, "Ancient Lights," 456-57; Taylor, The Troublemakers, 167-200; Taylor, Rumours of Wars, 184-203, 208; Taylor, Englishmen and Others (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1956), 155, 183, 188.

[41]John Brooke in Mehta, 225.

[42]Taylor, Origins, 70.

conclusions did discredit Munich as a guide for Western resistance to Soviet Russia. Until 1948, Taylor had written bitterly of Munich. After the "Munich Legend" was created by drawing parallels between his own view of the 1938 events and those of the late 1940's, Taylor complained that such "twaddling scraps of history" were preventing conciliation with the Soviet Union.[43] He also began to look critically at his own former judgments. The Origins of the Second World War was the product of this reexamination. Whatever his original motive for writing, Taylor's approach was a legitimate one, probably more so than Trevor-Roper's encouragement of retrospective emotions. Taylor set out to show that Munich was an historical event, the product of a unique point of view. The intellectual climate of the 1930's produced a morality which favored Germany. Fear of the effects of conventional bombing and other aspects of the arms situation in 1938 made war with Germany at the time seem fruitless. Further, the Hitler of 1938 was not the Hitler of wartime. He was sane. He did not aim at conquering Britain. Therefore, negotiating with him in 1938

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[43]Taylor, "Munich Ten Years After," 279. See also Taylor, Rumours of Wars, 76, 276-7; Taylor, The Trouble-makers, 19-20; Taylor, "Munich Twenty Years After," 7. For Taylor's views on Munich before the appearance of the "Munich Legend," see extracts from a note written to Duff Cooper in 1938 congratulating Cooper for resigning as First Lord of the Admiralty in protest over Munich in Martin Gilbert, Britain and Germany between the Wars (London: Longmans, 1964), 118. See also, Taylor, The Course of German History (reprint 1946 edition with new preface; New York: Capricorn Books, 1961), 220.

was not as foolish as it might seem in retrospect. These

and Taylor's other contentions suggested extraordinarily

complex events, which could not provide easy guides to

present policy.

However, Taylor did implicitly propose two general-

izations of his own from Munich. He emphasized that war at

the time of Munich, or by implication at any time, was not

a solution to national problems. All the government's fears

about fighting in 1938 were realized. After 1945 Britain

was impoverished. The Soviet Union gained control of

Eastern Europe, and Western Europe still faced the German

problem. The difference was that the Poles rather than the

Czechs were exterminated to save British honor. The fear

of bombing, which had been illusory in 1938, had become

terrifyingly real.[44] Also, Taylor implied that negotia-

tions with dictatorships were not as dangerous as the

"Munich Legend" suggested. The only misfortunes that

Britain suffered from dealing with Hitler at Munich came

from mutual misinterpretations of intentions afterwards.

The only thing wrong with making concessions to Hitler

was that he was a German. Non-German dictators, he hinted,

were like the Hitler of 1938, but could safely be negotiated

with. Certainly his portrait of Hitler in 1938, the

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[44]Taylor, Origins, 16-17; Taylor "Old Tunes," 238;
Taylor in Mehta, 160-61, 173.

dictator with limited aims waiting upon events, resembled
his description of Stalin in the early 1950's.

Were Taylor's conclusions then simply the dis-
creditable product of his biases as Trevor-Roper suggested?
Or, were they "objective" as Taylor himself claimed on
several occasions? The answer seems to be that Taylor
wanted to discredit the "Munich Legend," and that he found
what he wanted to find. However, he did so, at least in
the case of his Munich discussion, by consistent use of the
available documents. The very process of selection and ex-
clusion, the essence of historical analysis, is highly sub-
jective. Taylor selected material which emphasized the
historical uniqueness of Munich. By contrast, the Conser-
vative critics selected material which emphasized the common
elements of Munich with a later period. There is no gen-
eral agreement among historians on the "objective" validity
of either approach. Similarly, Taylor assumed an emotional
connection between Hitler's actions, greediness for success.
He selected material which emphasized the contrast between
his personality and aims in 1938 and those of wartime. Pre-
vious historians started with an assumption of an intellec-
tual connection, the unfolding of a plan. They had selected
material which minimized the difference between Hitler's
personality in 1938 and that of wartime. Again, there is
no objective way of determining the relation of intellect
or emotions to a series of foreign policy decisions. One

cannot measure Hitler's personality changes from 1938 to 1945. With these factors in mind, Taylor's description of Munich can be classified as a "rival dogma," as Taylor himself called it on another occasion.[45] It does not settle Munich but it provides an alternative way of looking at the event.

Nevertheless Trevor-Roper's charge was invalid. It is doubtful that any careful reader would support appeasement of the Soviet Union on the basis of Taylor's work. For Taylor was also extremely critical of Munich. All British policy after 1935, he noted, was based on expediency. Whatever appeasement's moral basis, it meant in practice, "endorsing the claims of the stronger and then making out that these claims were just."[46] At one point, Taylor did write that British and French pressure on the Czechs forced them to "follow the moral line."[47] He also wrote that the pressure was a "demand that Benes commit suicide in order to secure /British and French/ peace of minds."[48] This action was made all the worse by the Czechs probable ability alone to defeat the Germans in 1938. Such cant, Taylor pointed out, would have been impossible without the corruption of international life brought by the dictator's

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[45]Taylor, Origins, 216.

[46]Taylor, English History, 407-08.

[47]Taylor, Origins, 189.

[48]Ibid., 161.

lies and the connivance of Western statesmen in the lies.

Sir Edward Grey, the British Foreign Secretary in a better

time, would never have signed the Munich Agreement. The

British and French motives for this "shameful transaction,"[49]

Taylor went on, were fear of war and fear of admitting that

they were no longer Great Powers. Benes had turned the

moral question in his own favor by the time of the Munich

crisis. Chamberlain went to Berchtesgaden because the

French nerve had collapsed. After Godesberg, he was willing

to hand over the Czechs--even give up Britain's claim to Great

Power status--simply in order to avoid war. The British

people themselves appeared to accept Munich in order to

keep themselves from being bombed.[50]

These contradictions in Taylor's work suggest that

Munich was important to him for more than one reason. The

original motivation behind Taylor's work seems to have been

to debunk the conclusions about Munich on which the "Munich

Legend" was based. Apparently other, much older emotions

got in the way. Why should the feeling of nearly twenty-

five years before interfere with discrediting a present day

policy which he strongly disapproved? The answer is that

his feelings about Munich had a special significance. Munich

was, as Taylor pointed out, the last time England and the

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[49]Ibid., 179.

[50]Taylor, English History, 430-31.

other European powers "seemed the centre of the world."[51]
It was "the prelude to a fierce conflict which ended...
centuries of world dominance."[52] It was also the last
time that Britain had any real choice in foreign policy.[53]
Taylor's writings in the past had shown that he--like many
others--felt that later misfortunes had come from the wrong
choice at Munich.[54] His present statements showed that he
also believed that in her last leading part Britain had
played an ignoble role. Thus, for Taylor Munich had a
double and contradictory meaning: it was the source of the
"Munich Legend," and it was the last occasion when Britain
as an independent Great Power had freedom to choose her own
fate.

Taylor's British critics largely ignored these
particular contradictions. They attacked his work for
what the tone of the criticism indicated were emotional as
much as scholarly reasons. They did not do so because of
his work's implications for present policy towards Russia.
Trevor-Roper was the only British writer to mention this.
As Taylor himself pointed out, American reviewers appeared
to dislike the book for only this reason.[55] British

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[51]Taylor, "Munich Ten Years After," 278.

[52]Taylor, "Munich Twenty Years After," 7.

[53]Taylor, Rumours of Wars, 76.

[54]Taylor, "Munich Ten Years After," 278-79.

[55]Trevor-Roper, "A.J.P. Taylor, Hitler, and the War,"
96; Taylor in Mehta, 171.

writers criticized the work because it seemed to mock the
feelings they themselves had about Munich and Nazi Germany.
Thus, paradoxically, they attacked Taylor for belittling
emotions which he shared with them and which caused his
work to fail in its original purpose.

Except for Taylor's contradictory feelings, the
relationship of his revision to that of the "Phoney War"
apologists might well have been the same as that of the
post-World War I revisionists to the U.D.C. pamphleteers.[56]
Taylor, like the revisionists after 1918, aimed to suggest
a new policy by discrediting an accepted interpretation of
the causes of a war. To do so, he drew heavily on the
interpretations of a wartime dissenting minority, although
Carr, Henderson, and Medlicott, unlike the U.D.C. pamphle-
teers, were eminently respectable, and their views may well
have represented those of many of the officials actually
running the "Phoney War." Certainly, Taylor did compli-
ment the 1939-40 works of Carr, Henderson, and Medlicott,
an almost unprecedented act among British historians. Many
of his conclusions resembled theirs. Like Medlicott, Taylor
eliminated the assumption of an intellectual connection--
the unfolding of a closely reasoned plan--for Hitler's

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[56]Carr, Britain, 172-6; Henderson, Failure of a
Mission, 129-88; Medlicott, British Foreign Policy, 22-52,
302; Medlicott, The Origins of the Second Great War
(London: Bell and Sons for the Historical Association,
1940), 1-23.

actions, and substituted an accidental and emotional one.

To Taylor, success was Hitler's plan. To Medlicott, Hitler

aimed for "some half-mystical, ill-defined stroke of politics

which could produce glory for Germany and her Fuhrer."[57]

They further agreed that Hitler's writings were no guide

to his prewar foreign policy. Both also emphasized the

emotional significance of Munich; Munich's failure confirmed

an incorrect impression that Hitler meant to conquer Western

Europe. Both further pointed out that Hitler started the

war as a result of misreading post-Munich British opinion,

not as part of a plan for aggression. Taylor and Medlicott

along with Carr and Henderson as well interpreted the May

crisis and its impact alike.[58]

Yet the effect of Taylor's mixed emotions about

Munich was to make his work quite different in several ways

from those of Carr, Henderson, and Medlicott. These men

had written before any real fighting had taken place. Munich

meant little to them, except for its part in causing an

unnecessary, though mercifully inactive war. The passing

of Britain's role as a Great Power seemed a small price for

peace. Taylor disliked the "Munich Legend." However, he

despised the Germans for their wartime atrocities. Also,

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[57]Medlicott, The Origins of the Second Great War, 23.

[58]Taylor, Origins, 165-7; Carr, Britain, 170; Henderson, 143; Medlicott, The Origins of the Second Great War, 12.

the loss of Britain's Great Power status, which Munich had marked for him as it did for his critics, seemed to have brought many misfortunes without even the compensation of peace. For this reason, Taylor's picture of the inter- action of British and German policy was much like that of R. W. Seton-Watson, the friend of Masaryk and Benes. Taylor attributed a wider range of motives to British policy. His picture of German policy was clearer, and more damaging to Chamberlain. But both Taylor and Seton-Watson agreed that British actions alone moved the Czech crisis along. They agreed that Chamberlain deliberately played on British fears in the Commons on September 28th to insure support for what he already knew would be another trip to Germany. Taylor wrote, and Seton-Watson implied, that without Chamberlain there would have been no Munich. Thus, Taylor's work act- ually continued the postwar trend begun by the Conservative Critics of using documentation to make Chamberlain's actions seem more culpable than before.[59]

The feelings of Taylor's critics prevented the re- visionary part of his work from gaining the wide acceptance for the 1939-40 views of Carr, Henderson, and Medlicott that the post-World War I revisionists had obtained for those of the U.D.C. pamphleteers. In fact, Medlicott wrote a rebut- tal to Taylor in 1963. Medlicott then wrote that his former

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[59]Seton-Watson, Munich and the Dictators, 23-179.

conclusions and those of Taylor were wrong. Hitler, Medli-
cott had come to feel sure, did have plans for aggression.
Chamberlain had a rational policy as well. Expert opinion
told him that Britain could only resist Germany after March
1939.[60] In a preface to a reprinting of his 1948 work,
Wheeler-Bennett declared that nothing in Taylor's argument
had changed his mind about the significance of the Hossbach
Memorandum for Hitler's future actions.[61] In a revised
edition of his biography of Hitler, Alan Bullock described
the Hossbach Memorandum as showing Hitler's "thoughts" on
Czechoslovakia rather than his "intentions" towards her,[62]
but Bullock specifically rejected Taylor's conclusions. In
a 1963 work, Martin Gilbert and Richard Gott, both former
pupils of Taylor's, described Taylor as "seldom wrong when
dealing with British policy,"[63] but themselves described
Munich in a quite different way. A number of other writers
did so as well in what continued to be a large volume of

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[60]Medlicott, "The Coming of the War in 1939,"
From Metternich to Hitler, Aspects of British Foreign
Policy, 1814-1939, ed. W. N. Medlicott (London: Routledge
and Kegan Paul, 1963), 231-56.

[61]Wheeler-Bennett, Munich (2nd ed. with new preface:
London: Macmillan, 1963), x.

[62]Bullock, Hitler, 336; Bullock, Hitler (2nd ed.
revised; Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd.,
1962), 367.

[63]Gilbert and Gott, 421.

publication on Munich.[64] Leader writers continued to look

at the Cold War in terms of the "Munich Legend."[65] In his

biography of Chamberlain published seven months after Tay-

lor's The Origins of the Second World War, Ian McLeod chose

not to justify Chamberlain's foreign policy with the damning

apologies of Taylor.[66]

However, the revisionary part of Taylor's work did

have some favorable reaction. After Taylor amplified his

criticism of the Hossbach Memorandum in a 1963 reprinting

of The Origins of the Second World War, Richard Gott agreed

somewhat reluctantly that Taylor's interpretation of the

document was the correct one.[67] E. M. Robertson, who was

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[64]Eden, The Reckoning, 8-30; Earl Birkenhead, Hali-
fax (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1965), 381-416; Martin Gilbert,
The European Powers, 1900-1945 (New York: New American Lib-
rary, 1965) 211-20; Gilbert, The Roots of Appeasement (Lon-
don: Weidenfield and Nicolson 1966), 179-89; Ian Colvin,
Vansittart in Office (London: Gollancz, 1965), 199-286;
Harold Macmillan, Winds of Change (New York: Harper and Row,
1966), 460-530; William McElwee, Britain's Locust Years
(London: Faber and Faber, 1962), 208-19; 228, 231-42, 257-58;
David Thomson, England in the Twentieth Century, 1914-63
(Baltimore: Pelican Books, 1965), 173-8; Francis Williams,
A Pattern of Rulers (London: Longmans, 1965), 135-94; Martin,
"British Foreign Policy in the Thirties," New Statesman, LXVI
(August 26, 1963), 632-33; Sir Douglas Savory,"Chamberlain,
McLeod and the Facts," Contemporary Review, CCI (March 1962),
142-51; D.C.Watt, "Sir Neville Henderson Reappraised," Con-
temporary Review, CCI (March 1962), 151-54.

[65]Times Literary Supplement, December 1, 1961, 857-
58; (anon.), "Then and Now," Spectator, CCVII (December 1,
1961), 807-08; Brian Inglis, "Faraway Country Revisited,"
Spectator, CCVII (December 1, 1961), 811-13; Richard Gott,
"Last Lessons," Spectator, CCXI (September 20, 1963), 356.

[66]Mcleod, 221-76.

[67]Gott, "Last Lessons," 356.

also a former pupil of Taylor's, had published in 1963 a

study of Hitler's military planning which partly substan-

tiated Taylor's contentions that Hitler planned no wars

in the West, and only blundered into such a war in 1939.[68]

D. C. Watt, a lecturer in International history at the Uni-

versity of London, was impressed with some of Taylor's

readings of German documents as well as with Taylor's

suggestions of motives other than cowardice and ignorance

in British policy. After reading Taylor, Watt noted Chamber-

lain's policy resembled the "containment" of the postwar

period.[69] Watt also believed that Taylor's emphasis on a

gap between British will and resources in the 1930's had

"the ring of truth" to historians "who live in the last

stages of the contraction of British world power."[70]

Equally, Watt, along with Hugh Thomas, a young diplomat

and historian, was stimulated by Taylor's provocative con-

clusions about the importance of the August 1939 crisis in

explaining the coming of the war. They did not entirely

agree with this part of Taylor's analysis, but they were

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[68]E. M. Robertson, Hitler's Prewar Policy (London: Longmans, 1963).

[69]D.C. Watt, "Appeasement: The Rise of a Revisionist School?" Political Quarterly, XXXVI (April 1965), 211. See also Watt, Personalities and Policies, Studies in the Formulation of British Foreign Policy in the Twentieth Century (London: Longmans, 1965) 159-74.

[70]Watt, "Appeasement: The Rise of a Revisionist School?" 209.

even more critical of traditional accounts.[71] Thus, it is

possible that in the future the Polish crisis may be treated

as more than an epilogue to Munich.

Even if such study does develop, a de-emphasis of

Munich seems unlikely. To British historians, British

policy in the Polish crisis has always had a frustrating

air of inevitability which even Taylor's work does not dis-

pel. Historians have seen British policy then and after as

having no choice. In contrast, Munich remains "the last

occasion on which Britain conducted grand policy on her

own, perhaps the last ever in the history of the United

Kingdom."[72] Taylor's writing, just as that of his critics,

reflected this intrinsic political importance of Munich.

The emotion in Taylor's writing and that of his critics, both

reflected the belief that in this last exercise of indepen-

dent power Britain cut a poor figure and that Britain's loss

of power and choice after Munich resulted from the wrong

decision made then. Taylor could not escape this emotional

attachment to Munich. Nor could others. Watt, like Taylor,

revised some of his views of Munich, but Munich was still

"shameful but inevitable."[73] After 1961, other writers

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[71]Ibid., 200-1; Hugh Thomas, "Controversy Reexamined:
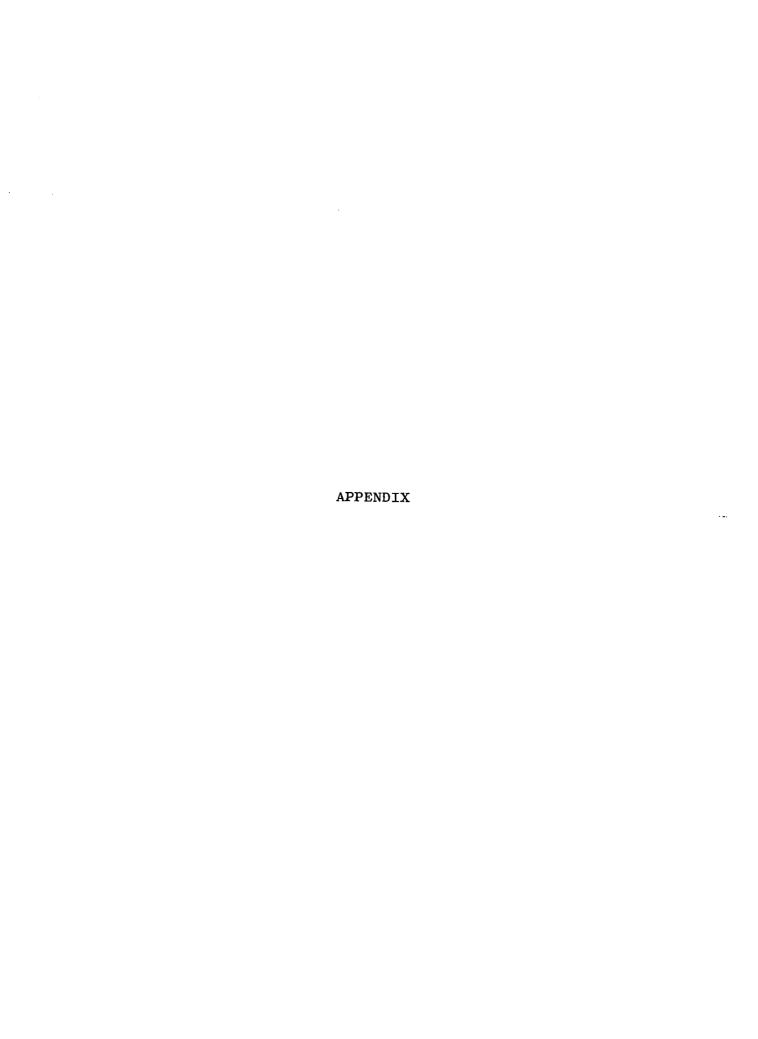Taylor and Trevor-Roper," Spectator, CCX (june 7, 1963),
728-29.

[72]Colvin, 16.

[73]Watt, "Appeasement: The Rise of a Revisionist
School?" 212.

continued to describe "pangs of hurt pride" and "a humilia-

tion and disgrace to our country."[74] Even such young

writers as Gilbert and Gott, the latter of whom had not

been born when the Munich Agreement was signed, have res-

ponded to this feeling.[75] Thus, whereas in 1961 Hugh Thomas

could quite successfully challenge a traditional view of

the Spanish Civil War--an event which some historians have

seen as arousing contemporary opinion much more than Munich--

Taylor's qualified, even contradictory revision of Munich

brought a storm of protest.[76] This contrast confirms the

existence of a special British feeling for Munich. It makes

it probable that the emotional British debate on Munich will

continue.

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[74]*Times Literary Supplement*, December 1, 1961, 857-
88; Savory, "Chamberlain, Mccleod and the Facts," 145.

[75]Gilbert and Gott, 49-185.

[76]Hugh Thomas, *The Spanish Civil War* (London: Eyre
and Spottiswoode, 1961). See R. H. S. Crossman, "Spain
against Spain," *New Statesman*, LXI (April 28, 1961), 671-
72.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

BRITISH PERIODICAL ARTICLES AND BOOKS

PUBLISHED OCTOBER 1938-MARCH 1939

Periodical articles written in the months October
and November 1938 on Munich include:

Anderson, Paul. "The Expansion of Germany," The Nineteenth
    Century and After, CXXIV (November 1938), 550-59.

Armitage, John. "The Peace Approach," Fortnightly Review,
    CXLIV (November 1938), 522-25.

Burns, C. Leslie. "Top Dog Diplomacy," Fortnightly Review,
    CXLIV (December 1938), 693-701.

Dalton, Hugh. "The Crisis in Retrospect," New Statesman,
    XVI (October 15, 1938), 561-62.

Dell, Robert. Letter to the Editor, New Statesman, XVI
    (October 8, 1938), 523-24.

Lord Elton. "Mr. Chamberlain and His Enemies," Fortnightly
    Review, CXLIV (December 1938), 686-92.

Elwell-Sutton, Lt. Commander A. S. "Sub-Carpathian Ruthenia,"
    Contemporary Review, CLIV (December 1938), 716-23.

Emrys-Evans, P. V. "Facing the Issues," Fortnightly Review,
    CXLIV (December 1938), 679-85.

Lord Esher. "Colonies for Germany," Fortnightly Review,
    CXLIV (December 1938), 641-50.

Gathorne-Hardy, G. M. "Herr Hitler's Assujances," Spectator,
    XLXI (November 25, 1938), 905.

Gillie, D. R. "Second Thoughts on France," Fortnightly
    Review, CXLIV (November 1938), 540-48.

Gillie, D. R. "The Situation in France," The Nineteenth Century and After CXXIV (December 1938), 677-89.

Glasgow, George. "Twenty Years of Czechoslovakia," Contemporary Review, CLIV (November 1938), 532-43.

Glasgow, George. "Foreign Affairs," Contemporary Review, CLIV (December 1938), 737-48.

Glendinning, Alex. "Commentary," The Nineteenth Century and After, CXXIV (November 1938), 572-82.

Glendinning, Alex. "Commentary," The Nineteenth Century and After, CXXIV (December 1938), 711-21.

Goldsmith, Margaret. "Konrad Henlein," The Nineteenth Century and After, CXXIV (December 1938), 711-21.

Grant-Duff, Sheila. "The Czechs and the Crisis," Contemporary Review, CLIV (December 1938), 699-76.

Greenwood, H. Powys. "Germany after Munich," Contemporary Review, CLIV (November 1938), 523-31.

Gwynn, Stephen. "Ebb and Flow," Fortnightly Review, CXLIV (November 1938), 617-22.

Gwynn, Stephen. "Ebb and Flow," Fortnightly Review, CXLIV (December 1938), 739-44.

Hammond, J. L. "British Policy Now," Spectator, CLXI (October 14, 1938), 595-96.

Hobhouse, Sir Charles. "The New Deal in Europe," Contemporary Review, CLIV (December 1938), 651-58.

Keynes, John Maynard. "Mr. Chamberlain's Foreign Policy," New Statesman, XVI (October 8, 1938), 518-19.

Macartney, C. A. "Hungary and Czechoslovakia," Contemporary Review, CLIV (December 1938), 677-83.

Martin, Kingsley. "Stock-Taking," New Statesman, XVI (October 15, 1938), 556.

(anon.). "London Diary," New Statesman, XVI (October 8, 1938), 519-20.

(anon.). "Muzzled Britain," New Statesman, XVI (November 12, 1938), 756-57.

(anon.). "The New Europe," New Statesman, XVI (October 8, 1938), 516-17.

(anon.). "Policy for a National Opposition," New Statesman, XVI (October 22, 1938), 596-97.

Nicolson, Harold. "After Munich," The Nineteenth Century and After, CXXIV (November 1938), 513-24.

Pares, Richard. "Labour and the Crisis," New Statesman, XVI (October 15, 1938), 565-66.

Postgate, Raymond. Letter to the Editor, New Statesman, XVI (October 8, 1938), 525.

von Rheinlaben, Baron. "The Outlook in Europe; a German view," Contemporary Review, CLIV (December 1938), 659-68.

Rose, W. J. "Czech-Polish Understanding," Contemporary Review, CLIV (November 1938), 570-75.

(anon.). "Crisis and the Future," Round Table, XXIX (December 1938), 1-12.

(anon.). "Ordeal," Round Table, XXIX (December 1938), 138-48.

(anon.). "Overseas Reactions to the Crisis," Round Table, XXIX (December 1938), 151-73.

Rouvier, Jacques. "Remarks of a Frenchman on the Munich Agreement," The Nineteenth Century and After, CXXIV (November 1938), 538-49.

Salter, Sir Arthur. "British Policy Now," Spectator, CLXI (October 21, 1938), 643-44.

Sencourt, Robert. "Geneva Reconsidered," Contemporary Review, CLIV (November 1938), 582-90.

Seton-Watson, Robert W. "Munich and After," Fortnightly Review, CXLIV (November 1938), 526-39.

Shand, John. "What People Are Saying," The Nineteenth Century and After, CXXIV (December 1938), 738-45.

Shephard, E. W. "The Military Aspect of the Crisis," The Nineteenth Century and After, CXXIV (December 1938), 690-97.

Spender, J. A. "British Policy Now," Spectator, CLXI (November 18, 1938), 839.

Spender, J. A. "Munich--Before and After," Contemporary Review, CLIV (November 1938), 513-22.

Street, J. W. "Hitler's Strategy in the International Crisis," The Nineteenth Century and After, CXXIV (November 1938), 525-37.

Tower, Charles. "Business as Usual," The Nineteenth Century and After, CXXIV (December 1938), 643-57.

Toynbee, Arnold. "After Munich: The World Outlook with Discussion," International Affairs, XVII (January 1939), 1-28. This article is a reprint of an address given by Toynbee at Chatham House of November 15, 1938.

Wentworth-Shields, W. F. "The Next War," Fortnightly Review, CXLIV (November 1938), 625-26.

Werth, Alexander. "Paris after Munich," New Statesman, XVI (October 22, 1938), 597-98.

Wilson, Sir Arnold. "British Policy Now," Spectator, CLXI (October 28, 1938), 701-02.

Articles in the Communist Party's Labour Monthly

during November and December 1938 include:

Campbell, J. R. "Left Socialism and the Crisis: A Study in Fifth Column Activity," Labour Monthly, XX (November 1938), 690-98.

Dutt, R. Palme. "Notes of the Month," Labour Monthly, XX (November 1938), 651-73.

Gallacher, Willie. "The Labour Party and the Munich Betrayal," Labour Monthly, XX (November 1938), 686-89.

Montagu, Ivor. "Hitler's Europe," Labour Monthly, XX (November 1938), 674-85.

Pitcairn, Frank /Claude Cockburn7. "The Munich Policy-- Continued," Labour Monthly, XX (December 1938), 732-35.

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1938 include:

Hodgson, Stuart. The Man Who Made the Peace, Neville Chamberlain (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1938).

Petrie, Sir Charles. The Chamberlain Tradition (New York: Frederick A. Stokes, 1938).

Salter, Sir Arthur. Is It Peace? The Nettle and the Flower (London: Spectator, 1938).

Periodical articles on Munich written in the months from December 1938 to March 1939 include:

Gooch, G. P. "Twenty Years of Europe," Contemporary Review, CLV (February 1939), 129-39.

Liddell Hart, Basil. "The European Crisis and Britain's Military Situation," Contemporary Review, CLV (January 1939), 26-36.

Noel-Buxton, Lord. "Settlement with Germany," Contemporary Review, CLV (January 1939), 1-9.

Hearnshaw, J. F. C. "The Franco-German Feud," Contemporary Review, CLV (February 1939), 160-68.

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Einstein, Lewis. "The Munich Agreement: A Retrospect," History, XXIII (March 1939), 331-40.

Periodical articles written in December to March, which anticipate peaceful German expansion include:

Burn, W. L. "Precarious Neutrality: The Netherlands in Europe and Asia," Contemporary Review, CLV (April 1939), 432-40. This article is written before the German occupation of Prague.

Cammaerts, Emile. "Reflections after the Crisis," Contemporary Review, CLV (January 1939), 52-59.

Friedman, R. A. "Alsation Unrest," Contemporary Review, CLV (February 1939), 213-21.

Gardiner, G. O. "The Role of Roumania," Contemporary Review, CLV (March 1939), 296-303.

Solveytchik, George. "Who Threatens Scandanavia?" Contemporary Review, CLV (February 1939), 169-78.

Wedgwood Benn, Col. J. C. "Germany's Eastern Neighbours," Contemporary Review, CLV (March 1939), 267-73.

Winch, Michael. "The 'New Slovakia,'" Contemporary Review, CLV (February 1939), 199-204.

Wolf, Dr. J. "Problems of Modern Poland," Contemporary Review, CLV (January 1939), 60-66.

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