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U.S. History Readers

From Hot War to Cold

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Printed in the United States of America.

ISBN: 978-1-56004-374-4

Product Code: ZP472

From Hot War to Cold

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From Hot War to Cold

This unit covers a period in United States' foreign policy beginning with its failure to involve itself in the Munich Conference and ending with the collapse of the Soviet Union. The intervening lesson-chapters cover the U.S. decision to provide Great Britain with Lend-Lease assistance, Pearl Harbor and Japanese Relocation, the war in Africa and Europe, the Pacific campaign and the decision to drop the bomb, the end of wartime collaboration with the Soviet Union and possible responses to Soviet provocations, the Berlin Blockade and the success of containment, the decision to defend South Korea and to fire General MacArthur, and how President Kennedy handled the Cuban Missile Crisis.

This series of chapters is not to be confused with a traditional text. Instead of striving for complete coverage of World War II and the Cold War, it highlights the issues that led Americans decide whether to participate and the risks they needed to take to achieve victory and avoid a wider war. The unit highlights points of conflict and encourages students to consider various alternatives to the decisions made.

One theme underlies coverage of these important events: When should the U.S. fight and how? The three choices to consider are: (1) follow Henry Wallace's advice to pursue a neo-isolationist position, (2) apply George Kennan's adroit counsel to apply counter-pressure to Soviet expansion, or (3) pursue John Foster Dulles's advocacy for nuclear brinkmanship. These stances provide a basis for considering arguments for or against providing Lend-Lease aid to England, accepting or rejecting General MacArthur's advice to use nuclear weapons in Korea, and deciding among alternative strategies to end the Cuban Missile Crisis. In most chapters, students are offered a similar range of policy options to help them decide the best course of action for the U.S. They are told what actually happened only after they have had the opportunity to discuss the various possibilities.

Student learning is enhanced by the use of graphic organizers, vocabulary lists, I (Inquiry)-charts, and questions that require critical thinking. Students are told to come to class every day with written homework assignments that prepare them for participating in informed discussions. A "For Further Consideration" section in each chapter requires advanced students to do more reading and writing and to use their extra knowledge to enrich class discussion.

Chapter 1. Munich: Anatomy of a Crisis

Teacher Page

Overview:

This chapter recounts the events that led up to the infamous 1938 Four Power Conference at Munich. Students learn that Czechoslovakia was one of the nations carved out of the old Austro-Hungarian Empire. They find out that Czechoslovakia included the Sudetenland, home to three million ethnic Germans, in order to give it a defensible border with Germany. England and France pledged to defend Czechoslovakia against an unprovoked attack from Germany.

The narrative also describes Hitler's rise to power, his anti-Semitism, and his determination to restore Germany to its pre-World War I glory. The chapter lists Hitler's gross violations of the Versailles agreement and reports his threat that Czechoslovakia cede the Sudetenland to the Third Reich or he would take it by force of arms. Students learn how this posed a conundrum for the British government and quotes two short speeches, one advising the government to "appease" Germany and the other to "stand fast" against unreasonable German demands. Students are left to decide which of these two positions Neville Chamberlain should have taken at Munich.

The "For Further Consideration" section recounts the agreement reached at Munich, Chamberlain's claim that it meant peace with honor, Germany's subsequent dismantling of Czechoslovakia, its cynical "non-aggression" pact with the USSR, and the subsequent attack on Poland. Students are left to conclude that the Munich Agreement brought neither peace to Europe nor honor to those who signed it.

Objectives:

Students will:

- understand the multiple dimensions of the Munich crisis
- learn that England and France had the opportunity to stand up to Hitler in 1938, but didn't
- understand why England and France did not stand up to Hitler, and that appeasing Germany did not prevent World War II

Strategies:

Before class: Assign the chapter either up to or including the "For Further Consideration" section and inform students they will be expected to write their answers to all the Student Activities questions covering the assigned section(s).

In class: Start with a small diversionary activity. Ask students whether they think it is better to fight for a principle in a losing cause than withdraw and live to fight another day. Point out that this was the question Neville Chamberlain faced at the Munich

Conference. Draw the outline of a map of Czechoslovakia on the board (similar to the one in the student text) and demonstrate that Czechoslovakia, with 30 divisions, was a bit like a man with his head in the mouth of Germany, with 40 combat-ready divisions and another 120 in reserve. Show that France stood to the west of Germany with 100 divisions and that England was even further away with only two divisions ready to be deployed. Having set the stage, ask students to share their answers to the first three questions in the Student Exercise section. Begin by asking students what Chamberlain could have known about Hitler, continue by having them evaluate the Karlsbad Program, and complete this inquiry by asking them to give arguments for or against appeasing Germany. Ask students who read the “For Further Consideration” section to share their knowledge of how Hitler used the Munich Agreement to prepare for a successful invasion of Poland. Conclude by asking all students to use this information to reappraise their positions on whether the Sudetenland should have been conceded to Germany.

Chapter 1. Munich: Anatomy of a Crisis I-Chart

	Did Germany have a legitimate claim to the Sudetenland?	What were the arguments for and against “standing fast” at Munich?	What happened as a result of the decision made by Chamberlain?
What I already know			
What I learned from Chapter 1, Part I			
What I learned from Chapter 1, Part II			
What I would still like to know			

Chapter 1—Munich: Anatomy of a Crisis

persecution

inevitable

Bacillus

incredible

Maginot line

upped the ante

unification

approximately

Chapter 1—Munich: Anatomy of a Crisis

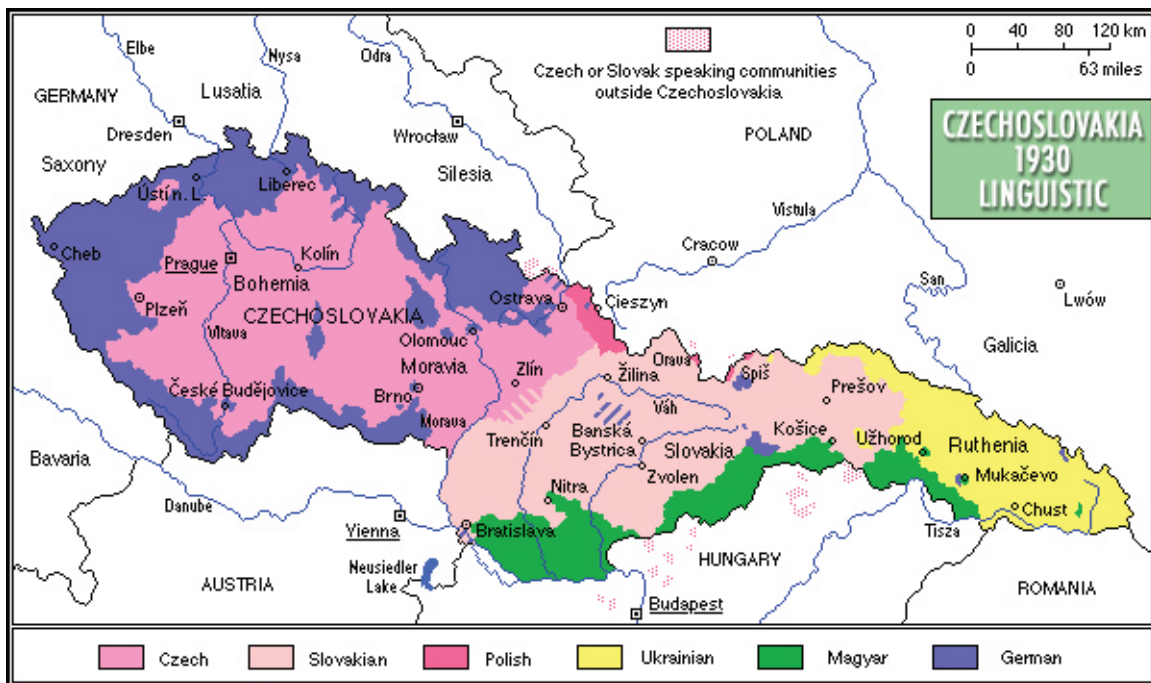
<p>The act of treating people with great cruelty, often because of their race or religion</p>	<p>Can't be prevented; bound to happen</p>	<p>Defensive line built by France after World War I to prevent another successful attack by Germany</p>
<p>A form of deadly bacteria</p>	<p>Hard to believe</p>	<p>Not exactly, but very close</p>
<p>A poker term that means to raise the stakes</p>	<p>The process of bringing different parts together to form a whole</p>	

Chapter 1

Munich: Anatomy of a Crisis

Introduction

September 28, 1938, “Black Wednesday,” dawned on a frightened Europe. Since the spring, Adolf Hitler had spoken often about the Sudetenland, the western part of Czechoslovakia. Many of the three million German-speaking people who lived there had complained that the Czechoslovakian government was mistreating them. Cooperating closely with Nazis who lived in the Sudetenland, Hitler at first simply demanded that the Czechs allow the German speakers within their borders to govern themselves. Then he upped the ante. If the Czechs did not hand the Sudetenland to him by October 1, 1938, he would order his well-armed and highly trained soldiers to attack Czechoslovakia, destroy its army, and seize the Sudetenland.



The Sudetenland is the mountainous region of Czechoslovakia surrounded by Germany and consists of most of the areas shown in dark blue on this map. Most of the people living there were of German ancestry and spoke German, as the map shows.

Germany’s threat quickly echoed through Europe. Many countries wondered how to respond to Hitler’s latest demand. France had signed a treaty to defend the Czechs, and Britain had a treaty with France; the USSR had promised to defend Czechoslovakia against a German attack, and Britain, in particular, found itself in a difficult position. To back the French and their Czech allies would almost guarantee the outbreak of a war in Europe that England was not prepared to fight. Turning the Sudetenland over to Germany would mean abandoning an ally and giving a bloodless victory to a ruthless dictator. In an effort to avoid these frightening possibilities, a group of European leaders met in Munich, Germany.

It will be your assignment to decide whether England should have come to Czechoslovakia's aid or advised the Czech government to give in to Hitler's demand.

Background to the Crisis



Eduard Benes

The clash between Germany and Czechoslovakia over Sudetenland had its origins in the Versailles Treaty of 1919. For 300 years, both the Czech and Slovak peoples had been part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. During World War I, many Czechs and Slovaks fought against Austria-Hungary. When the Allies at Versailles broke up the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Czech leader Eduard Benes was there to make sure that the Czech and Slovak peoples received their own country.

Benes wanted the new state of Czechoslovakia to be as independent as possible. He worked to provide Czechoslovakia with access to the Danube River trade route, and he insisted that stretches of Hungary be added to his new country in the south. He helped fulfill the Czechoslovakian industry's fuel demands by claiming Polish coal mines to the north, and because Czechoslovakia needed a defensible western frontier, Benes arranged for the annexation of the German-speaking Sudeten Mountain region.

The three million Sudetenlanders, who made up 15 percent of the Czechoslovakia's population, had expressed unhappiness with their situation since the 1920s. They did not like their minority status, and they felt that the government favored the Czechs and the Slovaks. At first their complaints were ineffective, but with the rise of Adolf Hitler in 1933 the Sudeten Germany Party (SDP) began to use money supplied by Germany to unite the majority of German speakers in the region. A former gym teacher, Konrad Henlein, led the SDP in its campaign against the Czech government. His Karlsbad Program demanded self-government for German speakers, Czechoslovakia's disavowal of its defense treaties, and Czech cooperation with Germany. Claiming that the SDP was a threat to the existence of Czechoslovakia, President Benes refused to negotiate with Henlein and tried to suppress SDP propaganda and activities.

Hitler Intervenes

Don't be misled into thinking you can fight a disease without killing the carrier, without destroying the bacillus. Don't think you can fight racial tuberculosis without taking care to rid the nation of the carrier of that racial tuberculosis. This Jewish contamination will not subside, this poisoning of the nation will not end, until the carrier himself, the Jew, has been banished from our midst.

—Adolf Hitler, 1920

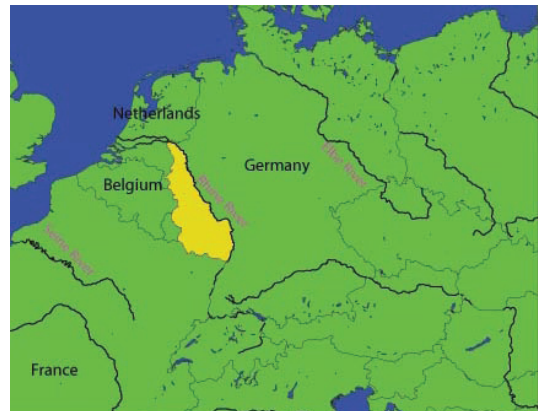


Adolf Hitler

In his book, *Mein Kampf*, Adolf Hitler blamed Germany's Jewish population for Germany's defeat in World War I, and he pledged to rid Germany of all Jews. He also proclaimed his hatred of the Versailles Treaty and his desire to unite all Germans under his leadership. Many Europeans paid little attention to Hitler's rage against the Jews but agreed that Germany had been unfairly treated at Versailles. They sympathized with Hitler's complaints that German property had been parceled off to other countries, but they paid little attention to his intent to persecute Jews once he came into power. After having been elected Chancellor by the Reichstag (Germany's parliament) and arresting those who voted against him, Hitler started on an ambitious program to rearm Germany and to overturn the Versailles Treaty. In 1936, his troops

illegally marched into the Rhineland, (see map) which had been demilitarized at

Versailles and temporarily given to France. In March 1938, he sent the German army into Austria to force an election on German-Austrian unification. This election, controlled by Nazi officials, led to the *Anschluss* (unification) of Austria and Germany. Then, in May 1938, Hitler began to demand that Czechoslovakia accept the SDP's Karlsbad Program or face German intervention. In September, Hitler told Premier Benes that he no longer trusted the Czechoslovakian government's intentions. Hitler then ordered Benes to turn the Sudetenland over to Germany or suffer the consequences.



The Rhineland appears in yellow

Facing a German deadline of October 1st, 1938, Benes agreed to grant limited self-rule to the Sudetenland. His government, however, refused to submit to Germany's demand that Czechoslovakia allow Germany to occupy the Sudetenland. Benes pointed out that Hitler's persecution of German Jews gave him little moral right to criticize Czech policy toward the minority Sudetenlanders.

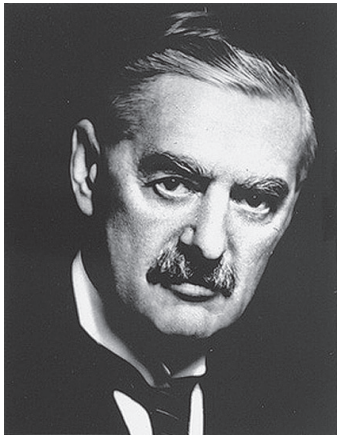
Fearful of German expansion, the USSR promised the Czechs its support. Because Poland and Romania refused to permit the Red Army to cross their territory, however, support could come only from the Soviet air force. France had to face the possibility of going to war with Germany with no hope of directly aiding its Czech ally 600 miles away.

The French would certainly not consider war with Germany without the backing of their British allies. Yet this meant that Britain might get dragged into a war over Czechoslovakia, a country with which it had neither political nor trade ties.

Nevertheless, as the German army got ready to attack on September 28th, the British military was on alert, civilians dug air raid shelters, and children were evacuated from London. Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain expressed the nation's fears in a radio address that began: "how horrible, how fantastic, how incredible it is that we should be digging trenches and trying on gas masks because of a quarrel in a far-away country between people of whom we know nothing."

Preparations for Munich

In the midst of this crisis, Benito Mussolini, the prime minister of Italy, proposed a last-minute conference in Munich. Mussolini asked that Hitler meet with him, France's Prime Minister Édouard Daladier, and Britain's Neville Chamberlain on September 29th in order to try to solve the crisis. Prime Minister Joseph Stalin of the USSR and Czech President Benes were not asked to attend. At the conference, Britain's position was of key importance. France's backing of Czechoslovakia in a war against Germany depended on maintaining the long-standing alliance between France and England. The instructions of the British delegation, therefore, would, in effect, determine the results of the conference.



Neville Chamberlain

The British considered two contrasting points of view. Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain, who believed he could make a deal with Hitler, represented the first view. He would advise the delegation to avoid war by persuading the Czechs to give the Sudetenland to Germany. Chamberlain argued that President Benes had already agreed to most of the SDP's and Germany's terms. Furthermore, Hitler promised that the Sudetenland would be his "last territorial demand in Europe." Sacrificing Czechoslovakia, it seemed, would prevent a major European war.

Winston Churchill, a former Chancellor of the Exchequer, headed the "stand-fast" faction. He wanted the delegation to offer full backing to France and urged Czechoslovakia to stand up to Germany. He believed that Hitler's actions over the past five years indicated that war with Germany was inevitable. By backing Czechoslovakia now, Churchill argued, Britain had the advantage of fighting for a good cause with willing allies.

Appeasement vs. Standing Fast

In deciding which set of instructions to give the Munich delegation, British leaders had to consider the strategic situation in Europe. In terms of raw strength, opposing sides appeared about equal. Czechoslovakia had an army of 30 divisions (one division had approximately 10,000 soldiers), an advanced weapons industry in the Sudetenland, and a 1500-plane air force. France could field 100 divisions behind its fortified border (the Maginot Line) with Germany. Because of geography, however, none

of these troops could be used to defend the Czechs. Britain could immediately promise France no more than 150 planes, two non-motorized divisions, and the support of the Royal Navy. Against this force, Germany could field a standing army of 40 divisions, the most modern and well equipped in Europe, and had three times that number on call. Because of the distrust of Poland and Romania, which would not permit Soviet troops to cross their territories, the best the USSR could offer Benes was the use of 1000 Soviet planes. Nevertheless, the German Army General Staff estimated that it would take three months to smash the fortifications defending Czechoslovakia.

British, French, and German statesmen all believed that the USSR might try to cause a war in western Europe that would lead to widespread communist revolution. French and British leaders feared that once Soviet armies entered central Europe, they would never leave. The Soviet Union, on the other hand, was eager to make a defensive alliance to limit German expansionism. If the allies allowed Hitler to take Czechoslovakia, there was no certainty that Stalin would not make his own best deal with Hitler, thus making a German attack on France likely.

For Appeasement	For Standing Fast
<p>However much we may sympathize with a small nation confronted by a big and powerful neighbor, we cannot in all circumstances undertake to involve the whole British Empire in a war simply on her account. If we have to fight, it must be on a larger issue than that.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">—Prime Minister Chamberlain</p>	<p>There is a price at which peace of any kind can generally be preserved for the most militant aggressor will hardly resort to actual war, if he can secure his most outrageous aims by mere threat...To buy off the bully by giving in to his demands leaves might still triumphant over right...To some of us peace so secured seems more immoral than war.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">—G.M. Gathorne-Hardy</p>

Student Activities

A. Graphic Organizer

Place the number of military divisions each of the countries listed below had available in case of war over the Sudetenland and their reasons for fighting:

Country	# of divisions	Reasons for fighting
Germany		
Czechoslovakia		
France		
England		
USSR		