Contesting Appeasement as a Classical Liberalism's Policy

The Case of 1938-9 Czechoslovakia: From the Sudetenland Crisis to the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia

MASTER THESIS

International Relations in Historical Perspective

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Wordcount: 17.431

Abstract

When the Nazis came to power in Germany in 1933, they claimed possession over Sudetenland, the edges of Western Bohemia in Czechoslovakia, inhabited by a German-speaking minority, triggering a major European crisis in 1938. Great Britain and France wanted to avoid war and resorted to the policy of appeasement, whose apex was reached with the Munich Agreement of September 30th, 1938. Sudetenland was ceded to Germany, paving the way to Czechoslovakia's final destruction five months later. In IR terms, appeasement might be considered a classical liberalism's policy for its strong concerns with trade, peace, and cooperation. However, while focusing on Great Britain, this Thesis argues that appeasement per se is not close to liberalism in International Relations (IR) – more to realism.

Is appeasement a classical liberalism's policy? Historiography on the relationship between IR and appeasement has not been examined much-neither by IR scholars nor by historians. While examining Great Britain's reasons to appease, this Thesis contests the assumption that appeasement might be considered a classical liberalism's policy and, considering the scarce literature on this fosters an early debate framing appeasement within the theories' realm.

By using a mix of primary and secondary sources at the methodological level, the Thesis offers three analytical chapters. The first one entails the historical background of the events that led to Munich: from World War I's aftermath to the Second Czechoslovak Republic's end. Secondly, five main reasons Great Britain chose to appease Nazi Germany are reviewed: the search for neutrality and peace, the gain of time to prepare for conflict, the economic concerns, the containment of Bolshevism, and the considerations of the domestic audience. A third chapter deals with the contestation of why appeasement is not to be considered a classical liberalism's policy as it prompts conflict, not peace; it disregards international norms; it is power-based; does not lean on morality; and is based on no win-win solutions.

The conclusion offers answers to the research question, but also legacy and lessons of appeasement, and reflections on historiographical and research hints. The Thesis provides the academic debate with a first contribution to the relationship between appeasement and IR theories while contesting appeasement as classical liberalism's policy. However, beyond liberalism and realism, foreign policy's conduct often requires a combination of different ideals. Trade-offs are sometimes imposed by circumstances. Liberal values must be protected, but they must be also enforced internationally when there is an opportunity.

Keywords

Acknowledgments

On the cover: "Germany's Territorial Changes, 1935-1939". From: https://ghdi.ghi-dc.org/map.cfm?map_id=2884, accessed on 22.10.2022.

Appendix

Introduction

At World War I's end, the Austro-Hungarian and German empires were dissolved, leading to a substantial redrawing of Europe and the emergence of new States, including Czechoslovakia, in 1918. This brand-new Central European liberal democracy was a multi-ethnic State: Bohemia's edges, the Sudetenland, were the home to a sizeable German-speaking minority. Having come to power in Germany in 1933, the Nazis started an aggressive foreign policy aimed at the Versailles Treaty's dissolution, the Jews' elimination, and Lebensraum's conquest – with the Sudetenland one of their territorial claims. After exiting the League of Nations (1933), remilitarizing the Rhineland (1936), and the "Anschluss" of Austria (1938), Germany turned to Czechoslovakia, leading to a major European crisis. Great Britain and France wanted to avoid war and thereby allowed the triumph of appeasement – a policy of pacifying an aggrieved country through negotiation to prevent a larger scale conflict – towards Germany, accommodating the Nazis' demands, enabling Czechoslovakia's dismemberment.

Sponsored mostly by Great Britain led by Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain (and France led by Prime Minister Édouard Daladier), the Munich Agreement of September 30th, 1938, was the appeasement's triumph and enabled Germany to get stronger eventually. After occupying Sudetenland in early October 1938, Adolf Hitler promised not to go further with territorial claims, but the Wehrmacht marched on Prague in March 1939, inaugurating the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia. This exposed the appeasement's failures within less than six months. Because of its concerns with trade, peace, and cooperation, appeasement might be considered a classical liberalism's policy – liberalism in IR being one of the early theories of this discipline, prompting the rule of law and free market, human rights, and democracy, international institutions and cooperation, and rejection of power politics and autocracy. This Thesis innovatively contests this hypothesis – quite the contrary, appeasement might be seen as more realist than liberal (this is not to say that appeasement *is* a realist policy).

Appeasement of Nazi Germany might be seen as one of the factors that paved the way for World War II. While Czechoslovakia was dismembered, the Munich Conference was a success for Germany and a political catastrophe for London, Paris, and Prague. While – retrospectively – war was avoided for another year, appeasement contributed to lead to the destruction of peace in Europe. The Thesis casts some light on an apparent marginal niche aspect concerning appeasement: elaborating on appeasement within the realm of foreign

policy and liberalism. The Thesis mixes IR and History; it mostly argues against seeing appeasement as belonging to classical liberalism in the policy sense – not the theoretical sense. When connecting classical liberalism as a policy and appeasement, there are two main problems at the academic level. First, the debate framing appeasement within a particular IR theory is quite scarce – there have been just a few academic attempts by some scholars. Second, there might be the superficial temptation to ascribe appeasement to classical liberalism in IR because of the intentions of the appeasers (Great Britain) to preserve trade, peace, and cooperation – typical liberalism's elements – with the belligerent actor (Germany).

Given the hypothesis that appeasement might be considered a liberal policy (for liberalism' concerns on trade, peace, and cooperation), the scarce literature and historiography on framing appeasement within a IR theory (particularly classical liberalism), the Sudetenland Crisis of 1938 as a case study, and the motivations that pushed Great Britain to appease Nazi Germany, here is the Thesis' research question: is the policy of appeasement a classical liberalism's policy of IR (or a more realist one)?

This Introduction explores concerns over historiography, the salient elements of liberalism and realism in IR, considerations on appeasement, and methodology.

Historiography

While at the academic level, there is not much debate among IR theorists or scholars on framing appeasement within a foreign policy approach or even IR theory, coupling appeasement with other disciplines has been successful. Rationality and appeasement have been studied by Daniel Treisman[1]. Robert Powell explored its connection with game theories and behaviouralism[2]. Emre Özigci, one of the very few political scientists that linked appeasement and IR theories, confirms that the tie between appeasement and IR theories is quite unexplored[3] – hence the Thesis' necessity to investigate any possible link. If the literature concerning appeasement as a historical case study is abundant[4] – and along with it the overall negative impressions of IR scholars and historians on the subject – there are very

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few studies on the relationship between appeasement and IR theories, James L. Richardson affirms[5]. Only IR scholar Alexander Anievas offered a Marxist account of appeasement[6], concluding that the practice is not correlated with this critical theory.

Unlike liberalism, there are few studies on appeasement and realism, as well as appeasement and feminism[7], but something similar is missing from the tradition of liberalism. Considering the echo appeasement in recent history, it is curious that this practice has also not been explored much in the light of IR. Considering the large body of literature reviewed, no analyses encompassing the link between liberalism and appeasement were retrieved; and this – coupled with the natural yet superficial temptation to ascribe appeasement to liberalism in IR – justifies the research question. Considering the 1938 appeasement case, the Thesis provides the academic debate and debates among historians and political scientists with a contribution by contesting the assumption that appeasement might be seen as a liberal practice of IR (in a policy sense, not in the analytical sense). One of the Thesis' contributions is also to strengthen the academic debate around the nature of appeasement's theoretical belonging, while contesting its association with liberalism.

Some links to the realist tradition will be found throughout the Thesis, but overall, it cannot be said that appeasement is a realist policy either – however, appeasement is more realist than liberal. Possible criticisms or hypothesis asserting appeasement as a classical liberalism's policy refer to the fact that British international thought between the late XIX and early XX century was internationalist (particularly centred on trade), but it was not the case anymore from the late Thirties. On the contrary, realism in IR might be associated with British foreign policy with Chamberlain and those who believed that the League of Nations was incapable of functioning as a guarantor of international peace[8]. Neville Thompson redirects appeasement to the realist tradition: from the Abyssinian Crisis on, "realism" and "appeasement" became

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[5] Richardson, James L. (1988). "New Perspectives on Appeasement: Some Implications for International Relations". *World Politics*, Vol. 40, Num. 3, pp. 289-316, DOI: https://doi.org/10.2307/2010215.

[6] Anievas, Alexander (2011). "The International Political Economy of Appeasement: The Social Sources of British Foreign Policy During the 1930s". *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 37, Num. 2, pp. 601-629, DOI: https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210510000513.

[7] Gottlieb, Julie V. (2014). "'The Women's Movement Took the Wrong Turning': British feminists, pacifism and the politics of appeasement". *Women's History Review*, Vol. 23, Num. 3, pp. 441-462, DOI: 10.1080/09612025.2013.820603.

[8] Hall, Ian (2006). "Power Politics and Appeasement: Political Realism in British International Thought, c. 1935–1955". *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, Vol. 8, Num. 2, pp. 174-192, DOI: https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-856X.2005.00208.x, p. 179

synonymous[9], especially among the British Conservatives[10].

In support of the hypothesis that appeasement is more realist than liberal, interestingly there is the link, found by economist Friedrich A. von Hayek[11], and later taken up by political scientist Martin Wight, that realism is related to appeasement and the methods of dictators. Wight defines Edward H. Carr's realism as the "theology of appeasement"[12]. Carr, one of the realism in IR's paramount thinkers, was sympathetic vis-à-vis Chamberlain's appeasement[13] and praised his speaking of a realistic quest for peace[14]. Especially after World War II, realism was discredited by its associations with the dictators' "power politics"[15], Hall argues. Historian Martin Gilbert explains appeasement in the Thirties was a realistic policy based on British interests[16] – however, appeasement is generally contested both as a concept, and its application in the 1938 Sudetenland Crisis case. In response to the academic debate – scarcity of sources analysing appeasement in the IR fields and the hypothesis that it might be a classical liberalism policy – the Thesis argues that appeasement cannot be ascribed to the classical liberalism of IR.

Liberalism and realism

Understanding both classical liberalism and realism in IR is important to start framing a debate around the relation between appeasement and IR theories in general, as well as disproving the hypothesis that appeasement might be considered a liberal practice. Classical liberalism in IR is a theoretical approach based on XVII classical liberalism's premises on the centrality of the individual, free market and free trade, rule of law and international institutions, the spread of democracy and multilateralism, individual preferences, and human rights. It aims to control

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[9] Thompson, Neville (1971). *The Anti-Appeasers: Conservative Opposition to Appeasement in the 1930s*. Oxford: Clarendon.

[10] Crowson, Nick J. (1997). *Facing Fascism. The Conservative Party and the European Dictators. 1935-1940*. London and New York: Routledge.

[11] von Hayek, Friedrich A. (1944). *The Road to Serfdom*. London: Routledge.

[12] Wight, Martin (1952-1953). *International institutions*, lecture notes, Wight MSS 121, British Library of Political and Economic Sciences

[13] Hall, Ian (2006). "Power Politics and Appeasement: Political Realism in British International Thought, c. 1935–1955". *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, Vol. 8, Num. 2, pp. 174-192, DOI: https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-856X.2005.00208.x.

[14] Carr, Edward Hallett (1939b). "Mr. Chamberlain's struggle for peace: The realistic quest for peace". *Times Literary Supplement*, 03.04.1948, Quoted in Hall, Ian (2006). "Power Politics and Appeasement: Political Realism in British International Thought, c. 1935–1955". *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, Vol. 8, Num. 2, pp. 174-192, DOI: https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-856X.2005.00208.x.

[15] Hall, Ian (2006). "Power Politics and Appeasement: Political Realism in British International Thought, c. 1935–1955". *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, Vol. 8, Num. 2, pp. 174-192, DOI: https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-856X.2005.00208.x.

[16] Gilbert, Martin (1966). *The Roots of Appeasement*. New York: New American Library.

violence nationally and internationally with the institutions' help that allows States to cooperate on matters that otherwise they will not be able to solve alone. It assumes that anarchy in IR can be limited by cooperation and violence's rejection. Conversely, the realist tradition (which arises in response to liberalism in IR) rests primarily on the notions of power and State, opposing cosmopolitanism and arguing that geopolitical frameworks must resolve the issue of anarchy as a structural condition of international politics. Realism looks at short-term goals and is based on pessimism, arguing that lasting cooperation between States is often impossible and thus international institutions are of little help in managing relations between them, due to States always pursuing their own interest first and above all else[17].

If classical liberalism was one of the early IR theories and was born during the European Enlightenment, realism has more recent origins. The first builds from authors (and fundamental texts) like John Locke (1632-1704, *The Treaties of Government*), Adam Smith (1723-1790, *The Wealth of Nations*), Immanuel Kant (1724-1804, *Zum ewigen Frieden*), Alexis de Tocqueville (1805-1859, *De la démocratie en Amérique)*, John Stuart Mill (1806-1873, *On Liberty*), and more recently Norman Angell (1872-1967, *The Great Illusion*), David Mitrany (1888-1975, *The Progress of International Government*), and Woodrow Wilson (1856-1924, *Fourteen Points*). On the contrary, realism and State and power consideration, find their origin primarily in Niccolò Machiavelli (1469-1527, *Il principe*) and Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679, *Leviathan*) who outlined, respectively, the need for ruthlessness of the sovereign in organizing his domestic and foreign policy, as well as facing the "homo homini lupus" concern and finding a remedy for anarchy. The realist tradition was then taken up and officially formulated in the XX century by historian Edward H. Carr (1892-1982, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*) and political scientist Hans Morgenthau (1904-1980, *Politics Among Nations*), up to Kenneth N. Waltz (1924-2013, *Theory of International Politics*) in the Seventies.

Classical liberalism was the first main modern theory of IR: until World War II's end, IR scholars and historians grossly looked at liberalism – realism in IR simply was not born yet back then. After World War I, classical liberalism merged with institutionalism, and it was not much concerned with power as its main interest and explicitly rejected autocracy. Liberalism in IR opposes unlimited government, it maintains that democracy, free market, and international norms are the ways to peace and security. In foreign policy, 1) it opposes

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[17] Morgenthau, Hans (1948). *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

war, which is prevented also with the help of institutions and the free market. 2) It prompts international norms, including self-determination and condemnation of States' aggression. 3) It does not much consider power politics and the balance of power much. 4) It is idealist and value-based, promoting morality and idealism. 5) In its "neo" version in the Seventies, it advocates for win-win solutions and absolute gains. Conversely, realism is not primarily concerned with liberal democracy's preservation and does not consider it the best system of government to ensure peace – it does not exclude coming to terms with dictators. Realism often ignores both individualism and the free market. 1) It is not totally opposed to the possibility of conflict between competing States). 2) It is not focused on international norms or institutions. 3) It considers political power as the States' primary object of analysis and goal too. 4) It has might have *its* morality, but it is not idealistic. 5) It advocates for win-lose solutions (one contender will win and the other will lose) and relative gains (one cannot "win it all").

Appeasement

Having focused on the salient theoretical aspects of liberalism and realism in IR, this subchapter discusses what is meant by appeasement – as shortly seen in the historiographical chapter, it is a quite contested policy and concept. The term refers to a relation between States involving political and material concessions to an aggressive power to avoid a larger conflict. Today, it is infamously associated with Chamberlain's policy towards Nazi Germany, during the Sudetenland Crisis. The term comes from the French ("the act of satisfying"): to appease is to concede considering the interests of the promoting State. While from 1938 on the word was charged, in Lucian Ashworth's words, with the status of a "myth"[18], appeasement has origins in the XIX century British way of diplomacy[19]. Basically, it is an interaction between a system and a challenger[20]; "a strategy of diplomatic concessions aimed at buying off a potential aggressor"[21]. George A. Lanyi defined active appeasement (the custodian negotiates with the system challenger) and passive appeasement (the system challenger improves its

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[18] Ashworth, Lucian M. (2013). *A History of International Thought: From the Origins of the Modern State to Academic International Relations*. London and New York: Routledge.
[19] Adams, R. J. Q. (1995). *British Politics and Foreign Policy in the Age of Appeasement, 1935-39*. Houndmills and London: Palgrave MacMillan.
[20] Özigci, Emre Y. (2022). "Theorising Systemic Appeasement in International Politics". *Central European Journal of International and Security Studies*, Vol. 16, Num. 2, pp. 54-89, DOI: https://doi.org/10.51870/MSBT1368.
[21] Trubowitz, Peter; Harris, Peter (2015). "When states appease: British appeasement the 1930s". *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 41, Num. 2, pp. 289-311, DOI: https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210514000278.

position against the order)[22].

Much of the debate on appeasement concerns the split between those in favor and those against it. According to appeasement's supporters, British historian Paul M. Kennedy argues, the practice settles quarrels by "satisfying grievances through rational negotiation and compromise […]. It is […] a positive policy, based upon […] assumptions about man's inherent reasonableness"[23]. Morgenthau was tough on appeasement, defining it as a policy of compromise[24], while according to American historian Paul W. Schroeder, it represented a "lapse into illusion"[25]. Ralph B. A. Dimuccio too reports the negative view of appeasement, explaining that Chamberlain's policy undermined its usefulness as an analytical concept[26]. Kennedy explains that appeasement was a "false", "dangerous", "negative", and "detestable" policy associated with the British government to preserve peace with the dictators[27]. A self-destructive policy[28], Treisman argues. Peter Trubowitz and Peter Harris analyze it as a dilemma: How to reduce the risk of an expansionist State while facing domestic problems[29].

Methodology

Appeasement raises discussions and it does not abate even today[30]: particularly in the 1938 case[31], there is much historical literature on it[32]. The authors' majority stress how it was counterproductive and wrong. However, as the topic is complex and needs to be seen through

[22] Lanyi, George A. (1963). The Problem of Appeasement. *World Politics*, Vol. 15, pp. 316-328, DOI: https://doi.org/10.2307/2009378.

[23] Kennedy, Paul M. (1976). "The Tradition of Appeasement in British Foreign Policy 1865-1939". *British Journal of International Studies*, Vol. 2, Num. 3, pp. 195-215, DOI: https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210500116699, p. 195-6.

[24] Dimuccio, Ralph B. A. (1998). "The Study of Appeasement in International Relations: Polemics, Paradigms, and Problems". *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 35, Num. 2, pp. 245-259, DOI: https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343398035002007.

[25] Schroeder, Paul W. (1976). "Munich and the British tradition". *Historical Journal*, Vol. 19, Num. 1, pp. 223-243, DOI: https://doi.org/10.1017/S0018246X00018379, p. 238.

[26] Dimuccio, Ralph B. A. (1998). "The Study of Appeasement in International Relations: Polemics, Paradigms, and Problems". *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 35, Num. 2, pp. 245-259, DOI: https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343398035002007.

[27] Kennedy, Paul M. (1976). "The Tradition of Appeasement in British Foreign Policy 1865-1939". *British Journal of International Studies*, Vol. 2, Num. 3, pp. 195-215, DOI: https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210500116699.

[28] Treisman, Daniel (2004). "Rational Appeasement". *International Organization*, Vol. 58, Num. 2, pp. 345-373, DOI: https://doi.org/10.1017/S002081830458205X.

[29] Trubowitz, Peter; Harris, Peter (2015). "When states appease: British appeasement the 1930s". *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 41, Num. 2, pp. 289-311, DOI: https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210514000278, p. 289.

[30] Beloff, May (1972). "Appeasement – For and Against". *Government and Opposition*, Vol. 7, Num. 1, pp. 112-119, DOI: https://doi.org/10.1017/S0017257X00018741.

[31] Aster, Sidney (2008). "Appeasement: Before and After Revisionism". *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, Vol. 19, Num. 3, pp. 443-480, DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/09592290802344962.

[32] Özigci, Emre Y. (2022). "Theorising Systemic Appeasement in International Politics". *Central European Journal of International and Security Studies*, Vol. 16, Num. 2, pp. 54-89, DOI: https://doi.org/10.51870/MSBT1368.

different sources and media, this Thesis is based on multiple sources: at the methodological level, primary and secondary sources help to answer the research question. The Thesis intends to contribute to a new debate on the nature of appeasement within the not-much-explored field of appeasement and IR theories while contesting the notion of appeasement as mainly a classical liberalism's policy. Direct quotes and declarations of some of the protagonists offer the direct and clear grasp on the actors' intentions and goals in their policy making – thus, enabling to better answer the research question. The Thesis relies on primary sources such as speeches by some protagonists; documents from the foreign affairs departments; notes, memories, and journals; and academic journals – both IR- and history-oriented.

A great deal of books has been considered too – particularly for the historical part. While it is impossible to include every publication on appeasement, older and recent publications proved to be complementary. Direct testimonies of the Munich Crisis events surrounding enrich the historical discussion: e.g., Chamberlain's notes, the diaries of the Italian Foreign Minister Galeazzo Ciano, the memoirs of Wehrmacht's commander Wilhelm Keitel, the speeches of MP Winston Churchill, the Documents on British and German Foreign Policy, the reports of diplomats George F. Kennan and Vojtěch Mastný, the considerations of Czech journalist Milena Jesenská, the analysis of British correspondents Alexander Werth and Shiela Grant Duff. These primary sources will not be used with a preferential route: the Thesis is not *primarily* based on primary sources, also because it offers a mix of history and IR. Secondary sources are of great help in the reconstruction of historical events, around the autumn of 1938. Academic articles and books focus on the appeasement process and highlight its critical points.

Concerning the Thesis' structure, this Introduction included the research question, the historiography, some theoretical references on liberalism and realism in IR and appeasement, and a discussion on the methodology and sources. It is followed by three analytical main chapters. The first one entails the historical background of the events that lead to the Munich Conference: from World War I's end to the Second Czechoslovak Republic's dismemberment in March 1939. Secondly, five main Great Britain's reasons to appease Nazi Germany are framed: the search for peace; the intention to gain time to prepare for conflict; the economic concerns; the containment of Bolshevism; the considerations of the domestic's audience concerns. The third chapter deals with the actual contestation of why appeasement is not mainly to be considered a classical liberalism's policy – but more realist, albeit not totally

realist. Again, five arguments are presented: appeasement prompts conflict, not peace; it disregards international norms; it is power-based; does not lean on idealism; is based on no win-win solutions. The conclusion offers the findings' summary, the legacy, and the lessons of appeasement, as well as academic and future research perspectives.

Chapter I: 1918-1939. The road to a new world war
The First Czechoslovak Republic

This first sub-chapter explores the First Czechoslovak Republic's historical background, from its founding in September 1918 to its breakup with the Munich Conference, in September 1938. Czechoslovakia gained independence from the Austro-Hungarian Empire after the Great War in 1918. It was the first time in History that Czechs and Slovaks had a nation of their own. Czechoslovakia inherited 75 percent of the heavy industry of the Habsburg Empire and bridged Western and Eastern Europe[33]. The country's economic future looked prosperous back then: the State was new and the institutions solid. Despite the complex ethnic-linguistic situation, the system of checks and balances replicated that of Western democracies, which was remarkable for such a young democracy in a historically tormented region. Particularly competitive in the primary (agriculture) and secondary (industry) sectors, Czechoslovakia was the world's tenth-largest economy. President Tomáš G. Masaryk fiercely led the newly built liberal democracy, the sole in Central Europe.

In 1918, the country had an area of 87.299 square miles and 6.5 million Czechs, 3.1 million Germans, 2 million Slovaks, 700.000 Hungarians, and 600.000 Ruthenians[34]. Czechoslovakia had good relations with its neighbours. Fearing German revanchism, on October 16th, 1925, it had made a defensive pact with France[35] and the Soviet Union: Masaryk and Edvard Beneš – his successor in Prague Castle from December 1935 – knew that Czechoslovakia was a small country surrounded by big States; thus, needed big friends[36]. Overall, what mattered the most in the First Czechoslovak Republic was not political affiliation, but ethnicity[37]. This was especially true for the around 3 million Sudeten[38] (German-speaking, but not citizens of the German State[39]) in Sudetenland, Bohemia's Western horseshoe-borders. Given the daily clashes in the State's management due to ethnic and linguistic diversity, some proposals were

[33] Grant Duff, Shiela (1938). *Europe and the Czechs*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Limited.
[34] App, Austin J. (1979). *The Sudeten-German Tragedy*. Takoma Park: Boniface Press.
[35] Ben-Arie, Katriel (1990). "Czechoslovakia at the time of 'Munich': The Military Situation". *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 25, Num. 4, pp. 431-446, DOI: https://doi.org/10.1177/002200949002500403.
[36] Vital, David (1966). "Czechoslovakia and the powers: September 1938". *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 1, Num. 4, pp. 37-67, DOI: https://doi.org/10.1177/002200946600100402.
[37] Heimann, Mary (2009). *Czechoslovakia: The State that Failed*. Yale: Yale University Press.
[38] Urbach, Karina in Gottlieb, Julie V.; Hucker, Daniel; Toye, Richard (2021). (Ed.). *The Munich Crisis, Politics, and the People. International, Transnational, and Comparative Perspectives*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
[39] Grant Duff, Shiela (1938). *Europe and the Czechs*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Limited.

made to federate the various nationalities within a Swiss model[40] and ease tensions among ethnicities. As Czechoslovakia could hardly its geographical location[41], the minority question played a major political role. To keep the multi-ethnical status quo and stability, Masaryk systematically delayed Czechoslovakia's "cantonisation" or federalization because of the (Czech) parties' unwillingness to share political power with the others.

Despite some frictions due to the ethnolinguistic issues persisting after the 1918 territorial re-arrangements, relations between newly created Czechoslovakia and Weimar Germany were quite cordial. Once in power, the Nazis started to put pressure on Prague to cede the Sudetenland, claiming the Sudeten-Germans there were ill-treated. It was indeed the Nazis' goal to federate not only all the "Arian" German people but also to unite the German speakers. Hitler exploited local nationalist griefs to undermine the Prague government's authority and exacerbate ethnical and political tensions. On October 25th, 1933, the Czech executive passed Law 201 banning parties that endangered the country's independence and constitutional unity. Led by Konrad Henlein, the local Nazi Party (Deutsche National Partei, which wanted to unite the region with Germany) was banned, but soon replaced by the Sudeten German Heimatsfront. The party challenged the central authority by presenting itself as appealing in Sudetenland, where unemployment was higher than in the Czech interior[42], and ethnic question was more acute.

The union of Sudetenland with the Reich represented an indispensable piece of Hitler's expansionist policy in the region. Which became increasingly aggressive after the League of Nations exit (1933) and the Rhineland's remilitarization (1936). After Austria's seizure by the Nazis in March 1938, PM Chamberlain responded to possible German threats by guaranteeing Czechoslovakia[43] and did not abandon hopes of an Anglo-German settlement[44]. Austria's incorporation into the Nazi orbit alarmed the government in Prague. One day after the invasion of Austria, the Luftwaffe planes flew over Czechoslovakia's border, dropping leaflets: "Tell

[40] Werth, Alexander (1939). *France and Munich. Before and After the Surrender*. New York and London: Harper and Brothers Publishers.

[41] Weinberg, Gerhard L.; Rock, William R.; Cienciala, Anna M. (1989). "The Munich Crisis Revisited". *International History Review*, Vol. 11, Num. 4, pp. 668-688, DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/07075332.1989.9640529.

[42] Heimann, Mary (2009). *Czechoslovakia: The State that Failed*. Yale: Yale University Press.

[43] Crowson, Nick J. (1997). *Facing Fascism. The Conservative Party and the European Dictators. 1935-1940*. London and New York: Routledge.

[44] MacDonald, Callum A. (1981). *The United States, Britain, and Appeasement. 1936-1939*. London and Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan.

everyone in Prague that Hitler says hello"[45]. Historians agree that the German minorities' question was only a pretext for action[46] by the Nazis to expand the "Lebensraum". Austria's Anschluss was the first German test to the Chamberlain government. In Great Britain, Hitler was seen as a threat to European stability[47]. According to political scientist Stacie E. Goddard, until the Munich Crisis, Hitler justified Germany's aims with appeals to self-determination and security, and after Munich, he justified his expansion as a matter of German power[48].

Beneš insisted that the issue of the German minority was internal and that foreign powers did not have to interfere[49]. Unfortunately for the Czechoslovak government, the British delegation in the country seemed sympathetic to Germany's concerns in the Sudetenland and provided Great Britain's government with pro-German reports of the situation[50]. Czechoslovakia was willing to defend itself with arms and its territorial integrity. While already in 1937 Hitler announced to his inner circle the plans for Czechoslovakia's invasion[51], Henlein pretended to present diplomatic solutions to the Sudetenland Crisis, affirming that peace in Europe would depend "on a satisfactory solution to the minority question"[52]. On March 28th, he was summoned to Berlin and welcomed Hitler's orders. "We must always demand so much," he summarized, "that we can never be satisfied."[53] In the same month, the British Institute of Public Opinion ran a poll asking the public if Great Britain should assist Czechoslovakia if Germany would act as it had acted in Austria: 33 percent said yes, 43 no[54].

Leading democracies in Europe – Great Britain and France, which was not even able to

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[45] Albright, Madeleine (2012). *Prague Winter. A Personal Story of Remembrance and War, 1937-1948*. New York: Harper Perennial, p. 77.

[46] Weinberg, Gerhard L. (1957). "The May Crisis 1938". *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 29, Num. 3, pp. 213-225, DOI: https://doi.org/10.1086/238051.

[47] Crowson, Nick J. (1997). *Facing Fascism. The Conservative Party and the European Dictators. 1935-1940*. London and New York: Routledge.

[48] Goddard, Stacie E. (2015). "The Rhetoric of Appeasement: Hitler's Legitimation and British Foreign Policy, 1938-39". *Security Studies*, Vol. 24, Num. 1, pp. 95-130, DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/09636412.2015.1001216, p. 95.

[49] Hauner, Milan (1978). "Czechoslovakia as a military factor in British considerations of 1938". *Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol. 1, Num. 2, pp. 194-222, DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/01402397808436998.

[50] Cornwall, Mark (1992). Ed. Morison, John. *The Czech and Slovak Experience*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

[51] Weinberg, Gerhard L. (1957). "The May Crisis 1938". *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 29, Num. 3, pp. 213-225, DOI: https://doi.org/10.1086/238051, p. 213.

[52] Henlein, Konrad (1936). "The German Minority in Czechoslovakia". *International Affairs*, Vol. 15, Num. 4, pp. 561-572, DOI: https://doi.org/10.2307/2603653, p. 561.

[53] Documents on German Foreign Policy 1918-1945 (1938). Series D (1937- 1945), Volume II, "Germany and Czechoslovakia 1937–1938," His Majesty's Stationery Office 1950, No. 107, p. 198, unsigned report of German Foreign Ministry, 28.03.1938, p. 68.

[54] Adamthwaite, Anthony (1983). "The British Government and the Media, 1937–1938". *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 18, Num. 2, pp. 281-297, DOI: https://doi.org/10.1177/002200948301800206.

respond to the Anschluss as it had no government at that time[55] – were ill-prepared when the Nazis started their expansion. On April 24th, 1938, in agreement with the German Foreign Ministry[56], Henlein presented the Czechslowak government with the Karlsbad's demands[57]. 1) Full equality of status between Czechs and Germans; 2) Recognition of the Sudeten as a legal entity; 3) Recognition of the German regions within the State; 4) Full self-government of those German regions; 5) Legal protection for every citizen living outside his national region: 6) Removal of injustices inflicted on Germans since 1918 and reparation for the damages caused; 7) Recognition and realization of the principle "German regions-German officials"; 8) Full liberty to profess German nationhood and German political philosophy[58]. While the British government judged the proposals as reasonable, these were rejected by Beneš.

Prague feared the loss of its independence and a possible transformation into a Nazi-style State – and that other regions with a high proportion of ethnic minorities could also declare autonomy or join neighbouring States. In April 1938, British Foreign Minister Halifax wrote to his government he would do his best to convince Beneš to accept Henlein's proposals[59]. The May Crisis originated from Karlsbad's demands and made war in Europe seem imminent[60]: Czechoslovak intelligence warned about the German troops' concentration around the Western Sudetenland. London and Paris warned Nazi Germany that in case of an attack, they would rush to Prague's rescue. Germany denied any deployment of forces, but on May 30th Hitler announced to his generals: "It is my unalterable will to smash Czechoslovakia by military action in the near future"[61]. And scheduled the invasion – the so-called Case Green – on October 1st[62]. Czechoslovakia seemed ready for a major conflict.

Particularly in Bohemia, Czechoslovakia was well armed and had many coal and steel factories and strong fortifications. Although it had never been tested in a war, the

[55] Bindoff Butterworth, Susan (1974). "Daladier and the Munich Crisis: A Reappraisal". *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 9, Num. 3, pp. 191-216, DOI: https://doi.org/10.1177/002200947400900308.
[56] Faber, David (2008). *Munich, 1938. Appeasement and World War II*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
[57] Adams, R. J. Q. (1995). *British Politics and Foreign Policy in the Age of Appeasement, 1935-39*. Houndmills and London: Palgrave MacMillan.
[58] Werth, Alexander (1939). *France and Munich. Before and After the Surrender*. New York and London: Harper and Brothers Publishers.
[59] Halifax (1938b). "Germany. Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs". CAB 24/276/16. From: https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/D7731079, 04.04.1938.
[60] Grant Duff, Shiela (1938). *Europe and the Czechs*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Limited.
[61] Quoted in Wheeler-Bennett, John W. (1948). *Munich. Prologue to Tragedy*. London: MacMillan / Co. Ltd.
[62] Parker, Robert A. C. (1993). *Chamberlain and Appeasement. British Policy and the Coming of The Second World War*. Houndmills and London: Palgrave.

Czechoslovakian army units were well-organized and well-trained. The country devoted 15-20 percent of its GDP to defense, which in 1938 rose to 44[63]. The May Crisis was a further step toward greater involvement of the European democratic powers in the Sudetenland Crisis. The Czechoslovak government rejected the Karlsbad's Programme, but in the early summer of 1938, Great Britain and France were still pushing Beneš to try to accept a few of the Karlsbad demands. In August, Nazi propaganda raised the bar again and published stories about alleged atrocities by the Czechoslovaks against the Sudeten. A clear attempt, historians agree, to force the democratic powers to put pressure on Czechoslovakia to make concessions.

In the same month, Germany sent 750.000 soldiers along its Eastern borders with Czechoslovakia. In response to Henlein's requests, Prague made a counteroffer on September 6th, 1938: 1) Proportional employment officials according to population; 2) Employment of officials in the districts of their nationality; 3) Local regions to have police of their nationality; 4) New language law based on equality; 5) Assistance to depressed Sudeten industrial areas; 6) Self-government for the minorities in the areas in which they are a majority; 7) Department for minorities in central administrations; 8) Protection for citizens against denationalization[64]. The Czechoslovak counterproposal was rejected by Henlein – backed by Germany. Czechoslovakia had three choices: 1) Defy the Great Powers awaiting the war with Germany; 2) Appeal to Russia or the League; 3) Put pressure on the West to stop Germany[65]. None of these options was chosen, as Czechoslovakia's fate was not in its hands. On September 13th, Chamberlain asked Hitler for a personal meeting to avert the Sudetenland's Crisis escalation.

As both German ambitions and Czechoslovak resistance mounted, Hitler and Chamberlain met on September 15th in Berchtesgaden to discuss the Crisis. No Czechoslovak delegation or representation was invited. By the end of this first consultation between Chamberlain and Hitler, Czechoslovakia was already doomed. Under threat of a major conflict, the Führer demanded carte blanche on the Sudetenland's takeover. On September 22nd, Czechoslovakia ordered a mobilization – Germany's plan for the invasion was already approved on May 30th. In Berchtesgaden, Hitler affirmed being very concerned about the Germans in

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[63] Vital, David (1966). "Czechoslovakia and the powers: September 1938". *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 1, Num. 4, pp. 37-67, DOI: https://doi.org/10.1177/002200946600100402.

[64] Werth, Alexander (1939). *France and Munich. Before and After the Surrender*. New York and London: Harper and Brothers Publishers.

[65] Vital, David (1966). "Czechoslovakia and the powers: September 1938". *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 1, Num. 4, pp. 37-67, DOI: https://doi.org/10.1177/002200946600100402.

Czechoslovakia[66]. He declared: "I am determined to settle it and to settle it soon and I am prepared to risk a world war rather than allow this to drag on", as Chamberlain later reported[67]. In principle, the British PM had nothing against the Sudeten Germans' separation from Czechoslovakia, provided political difficulties will be overcome[68]. A memorandum written on September 23rd, stated the withdrawal of the Czech armed forces, the police, the gendarmerie, and the customs officials from Sudetenland.

The Czech Foreign Minister in London Jan Masaryk warned that: "Our national and economic independence would automatically disappear with the acceptance of Herr Hitler's plan"; and that his "demands in their present form are absolutely and unconditionally unacceptable to my government"[69]. On September 24th, a second meeting between Chamberlain and Hitler took place in Bad Godesberg. As no agreement on Germany's requests was achieved, the day after was nicknamed "gas mask Sunday" by the press[70], as in preparing for possible war. While Beneš resisted using the army[71], the Führer insisted on the Czech "provocations"[72], claiming that Sudetenland was the price of peace[73]. Britain and France were committed to reaching an agreement at all costs. There was a belief that if the Sudetenland issue was not solved, a small identity dispute in Central Europe could have broader political effects.

A third and final colloquium, the crucial one – what went down in History as the metaphorical capitulation of London and Paris and the appeasement's climax – occurred on September 29th, in Munich, where Hitler, Chamberlain, France's Daladier, and Italy's Benito Mussolini convened to set the Sudeten question once and for all. Again, Czechoslovakia was not even invited. "We are a Western country," Beneš declared, "bound to the evolution of Western

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[66] Chamberlain, Neville (1938a). "Minute of the conversation between Neville Chamberlain and Adolf Hitler at Berchtesgaden (FO 371/21738)". From: https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/resources/chamberlain-and-hitler/source-2a/.

[67] Chamberlain, Neville (1938b). "Minute of the conversation between Neville Chamberlain and Adolf Hitler at Berchtesgaden (FO 371/21738)". From: https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/resources/chamberlain-and-hitler/source-2b/.

[68] Chamberlain, Neville (1938c). "Minute of the conversation between Neville Chamberlain and Adolf Hitler at Berchtesgaden (FO 371/21738)". From: https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/resources/chamberlain-and-hitler/source-2c/.

[69] Quoted in Wheeler-Bennett, John W. (1948). *Munich. Prologue to Tragedy*. London: MacMillan / Co. Ltd.

[70] Faber, David (2008). *Munich, 1938. Appeasement and World War II*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

[71] Mastný, Vojtěch (1971). *The Czechs under Nazi rule. The Failure of National Resistance 1939-1942*. New York and London: Columbia University.

[72] Ciano, Galeazzo (1996 [1980]). Ed. De Felice, Renzo. *Diario 1937-1943*. Milano: Biblioteca Universale Rizzoli.

[73] Hirshleifer, Jack (2001). "Appeasement: Can It Work?". *American Economic Review*, Vol. 91, Num. 2, pp. 342-346, DOI: https://doi.org/10.1257/aer.91.2.342.

Europe."[74] But this was not enough to dissuade Chamberlain from appeasing. Beneš implored the Western powers to defend Czechoslovakia, but appeasement dissuaded Paris and London from a firm hand against Hitler. London and Paris were convinced that having Prague surrounding the Sudetenland to Germany would mollify Hitler[75]. But eventually, the Munich Agreement saw London capitulating on every point in favor of Czechoslovakia.

Signed on September 30th, 1938, in the Bavarian capital, the Munich Agreement marked the First Czechoslovak Republic's end. The agreement reached in principle for the cession to Germany of the Sudeten territory and consisted of eight main points making Czechoslovakia responsible for carrying out the evacuation and having four weeks to release military and police forces from the Sudetenland[76]. Great Britain and France agreed to these terms but wanted a guarantee[77] of the new Czechoslovakia against unprovoked aggressions[78][79]. The agreement's document was sent to the Czechoslovak Government[80], along with protocols that hoped for a coexistence of the Germans and the Czechs, inspired by mutual respect[81]. At Munich, Hitler wanted a new regional order[82], and Chamberlain did not deny it to him[83]. 11.600 square miles[84], one-third of Czechoslovakia, was ceded[85]. The agreement was soon labelled as a "shameful capitulation"[86] by Chamberlain's few opponents (i.e. Churchill) within

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[74] Quoted in Wallace, William (1960). "The Foreign Policy of President Beneš in the Approach to Munich". *The Slavonic and East European Review*, Vol. 39, Num. 92, pp. 108-136.

[75] Trubowitz, Peter; Harris, Peter (2015). "When states appease: British appeasement the 1930s". *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 41, Num. 2, pp. 289-311, DOI: https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210514000278.

[76] Hitler, Adolf; Chamberlain, Neville; Daladier, Edouard; Mussolini, Benito (1938a). "Munich Pact September 29, 1938". From: https://avalon.law.yale.edu/imt/munich1.asp, 29.09.1938.

[77] Hitler, Adolf; Chamberlain, Neville; Daladier, Edouard; Mussolini, Benito (1938e). "Munich Pact: Composition of the International Commission". From: https://avalon.law.yale.edu/imt/munich5.asp, 02.09.1938.

[78] Hitler, Adolf; Chamberlain, Neville; Daladier, Edouard; Mussolini, Benito (1938b). "Munich Pact: Annex to the Agreement". From: https://avalon.law.yale.edu/imt/munich2.asp, 29.09.1938.

[79] Hitler, Adolf; Chamberlain, Neville; Daladier, Edouard; Mussolini, Benito (1938c). "Munich Pact: Supplementary Declaration". From: https://avalon.law.yale.edu/imt/munich4.asp, 29.09.1938.

[80] Documents on German Foreign Policy 1918-1945 (1955a). "Munich Agreement Aftermath - The Charge d'Affaires Czechoslovakia to the Czechoslovak Minister of Foreign Affairs". In: *Series D Volume IV*. United States Government Printing Office: Washington. From: https://avalon.law.yale.edu/imt/mun01.asp.

[81] Documents on German Foreign Policy 1918-1945 (1955b). "Munich Agreement Aftermath - The Charge d'Affaires in Czechoslovakia to the Foreign Ministry". In: *Series D Volume IV*. United States Government Printing Office: Washington. From: https://avalon.law.yale.edu/imt/mun04.asp.

[82] Kennan, George F. (1968). *From Prague After Munich. Diplomatic Papers. 1938-1939*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

[83] Albright, Madeleine (2012). *Prague Winter. A Personal Story of Remembrance and War, 1937-1948*. New York: Harper Perennial, p. 89.

[84] Procházka, Theodore (1981). *The Second Republic: The Disintegration of Post-Munich Czechoslovakia*. New York: Columbia University Press.

[85] Jesenská, Milena (2003). Ed. Hayes, Kathleen. *The Journalism of Milena Jesenská. A Critical Voice in Interwar Central Europe*. New York-Oxford: Berghahn Books.

[86] Jukes, Geoffrey (1991). "The Red Army and the Munich Crisis". *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 26, Num. 2, pp. 195-214, DOI: https://doi.org/10.1177/00220094910260020, p. 195.

the Conservative Party.

After Munich, not only Czechoslovakia lost territories and inhabitants but also several industries (concentrated in regions absorbed into the Third Reich), including factories and fortifications. This made the country more vulnerable to a full German invasion. The Second Republic, which lasted less than six months, was militarily weak and unable to counter German expansionism. The Sudetenland's loss deprived the country of its natural frontier system. "Hitler was perfectly happy with the political victory he had scored"[87], German Field marshal Keitel wrote. The appeasement caused much uproar in Europe and inflamed debates because of its lack of morality, and the cold political calculation on power balancing that sacrificed Czechoslovakia's sovereignty for alleged peace preservation[88]. Satisfied by this easy win, Hitler promised the Sudetenland was the last territorial claim he had[89].

The Second Czechoslovak Republic

This second sub-chapter explores the Second Czechoslovak Republic's unfortunate short history after Munich's mutilations, until the establishment of the Nazi protectorate in March 1939. Many historians agree the Western attitude in Munich was unsavory[90]. Masaryk Jr. sent a complaint note to Halifax: "Against these new and cruel demands my Government feels bound to make their utmost resistance and we shall do so"[91]. While defining the Munich Agreement as the blackest page in British history, Churchill said, the Czechoslovaks "could hardly have had worse"[92]. Chamberlain could defend himself from criticism at home because he managed to wrest from Hitler a supplementary declaration that Britain and Germany would never go to war with one another again[93]. But to Hitler that paper was worthless. As Ciano writes in his diaries, Hitler reassured his Foreign Minister Joachim von Ribbentrop: "Oh, don't

[87] Keitel, Wilhelm (2010 [1965]). Ed. Görlitz, Walter. *The Memoirs of Field-Marshal Keitel*. Parforce: William Kimber and Co. Limited, p. 73.

[88] Anievas, Alexander (2011). "The International Political Economy of Appeasement: The Social Sources of British Foreign Policy During the 1930s". *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 37, Num. 2, pp. 601-629, DOI: https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210510000513.

[89] Hirshleifer, Jack (2001). "Appeasement: Can It Work?". *American Economic Review*, Vol. 91, Num. 2, pp. 342-346, DOI: https://doi.org/10.1257/aer.91.2.342.

[90] Wallace, William (1959). "New Documents on the History of Munich: A Selection from the Soviet and Czechoslovak Archives". *International Affairs*, Vol. 35, Num. 4, pp. 447-454, DOI: https://doi.org/10.2307/2609123, p. 454.

[91] Quoted in Vital, David (1966). "Czechoslovakia and the powers: September 1938". *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 1, Num. 4, pp. 37-67, DOI: https://doi.org/10.1177/002200946600100402.

[92] Churchill, Winston (1938). "October 5, 1938. House of Commons". From: https://winstonchurchill.org/resources/speeches/1930-1938-the-wilderness/the-munich-agreement/.

[93] Cull, Nicholas J. (1999). "The Munich crisis and British propaganda policy in the United States". *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, Vol. 10, Num. 2-3, pp. 216-235, DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/09592299908406130.

take it all so seriously. That piece of paper is of no significance whatsoever."[94]

Historians debate whether or not Chamberlain was convinced by the agreement with Hitler. On the level of public image, he gave the idea of being reassured. He went back to London as a peacemaker, saying he had signed the "peace of our time," waving the piece of paper at the airport back from Munich. While hoping to affirm the "desire of our two peoples never to go to war with one another again," the paper stated, "We are determined to continue our efforts to remove possible sources of difference, and thus contribute to assuring the peace of Europe."[95] Chamberlain took advantage of his position as a national savior[96]. More than 20 thousand letters and telegrams were delivered to 10 Downing Street in late September and early October 1938[97]. "All is over. Silent, mournful, abandoned, broken, Czechoslovakia recedes into the darkness," Churchill bitterly declared at the House of Commons, on October 5th, 1938, as "she has suffered in every respect by her association with the Western democracies."[98] Chamberlain did not invent the appeasement[99], but when Hitler came to power in 1933, the ground for German expansion had already been prepared by years of appeasement fueled by shortsighted interests, realist calculations, and delusional idealism[100] of the British government.

The French government was embarrassed after Munich, as Paris had signed a treaty of mutual assistance on October 16th, 1925. "In the event of Czechoslovakia or France being attacked without provocation, France, or […] Czechoslovakia […] will immediately lend aid and assistance" (Art. 1)[101]. The Treaty of Locarno (i.e., the treaty of guarantee between Belgium, France, Germany, Great Britain, and Italy that fixed the border along the Rhine) did not guarantee peace and said nothing about Eastern Europe[102]. Hitler, who had already denounced

[94] Ciano, Galeazzo (1996 [1980]). Ed. De Felice, Renzo. *Diario 1937-1943*. Milano: Biblioteca Universale Rizzoli.

[95] Chamberlain, Neville (1938d) "Neville Chamberlain's Statement". From: https://avalon.law.yale.edu/wwii/peace-ou.asp.

[96] Cockett, Richard (1989). *Twilight of Truth. Chamberlain, Appeasement, and the Manipulation of the Press*. New York: St. Martin's Press.

[97] Parker, Robert A. C. (1993). *Chamberlain and Appeasement. British Policy and the Coming of The Second World War*. Houndmills and London: Palgrave.

[98] Churchill, Winston (1938). "October 5, 1938. House of Commons". From: https://winstonchurchill.org/resources/speeches/1930-1938-the-wilderness/the-munich-agreement/.

[99] Bouverie, Tim (2019). *Appeasing Hitler. Chamberlain, Churchill and the Road to War*. London: The Bodley Head.

[100] Thornton, Bruce S. (2011). *The Wages of Appeasement. Ancient Athens, Munich, and Obama's America*. New York and London: Encounter Books.

[101] Quoted in Wheeler-Bennett, John W. (1948). *Munich. Prologue to Tragedy*. London: MacMillan / Co. Ltd.

[102] Adams, R. J. Q. (1995). *British Politics and Foreign Policy in the Age of Appeasement, 1935-39*. Houndmills and London: Palgrave MacMillan.

the Treaty of Locarno, was able to exploit its "vacuum" on "Ostpolitik," while neither London nor Paris seemed to have anything to object to it. In Munich, Daladier defended the Czech cause with little conviction[103] – strangely enough, appeasement was not a consolidated foreign policy practice for France[104], as relations between Paris and Berlin were historically difficult.

While the appeal of Fascism increased in France[105], Italy knew Fascism very well: Rome was already used to land grabbing as witnessed by the 1935 Abyssinia case[106] – when there were timid relations (thus appeasement) from Great Britain. This sparked reactions from the League of Nations, pushing the Fascist regime to seek Germany as a political ally. Mussolini's rapprochement with Hitler did little to cement an understanding with London and Paris on Czechoslovakia[107]. As Ciano revealed, Mussolini called Czechoslovakia a "misunderstanding" on the map and gradually became disinterested in Prague's fate[108]. The Duce did not consider war until September 1938 and decided that he would only go to war if Britain did so first[109]. London and Paris needed to have Italy as a friend[110] and tried to dissuade Mussolini, who has already convinced an alliance with Germany was more fruitful. With the Munich Agreement, Polish and Hungarian minorities' question in Czechoslovakia was settled too[111][112]. While the evacuation of the Czechoslovak administration was to be carried out from Oct 1st to 10th[113]. As part of the First Vienna Award – a result of Munich, which entailed

[103] Ciano, Galeazzo (1996 [1980]). Ed. De Felice, Renzo. *Diario 1937-1943*. Milano: Biblioteca Universale Rizzoli.

[104] Thomas, Martin (2008). "Appeasement in the Late Third Republic". *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, Vol. 19, Num. 3, pp. 566-607, DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/09592290802345001.

[105] Soucy, Robert J. (1998). "French Press Reactions to Hitler's First Two Years in Power". *Contemporary European History*, Vol. 7, Num. 1, pp. 21-38, DOI: https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960777300004744.

[106] Holt, Andrew (2011). "'No More Hoares to Paris': British Foreign Policymaking and the Abyssinian Crisis, 1935". *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 37, Num. 3, pp. 1383-1401, DOI: https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210510001646.

[107] Mallett, Robert (2007). "The Anglo-Italian war trade negotiations, contraband control and the failure to appease Mussolini, 1939-40". *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, Vol. 8, Num. 1, pp. 137-167, DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/09592299708406033.

[108] Ciano, Galeazzo (1996 [1980]). Ed. De Felice, Renzo. *Diario 1937-1943*. Milano: Biblioteca Universale Rizzoli.

[109] Strang, Bruce G. (1999). "War and peace: Mussolini's road to Munich". *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, Vol. 10, Num. 2-3, pp. 160-190, DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/09592299908406128.

[110] Davis, Richard (2001). *Anglo-French Relations Before the Second World War. Appeasement and Crisis*. Houndsmills and New York: Palgrave MacMillan.

[111] Hitler, Adolf; Chamberlain, Neville; Daladier, Edouard; Mussolini, Benito (1938d). "Munich Pact: Declaration". From: https://avalon.law.yale.edu/imt/munich3.asp, 29.09.1938.

[112] Lojko, Miklos in Gottlieb, Julie V.; Hucker, Daniel; Toye, Richard (2021). (Ed.). *The Munich Crisis, Politics, and the People. International, Transnational, and Comparative Perspectives*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

[113] Documents on German Foreign Policy 1918-1945 (1955c). "Minutes of the Second Meeting of the International Commission". In: *Series D Volume IV*. United States Government Printing Office: Washington. From: https://avalon.law.yale.edu/imt/intcomm2.asp.

concession after the arbitration of Germany and Italy to Warsaw and Budapest – Polish troops occupied the Teschen region, while the most eastern Czechoslovak region, Ruthenia, was seized by Hungary.

After Munich, Czechoslovakia felt humiliated and betrayed. On October 5th, Beneš resigned and gave his farewell to the nation on broadcast[114]; he became a professor in the American Midwest[115]. German troops entered the Sudetenland and wanted Czechoslovakia to pay for it the logistic re-arrangements[116] (demilitarization of the concerned areas included). Struggles took place in Krumau (Krumlov) and Reichenberg[117] (Liberec), as witnessed by Jesenská[118]. The Czechs hoped the demarcation would include only areas which had at least 76 percent of Bohemia's German-populated areas[119]. New maps were issued between October 7th and 10th, 1938[120]. Around 4.9 million people left Czechoslovakia[121]. On October 9th, Hitler spoke in Saarbrucken: he did not mean to disarm or celebrate the "coming peace". He thanked Mussolini – "Germany's true friend"[122] – and eventually the illusions of his "good intentions", both nationally and internationally, ended up with Kristallnacht – on November 9th and 10th.

In December 1938, Halifax spoke about a Europe that might decide between a Pax Germanica or a Pax Britannica[123] – this latter being a combination of democratic values and liberalism, free trade, under the aegis of Great Britain. Liberalism and democracy were discredited, as American diplomat in Prague George F. Kennan reported. In January 1939, Bohemia was silent, "but the intense battle is taking place in every corner of the country and every section

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[114] Heimann, Mary (2009). *Czechoslovakia: The State that Failed*. Yale: Yale University Press.

[115] Adams, R. J. Q. (1995). *British Politics and Foreign Policy in the Age of Appeasement, 1935-39*. Houndmills and London: Palgrave MacMillan.

[116] Documents on German Foreign Policy 1918-1945 (1955d). "Minutes of the Third Meeting of the International Commission". In: *Series D Volume IV*. United States Government Printing Office: Washington. From: https://avalon.law.yale.edu/imt/intcomm3.asp.

[117] Documents on German Foreign Policy 1918-1945 (1955e): "Minutes of the Fourth Meeting of the International Commission". In: *Series D Volume IV*. United States Government Printing Office: Washington. From: https://avalon.law.yale.edu/imt/intcomm4.asp.

[118] Jesenská, Milena (2003). Ed. Hayes, Kathleen. *The Journalism of Milena Jesenská. A Critical Voice in Interwar Central Europe*. New York-Oxford: Berghahn Books.

[119] Documents on German Foreign Policy 1918-1945 (1955f). "Minutes of the Fifth Meeting of the International Commission". In: *Series D Volume IV*. United States Government Printing Office: Washington. From: https://avalon.law.yale.edu/imt/intcomm5.asp.

[120] Documents on German Foreign Policy 1918-1945 (1955g). "Minutes of the Seventh Meeting of the International Commission". In: *Series D Volume IV*. United States Government Printing Office: Washington. From: https://avalon.law.yale.edu/imt/intcomm7.asp.

[121] Heimann, Mary (2009). *Czechoslovakia: The State that Failed*. Yale: Yale University Press, p. 94.

[122] Parker, Robert A. C. (1993). *Chamberlain and Appeasement. British Policy and the Coming of The Second World War*. Houndmills and London: Palgrave.

[123] Halifax (1938a). "British Propaganda in Germany. Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs". CAB 24/281/10. From: https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/D7731274, 08.12.1938.

of society"[124]. A February 1939 poll in Great Britain suggested that 28 percent thought that Chamberlain's policies would lead to peace in Europe[125]. The news of the rest of Bohemia and Moravia's illegal occupation by Germany was announced on Radio Prague at 4:30 am[126] on March 15th, 1938. Emil Hácha, President of the Supreme Administration Court, replaced Beneš as Second Republic's President. Throughout his mandate (till World War II's end) he carried out a pro-German policy as to him this was the best way to maintain the nation's independence.

Slovakia was separated from Bohemia and Moravia[127] and gained independence for the first time in its history. Transformed into a German puppet State, it was ruled by the fascist-cleric Jozef Tiso, who was summoned by Hitler in Berlin on March 14th, to put pressure on the Slovak Diet to declare independence from Prague. The new Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia was incorporated into the Reich. The Reichsprotektor was the former German Ambassador in London, Konstantin von Neurath – whose appointment was interpreted as a signal of Hitler's "good intentions"[128]. Pogroms against the Jews started in the Protectorate[129], and with them the prohibition of Communist activities[130]. With the appeasement's ultimate result – the seizure of Prague on March 15th, 1939[131] – not even the staunchest supporters of this policy in London or Paris had any doubts on Germany's ultimate goals. They condemned the occupation and got ready for the next step: re-armament.

Great Britain and France knew they had to prepare for something bigger: the months between Bohemia and Moravia's annexation and the war in Poland in September would serve them to rearm. By this time, "pessimists fell into two camps: there were those who now saw

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[124] Kennan, George F. (1968). *From Prague After Munich. Diplomatic Papers. 1938-1939*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, p. 10.

[125] Parker, Robert A. C. (1993). *Chamberlain and Appeasement. British Policy and the Coming of The Second World War*. Houndmills and London: Palgrave.

[126] Mastný, Vojtěch (1971). *The Czechs under Nazi rule. The Failure of National Resistance 1939-1942*. New York and London: Columbia University.

[127] Boucek, Jaroslav A. (1975). "Post Munich Czechoslovakia: A Few Historical Notes". *Canadian Slavonic Papers*, Vol. 17, Num. 1, pp. 44-64, DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/00085006.1975.11091396.

[128] Gerwarth, Robert (2011). *Hitler's Hangman. The Life of Heydrich*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.

[129] Jesenská, Milena (2003). Ed. Hayes, Kathleen. *The Journalism of Milena Jesenská. A Critical Voice in Interwar Central Europe*. New York-Oxford: Berghahn Books.

[130] Procházka, Theodore (1981). *The Second Republic: The Disintegration of Post-Munich Czechoslovakia*. New York: Columbia University Press.

[131] Phillips, Adrian (2019). *Fighting Churchill, Appeasing Hitler. Neville Chamberlain, Sir Horace Wilson, & Britain's Plight of Appeasement. 1937-1939*. New York and London: Pegasus Books.

subordination to the Reich as inevitable, and they either resigned themselves to it or fled"[132]. The Second Republic's seizure was the first time that the Nazis absorbed a non-Germanic political unit[133]. After March 1939, there were no longer uncertainties about Nazi Germany's domination goals[134]. Again, no one helped Czechoslovakia. Hitler based himself on the following calculations: France will move, but only if England moves, and England will not move[135]. He was right on this until September 1939, when he hoped that with the invasion of Poland, the West would appease him once again[136]. But by then London and Paris dropped the appeasement policy and declared war on Germany. British public opinion had evolved from appeasement's support at Munich to support for resistance after the Prague coup[137].

After the Second Republic's end in March 1939, the British government had three choices: 1) appease, 2) give an immediate guarantee to Poland and Romania, and 3) Work for a political and military relationship with the USSR[138]. London chose none of this and thought about rearmament until the beginning of the "Fall Weiss" – Poland's invasion. Chamberlain was now convinced that it was not possible to negotiate with Hitler. Mussolini invaded Albania on April 7th. The Pact of Steel between Germany and Italy was signed on May 22nd, 1939, and by then Field Marshal Keitel wrote: "Again and again, Hitler reassured me that he had no desire whatsoever for war with Poland – he would never let things go as far as that"[139]. Only with the deterioration of the international political situation in March 1939 did the British Cabinet call for a general hardline against Germany. It was too late: some eighteen months, a year and a half, had been lost to stop Hitler. On September 1st, 1939, Germany invaded Poland.

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[132] Adams, R. J. Q. (1995). *British Politics and Foreign Policy in the Age of Appeasement, 1935-39*. Houndmills and London: Palgrave MacMillan, p. 129.

[133] Kennan, George F. (1968). *From Prague After Munich. Diplomatic Papers. 1938-1939*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

[134] Wheeler-Bennett, John W. (1948). *Munich. Prologue to Tragedy*. London: MacMillan / Co. Ltd.

[135] Steiner, Zara (1999). "The Soviet Commissariat of Foreign Affairs and the Czechoslovakian Crisis in 1938: New Material from the Soviet Archives". *Historical Journal*, Vol. 42, Num. 3, pp. 751-779, DOI: https://doi.org/10.1017/S0018246X99008626.

[136] Overy, Richard (2007). "Germany and the Munich crisis: A mutilated victory?". *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, Vol. 10, Num. 2-3, pp. 191-215, DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/09592299908406129.

[137] Hucker, Daniel (2011). "Public Opinion between Munich and Prague: The View from the French Embassy". *Contemporary British History*, Vol. 25, Num. 3, pp. 407-427, DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/13619462.2011.597551, p. 4007.

[138] Alexandroff, Alan (1977). "Deterrence in 1939". *World Politics*, Vol. 29, Num. 3, pp. 404-424, DOI: https://doi.org/10.2307/2010003.

[139] Keitel, Wilhelm (2010 [1965]). Ed. Görlitz, Walter. *The Memoirs of Field-Marshal Keitel*. Parforce: William Kimber and Co. Limited, p. 86.

Chapter II: Great Britain's reasons to appease

This chapter outlines Great Britain's main reasons to resort to the policy of appeasement vis-à-vis Nazi Germany. Since the united German State's emergence in January 1871, the relations between the two countries have fluctuated. The naval race intensified since the end of the XIX century between the two countries. Then the two fought on opposite sides in World War I. After the conflict, the British PM Llyod George promised to impose a tough treaty on Germany and so it was. With time, however, the tougher positions of France and Belgium, which insisted on punishing Germany, emerged with greater vigor; British positions toward Berlin softened. The Treaty of Versailles imposed major army restrictions on Germany, territorial mutilations, and massive war reparations as well as blame for the Great War's outbreak.

In 1922, at the conference in Genoa, the British delegation crashed with the French one over war reparations. The year after, France occupied the Ruhr industrial area, increasing many Germans' sense of humiliation and frustration. In 1923 also, inflation skyrocketed in the Weimar Republic, and not even two U.S.-sponsored plans (Dawes 1924-1929 and Young in 1929 and 1931) seemed to ameliorate its economic and social conditions. However, these recovery plans proved to be partially ineffective in light of the Wall Street Crash in 1929 and its effects in Europe throughout the following decade. Until the early Thirties, diplomatic relations between Great Britain and Germany were relatively positive. This was also witnessed by the 1925 Treaty of Locarno (which stated that Germany would never go to war with other countries) and the 1928 Kellogg-Briand Pact (when the signatories pledged not to use war to settle disputes).

With Hitler's coming to power in 1933, the relations with London dramatically deteriorated and Germany's payments to Britain were suspended globally. Furthermore, the British political class gravely misunderstood Hitler and tried to interpret his "good intentions" regarding Sudetenland. In January 1933, the *Daily Telegraph* newspaper wondered how a man, who looked so uninspiring, "with that ridiculous little mustache", could prove "so attractive and impressive" to the German people, while *The Times* noted that a Hitler Government "was held to be the least dangerous solution", and *New Statesman*, "We shall not expect to see the Jews' extermination[140]. Even after Hitler came to power and the brutality of

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[140] Bouverie, Tim (2019). *Appeasing Hitler. Chamberlain, Churchill and the Road to War*. London: The Bodley Head.

the Nazis became obvious, Great Britain's ruling classes continued to see the advantages of having good relations with Berlin, rather than the concerns about Germany's ascent, conquest, and continuous violation of the Versailles Treaty. In 1935, Germany and Great Britain entered into an Anglo-German Naval Agreement to avoid a potential arms race.

Chamberlain's appeasement embodied Realpolitik in the coldest Bismarckian terms[141], which failed, however, to deter Hitler both in the Czechoslovak case (Sudetenland in 1938 plus Bohemia and Moravia in 1939) and Poland (in 1939). Historian Norman Henry Gibbs agrees and argues that British strategy throughout the Thirties was an isolationist one rather than prone to commitment in continental Europe[142]. In three cases, Great Britain showed scarce interest in continental Europe's balance. The first case was Abyssinia. In 1935, London closed an eye on the cruel Italian takeover of Abyssinia, appeasing Mussolini's territorial goals. The second case was the Rhineland occupation in 1936. Protesting against Chamberlain's appeasement policies and referring to Hitler, MP Anthony Eden already stated on this occasion that "by reoccupying the Rhineland he has deprived us of the possibility of making to him a concession"[143]. The third case was the Spanish civil war when London did not take any side. While both Hitler and Mussolini helped the Nationalists to take over Spain, London and Paris were timid and showed little understanding or support to the Republicans.

With the late Thirties' appeasement policy, Great Britain was animated by goodwill and determined to prevent World War I's-like horrors. The use of diplomacy and concession instead of war was imperative for all British Conservatives- and business-led governments. Chamberlain knew that war would solve nothing and could not even imagine anyone intentionally causing a second global conflict[144]. He believed that Hitler was wholeheartedly concerned with justice for German minorities[145] in Czechoslovakia; while other historians pointed out that the conservative leader had sensed the Chancellor's criminal intentions from the very beginning – but still he had bowed out. In any case, there are several reasons why

[141] McKercher, B. J. C. (2008). "National Security and Imperial Defence: British Grand Strategy and Appeasement, 1930-1939". *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, Vol. 19, Num. 3m pp. 391-442, DOI: 10.1080/09592290802344954.

[142] Gibbs, Norman Henry (1976). *Grand Strategy*. Volume 1, *Rearmament Policy* (United Kingdom Military Series. History of the Second World War). London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office.

[143] Eden, Anthony (1936). "Eden Memorandum, 8 March 1936". Documents on British Foreign Policy II, XVI, pp. 60-61.

[144] Albright, Madeleine (2012). *Prague Winter. A Personal Story of Remembrance and War, 1937-1948*. New York: Harper Perennial.

[145] MacDonald, Callum A. (1981). *The United States, Britain, and Appeasement. 1936-1939*. London and Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan.

Great Britain adopted this policy. This chapter explores five reasons why Britain accommodated Nazi Germany in 1938 regarding the Sudetenland Crisis.

First one: although Chamberlain was surely animated by good faith in trying to preserve peace and security in Europe, in the end, he played into Hitler's hands. A second reason was that London sensed that German aggression would not subside as a result of the Munich Accord. Third, the state of the economy and business interests, but also awareness of the economic conditions, strengthened the positions of those who wished for cordial relations with Germany. Fourth, given the British establishment's fear of the spread of Communism, appeasement was strategically adopted to contrast Communism and its influence, particularly after the 1917 Russian Revolution. Finally, the internal audience and domestic policy must be politicians' concerns. These motivations provide the context that helps to contest hypothesis that appeasement might be considered a classical liberalism's policy.

Peace and security in Europe

The first motivation for Great Britain's appeasement towards Nazi Germany was the search for peace and security in Europe. With fresh memories of World War I, no one in Europe, except Nazis and Fascists, wanted war again. For this reason, Chamberlain was determined to use diplomacy to pacify Nazi Germany. His sincere attempts and efforts to avoid war enjoyed wide public support and he was aware of this[146]. The Prime Minister had lost his cousin Norman Chamberlain in the Great War[147] and had a visceral horror of war. He was not a pacifist, but he saw war as the last resort, subject to a "vital cause," one that "transcends all the human values"[148]. All and more has been said about his personality and the crucial moments leading up to Munich. Some believe he was a naive politician; others emphasized his political realism or resignation that German pressures were too hard to contrast.

In his party too, some accused him of cowardice; others, in hindsight, explained how he prepared the country for war. According to historian Robert A. C. Parker, Chamberlain "was neither a coward nor a fool; he was neither ignorant nor idle. He was a cultivated, highly intelligent, hard-working statesman, yet he has been written off as a petty, narrow-minded,

[146] Trubowitz, Peter; Harris, Peter (2015). "When states appease: British appeasement the 1930s". *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 41, Num. 2, pp. 289-311, DOI: https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210514000278.

[147] Adams, R. J. Q. (1995). *British Politics and Foreign Policy in the Age of Appeasement, 1935-39*. Houndmills and London: Palgrave MacMillan.

[148] Thornton, Bruce S. (2011). *The Wages of Appeasement. Ancient Athens, Munich, and Obama's America*. New York and London: Encounter Books.

boring provincial"[149]. Even at the price of injustice, peace was his polar star. Chamberlain never had a high opinion of the Czechoslovak people[150], Adrian Philips remembers, and along with the Conservative Party, he truly believed that concessions on some Versailles provisions would placate Hitler[151] and secure peace in Europe. During the Sudetenland Crisis, the British government considered previous positions of neutrality (Abyssinia, Rhineland, and the Spanish Civil War) to prevent the Sudetenland Crisis' overstretch – ready to establish good relations with anyone winning after the war[152].

Chamberlain knew that the search for peace could not be based on international laws violations. That was against the post-World War I premises based on a liberal institutionalism-based world order. However, the PM failed to grasp the ultimate effects of Hitler's intentions: the Führer was not interested in peace. According to Schroeder, this reflected the British traditional conformity with the approach to Central European issues in the XIX century[153]: semi-disinterest in Czechoslovakia's fate. And 1938 Chamberlain did not intend to enforce internationalist and liberal principles to preserve the country's integrity from Nazi aggression. The conservative leader himself admitted he would not send troops to defend a remote Central European State. After all, German territorial claims were not against primary British Empire's interests. To many (both the executive and the population) Hitler's claim did not seem "unreasonable"; and unlike Paris, London did not have a defensive agreement with Prague.

Like the French government, but with few exceptions, the British Conservative executive was willing to accept anything to preserve peace and stability in Europe. Showing his myopia vis-à-vis Nazi Germany, the French Foreign Minister Georges Bonnet was also ready to accept anything for peace at any price[154]. Indeed, France's goal was the same as London's: to ward off the possibility of an armed confrontation with Germany and to preserve peace in Europe. For this scope, Paris abandoned its traditional bellicose attitude towards Germany

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[149] Parker, Robert A. C. (1993). *Chamberlain and Appeasement. British Policy and the Coming of The Second World War*. Houndmills and London: Palgrave, p. 1-2.
[150] Phillips, Adrian (2019). *Fighting Churchill, Appeasing Hitler. Neville Chamberlain, Sir Horace Wilson, & Britain's Plight of Appeasement. 1937-1939*. New York and London: Pegasus Books.
[151] Thornton, Bruce S. (2011). *The Wages of Appeasement. Ancient Athens, Munich, and Obama's America*. New York and London: Encounter Books.
[152] Ramsay, Scott (2019). "Ensuring Benevolent Neutrality: The British Government's Appeasement of General Franco during the Spanish Civil War, 1936-1939". *The International History Review*, Vol. 41, Num. 3, pp. 604-623, DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/07075332.2018.1428211.
[153] Schroeder, Paul W. (1976). "Munich and the British tradition". *Historical Journal*, Vol. 19, Num. 1, pp. 223-243, DOI: https://doi.org/10.1017/S0018246X00018379.
[154] McVickar Haight, John (1960). "France, the United States, and the Munich Crisis". *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 32, Num. 4, pp. 340-358, DOI: https://doi.org/10.1086/238615.

(exemplified in the Versailles treaties' French-tailored clauses) and followed London on the appeasement pathway. Both Chamberlain and Daladier failed to understand that peace is not peace at any price: there can be no peace with unjust or imposed agreements. And the principle of neutrality must not serve as smoke and mirrors to hide indifference to the attacked nations' fate. Appeasement does not lead to peace, as it does not stop a dictator's territorial appetite.

In hindsight, Susan Bindoff Butterworth, argues, the crisis in Czechoslovakia was less a Czech-German problem, but more a problem of peace in Europe[155]. The preservation of peace at any cost derived from the fear to trigger German's wrath and turned into short-sightedness. Although Chamberlain understood who Hitler was and what his goals were, he was also persuaded that territorial concessions served the noble cause of the preservation of peace and security in the continent. However, after the Munich Conference, London continued its rearmament[156]. Hitler wanted to rearrange Central-Eastern Europe to suit Nazi policy goals and create his European order. Most Germans wished to amend and relieve the Versailles Treaty and sympathized with his goals[157]. Security goes hand in hand with peace: more security meant less conflict and thus the preservation of peace. If Germany was satisfied, the British government hoped, it would have no reason to attack other European States. But Nazi Germany was unappeasable and Hitler was not a man of peace. And ardently wanted war[158].

Time to prepare and strategy

A second motivation for Great Britain's appeasement towards Germany was the British government's strategy to buy time to prepare itself for a future potential conflict in Europe. As Robert J. Beck recalls, in the fall of 1938, compared to Germany, both Great Britain and France were gravely inferior in military strength[159]. Fear of an impending conflict in the heart of Europe added to the military calculus of Britain and France: both realized they could not beat Hitler militarily and thus abandoned Czechoslovakia. Fearing the outbreak of a new confrontation with Germany and acknowledging that standing up on Czechoslovakia might

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[155] Bindoff Butterworth, Susan (1974). "Daladier and the Munich Crisis: A Reappraisal". *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 9, Num. 3, pp. 191-216, DOI: https://doi.org/10.1177/002200947400900308.

[156] Bouverie, Tim (2019). *Appeasing Hitler. Chamberlain, Churchill and the Road to War*. London: The Bodley Head.

[157] Parker, Robert A. C. (1993). *Chamberlain and Appeasement. British Policy and the Coming of The Second World War*. Houndmills and London: Palgrave.

[158] Howard, Michael (1993). "A Thirty Years' War? The Two World Wars in Historical Perspective", in: *The Prothero Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, Vol. 3, pp. 171-184, DOI: https://doi.org/10.2307/3679140.

[159] Beck, Robert J. (1989). "Munich's Lessons Reconsidered". *International Security*, Vol. 14, Num. 2, pp. 161-191, DOI: https://doi.org/10.2307/2538858.

lead to war, they decided for the twin strategy of appease-and-rearm. Hitler assumed that Chamberlain wanted time to postpone the conflict, Kennedy reports[160]. And in this sense, appeasement was also a strategy to buy time for rearmament[161]. Many historians agree that London began to prepare for war with delay. In Great Britain, the population and industrial resources were less than Germany's[162]. However, Hitler perfectly knew that Britain's imperial greatness was founded on naval superiority[163]. He did not provoke London on this and offered assurances in this regard. As for land forces, the situation was different.

Based on January 1938 and April 1939 data, Germany had 81 and 130 divisions; Italy 73 and 85; France 100 and 100; Great Britain 2 and 16[164]. Great Britain as a nation had to reorganize itself[165]. From the spring of 1938, numerical inferiority was urgently stressed in cabinet meetings and by the military apparatus too. Reflecting on the August 1939 Molotov-von Ribbentrop pact (the treaty of nonaggression between Germany and the Soviet Union in which the parties pledged not to attack each other), Geoffrey Jukes explains how the Munich Agreement "gave the Allies one extra year to prepare for an inevitable war. Hitler made much better use of the time, not just in increasing German armed forces and armaments, but in removing the Soviet Union from the opposing camp"[166]. By eliminating the historical regional concern in the East (once the Tsarist Empire, then the USSR), Germany sealed off the eastern front and had a free hand to proceed with the territorial conquest of Western Europe.

German air staff reports illustrated that one week before the Munich Conference an aerial campaign against Britain was impossible for the Luftwaffe[167]. Thus, the Munich Agreement served both London and Berlin: it cost nothing to Hitler – except a few false promises – and made Chamberlain (and Daladier) gain time. According to economist Jack Hirshleifer, Great

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[160] Kennedy, Paul M. (1978). "'Appeasement' and British Defence Policy in the Interwar Years". *British Journal of University Studies*, Vol. 4, Num. 2, pp. 161-177, DOI: https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210500117176.

[161] Ripsman Norrin M.; Levy, Jack S. (2000). "Wishful Thinking or Buying Time? The Logic of British Appeasement in the 1930s". *International Security,* Vol. 33, Num. 2, pp. 148-181, DOI: https://doi.org/10.1162/isec.2008.33.2.148.

[162] Parker, Robert A. C. (1993). *Chamberlain and Appeasement. British Policy and the Coming of The Second World War*. Houndmills and London: Palgrave.

[163] Maiolo, Joseph A. (1998). *The Royal Navy and Nazi Germany, 1933-39. A Study in Appeasement and the Origins of the Second World War*. New York: St. Martin's Press.

[164] Adamthwaite, Anthony (2021 [1977]). *France and the Coming of the Second World War. 1936-1939*. Routledge: Oxon and New York.

[165] Lammers, Donald (1973). "From Whitehall after Munich: The foreign office and the future control of British policy". *Historical Journal*, Vol. 16, Num. 4, pp. 831-856.

[166] Jukes, Geoffrey (1991). "The Red Army and the Munich Crisis". *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 26, Num. 2, pp. 195-214, DOI: https://doi.org/10.1177/00220094910260020.

[167] Beck, Robert J. (1989). "Munich's Lessons Reconsidered". *International Security*, Vol. 14, Num. 2, pp. 161-191, DOI: https://doi.org/10.2307/2538858.

Britain had the chance to appease or oppose[168]. In hindsight, by selling off Czechoslovakia, Chamberlain and his cabinet ruined the reputation of the liberal democracies of the time. Indeed, the appeasement betrayed the expectations of those who had faith in democratic and liberal values. On the contrary, having good relations with dictators seemed to be Chamberlain's main policy pillars[169], B. J. C McKercher argues. In January 1938, the British PM realized, his country was rich but also vulnerable[170] and ill-prepared to face war again[171]; and the solution was found in trying to build up a strong "peace front"[172] with France.

The British government was quite angry at Hitler's behaviour before and after Munich but did not take the opportunity of war[173] seriously, Anthony Adamthwaite recalls. Chamberlain himself did not want to risk war with Hitler *on* Czechoslovakia, but he started with extensive rearmament nonetheless. Many historians agree with the "Earning one more year" thesis, but the British government showed gross and short-sighted indifference to Czechoslovakia and in doing so implied a lack of perception of the balance of power politics in Europe[174]. Above all, the indifference and inability to defend values such as the defense of liberal democracy. Hitler's intentions were not considered with due attention and this delayed the general rearmament before the Munich conference. Between the fall of 1938 and the summer of 1939, the country rearmed itself. And, eventually, at the price of Czechoslovakia's independence, Chamberlain's sole achievement was preventing war in the short term[175].

State of the economy

A third motivation for Great Britain's appeasement towards Nazi Germany was the concerns with the state of its economy. Studies on the 1938-9 crisis quite often neglect the economic

[168] Hirshleifer, Jack (2001). "Appeasement: Can It Work?". *American Economic Review*, Vol. 91, Num. 2, pp. 342-346, DOI: https://doi.org/10.1257/aer.91.2.342.

[169] McKercher, B. J. C. (2017). "*Anschluss*: The Chamberlain Government and the First Test of Appeasement, February–March 1938". *The International History Review*, Vol. 39, Num. 2, pp. 274-294, DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/07075332.2016.1179207.

[170] Fry, Michael G. (1999). "Agents and structures: The dominions and the Czechoslovak crisis, September 1938". *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, Vol. 10. Num. 2-3, pp. 293-341, DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/09592299908406134.

[171] Beck, Robert J. (1989). "Munich's Lessons Reconsidered". *International Security*, Vol. 14, Num. 2, pp. 161-191, DOI: https://doi.org/10.2307/2538858.

[172] Kennedy, Paul M. (1978). "'Appeasement' and British Defence Policy in the Interwar Years". *British Journal of University Studies*, Vol. 4, Num. 2, pp. 161-177, DOI: https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210500117176.

[173] Adamthwaite, Anthony (1983). "The British Government and the Media, 1937–1938". *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 18, Num. 2, pp. 281-297, DOI: https://doi.org/10.1177/002200948301800206.

[174] Weinberg, Gerhard L.; Rock, William R.; Cienciala, Anna M. (1989). "The Munich Crisis Revisited". *International History Review*, Vol. 11, Num. 4, pp. 668-688, DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/07075332.1989.9640529.

[175] Phillips, Adrian (2019). *Fighting Churchill, Appeasing Hitler. Neville Chamberlain, Sir Horace Wilson, & Britain's Plight of Appeasement. 1937-1939*. New York and London: Pegasus Books.

side of appeasement[176], Callum A. MacDonald affirms. On the other hand, a few others criticize[177] it. Generally, governments appease when leaders are cross-pressured. As Trubowitz and Harris point out, appeasers "hold power at times when national security is scarce […]. Yet leaders who appease foreign aggressors are also constrained domestically. Economic resources are limited, and leaders run high risks with the electorate […] if they fail to invest those resources at home"[178]. This third element for appeasement takes into account two issues: the economy of the British State back then (understood as economic problems) and the costs associated with appeasement (understood as appeasement's opportunity-cost). Sure, the appeasers in the British government were right in saying that stopping Hitler was costly in 1938[179]. They did not consider, however, that stopping it after the incorporation of the new territories, the Sudetenland, would have been more costly.

In June 1930, the U.S. Congress' raised customs duties over thousands of imported goods via the Smoot-Hawley tariff, which had bad repercussions on the trade-based British economy[180] and on the entire world economy. Thus, the country could not afford war's costs, but also could not properly manage a far "second-rate" crisis such as the one in Sudetenland. Curiously, Chamberlain's mandate was originally focused on saving the economy, not preparing war. The PM had strong economic concerns in relation to Germany – which was one of Great Britain's biggest commercial partners – and never aimed at contesting German economic and political predominance in Central Europe[181]. Thus, Czechoslovakia was expendable, as it belonged to a legitimate German area of interest – both economically, socially, and culturally. Considering the post-Great Depression effects, the British government did not have enough economic resources to propose an economic deal with Nazi Germany and whether to dissuade Berlin to claim territories in Central Europe.

The economic difficulties of Western liberal democracies needed to be kept into

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[176] MacDonald, Callum A. (1972). "Economic Appeasement and the German 'Moderates' 1937-1939: An Introductory Essay". *Past and Present*, Vol. 56, Num. 1, pp. 105-135, DOI: https://doi.org/10.1093/past/56.1.105.
[177] Ekbladh, David (2020). "Development as … appeasement? From Peaceful Change to ideological combat". *History Australia*, Vol. 17, Num. 4, pp. 611-627, DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/14490854.2020.1838931.
[178] Trubowitz, Peter; Harris, Peter (2015). "When states appease: British appeasement the 1930s". *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 41, Num. 2, pp. 289-311, DOI: https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210514000278, p. 290.
[179] Schroeder, Paul W. (1976). "Munich and the British tradition". *Historical Journal*, Vol. 19, Num. 1, pp. 223-243, DOI: https://doi.org/10.1017/S0018246X00018379.
[180] McKercher, B. J. C. (2008). "National Security and Imperial Defence: British Grand Strategy and Appeasement, 1930-1939". *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, Vol. 19, Num. 3m pp. 391-442, DOI: 10.1080/09592290802344954.
[181] MacDonald, Callum A. (1981). *The United States, Britain, and Appeasement. 1936-1939*. London and Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan.

consideration[182], Williamson Murray insists. Germany's increase in both political and economic power threatened British interests, as warned by anti-appeasers[183]. The economic situation and industrial production in Great Britain were worse than in Germany – e.g., in 1934, Britain was only the fifth largest air power in the world[184]. Militarily speaking, in March 1939, Chamberlain's first preoccupation was the defence against the Luftwaffe[185]. As for France, in 1935-9, there was an enormous disparity between it and Germany: while the former produced 47 million tons of coal, the latter produced 351 million tons. Between 1929 and 1938 industrial production increased by 16 percent in Germany and fell in France by 24 percent[186]. "Economic appeasement paralleled political appeasement"[187], Adamthwaite stresses. Many politicians in the U.S. were also favoring economic appeasement[188].

Innovatively, Andrew Stedman reflects on what economic appeasement meant back then. "(1) granting of economic concessions to Germany […]; (2) encouraging Germany to return to a global system of trade; (3) attempting to win Germany over towards the economic systems of Western Europe as opposed to the Soviet sphere […]; (4) recognizing that certain areas of Central and Eastern Europe were to be left to German economic domination; (5) settling of debts and potential exchange of loans, colonies or raw materials between Britain and Germany; (6) creating a unique Anglo-German economic partnership to shield their mutual recovery from the Depression; (7) revising any British economic practices that were disadvantageous to Germany; (8) promoting peaceful ways in which Germany could alleviate its most serious economic problems; and (9) fostering closer relations between British and German industrialists"[189]. An example of economic appeasement by Great Britain occurred during the 1935 Abyssinian Crisis, when Fascist Italy was not denied the use of the British-

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[182] Murray, Williamson (1979). "Munich, 1938: The military confrontation". *Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol. 2, Num. 3, pp. 282-302, DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/01402397908437027.

[183] Schroeder, Paul W. (1976). "Munich and the British tradition". *Historical Journal*, Vol. 19, Num. 1, pp. 223-243, DOI: https://doi.org/10.1017/S0018246X00018379.

[184] Bouverie, Tim (2019). *Appeasing Hitler. Chamberlain, Churchill and the Road to War*. London: The Bodley Head.

[185] Pownall, Sir Henry (1973). Ed. Bond, Brian. *The Diaries of Lieutenant General Sir Henry Pownall, Vol 1: 1933–40*. Archon: Hamden.

[186] Adamthwaite, Anthony (2021 [1977]). *France and the Coming of the Second World War. 1936-1939*. Oxon and New York: Routledge.

[187] MacDonald, Callum A. (1972). "Economic Appeasement and the German 'Moderates' 1937-1939: An Introductory Essay". *Past and Present*, Vol. 56, Num. 1, pp. 105-135, DOI: https://doi.org/10.1093/past/56.1.105, p. 114.

[188] Stedman, Andrew D. (2011). *Alternatives to Appeasement. Neville Chamberlain and Hitler's Germany*. London and New York: Bloomsbury.

[189] Stedman, Andrew D. (2011). *Alternatives to Appeasement. Neville Chamberlain and Hitler's Germany*. London and New York: Bloomsbury, p. 44.

controlled Suez Canal to reach the new colonies in Western Africa.

On the other hand, in 1938 a new war or major conflict in Europe would have cost all countries – and in the British view, it would have antagonized the U.S. That is why much of the Conservative party – traditional representative of the financial and economic élites' interests in the country – were against the war. The Great Depression's scars and geopolitical uncertainty kept London from defending the liberal values put under attack by the Nazis over the Sudetenland. Germany promised to enter new trade talks with Great Britain and buy British finished goods[190], but this did not occur, eventually. On the contrary, hand in hand with rearmament, Germany intensified autarky. And almost everyone was convinced that after March 1939 a new war in Europe was just a matter of time. This is also witnessed by the GNP percentage devoted to military expenditure, which in Germany was 12.4 in 1936, 16.6 in 1938, 23 in 1939, and 38 in 1940, whereas in Great Britain was 4.2, 8.1, 21.4, 51.7, respectively[191].

While recalling that the Conservatives' constituencies were tied with trade and finance interest groups, Trubowitz and Harris argue that States "will sometimes attempt to mollify one foe to concentrate scarce resources against a more dangerous enemy"[192]. Chamberlain knew well that the Conservative Party's electoral fortunes depended on economic and trade success. According to diplomat Harold Nicolson, in late November 1938, a Minister of Supply would arouse Germany's anger[193]. Sanctions toward Germany for the Sudetenland, as Cecelia Lynch points out, raised concerns in British public opinion, but then the thing was dropped by the government[194]. Thus, not just political, but also economic appeasement (that means: not upsetting Germany with sanctions) was carried out. The economic argument and the buying time argument are connected: the former depends on the latter since Britain's concerning state of armaments had a significant change of pace as a result of the events in Munich and the Conservative leadership's decision to arm in anticipation of a wider conflict.

Bolshevism's containment

[190] MacDonald, Callum A. (1972). "Economic Appeasement and the German 'Moderates' 1937-1939: An Introductory Essay". *Past and Present*, Vol. 56, Num. 1, pp. 105-135, DOI: https://doi.org/10.1093/past/56.1.105.
[191] Peden, George C. (1984). "A matter of timing: The economic background to British foreign policy, 1937-1939". *History*, Vol. 69, Num. 225, pp. 15-28, DOI: https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-229X.1984.tb01412.x.
[192] Trubowitz, Peter; Harris, Peter (2015). "When states appease: British appeasement the 1930s". *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 41, Num. 2, pp. 289-311, DOI: https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210514000278, p. 289-290.
[193] Nicolson, Harold (1967). Ed. Nicolson, Nigel. *Diaries and Letters 1930-39*. London: Collins.
[194] Lynch, Cecelia (1999). *Beyond Appeasement. Interpreting Interwar Peace Movements in World Politics*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press.

A fourth motivation for Great Britain's appeasement was the fear of Communism's spread across Europe and the necessity to contain it, also by preferring right-wing dictatorships or right-wing authoritarian regimes instead of even mild social-democratic or socialist governments. Like much of his party and the British society, Chamberlain found Nazism abhorrent but loathed Bolshevism even more. This was also the generalized opinion of the City of London and much of the British nobility. Conservative leader Chamberlain could not personally stomach Communism all over Europe and look positively at an agreement with what was perceived as the lesser evil – namely right-wing autocracy. Throughout the Twenties and Thirties, the fight against Communism intensified in Europe[195], where this ideology was seen as a bigger threat than Nazism. Fragile democracies shifted to far-right authoritarian regimes as it occurred in Italy, Portugal, and Spain; or military regimes like in Poland and Hungary; or royal autocracies in Romania and Yugoslavia. Hitler was well aware that in the European democratic countries, the fear of Bolshevism was enormous[196].

Nazism in Germany was generally despised by the British public, but it was also considered the lesser evil compared to an atheist and anti-capitalist Soviet Union. The fear of Bolshevism might also explain why Chamberlain failed to secure a deal with Moscow to contain Germany. Ever since the 1917 Russian Revolution, the Conservatives acted as a barrier against the spread of Communism[197], Nick J. Crowson argues. Stedman agrees: during the interwar years, "Russia was seen as by far the biggest threat to Britain and world peace, Communism as the specter on the horizon […]. Indeed, 'Better Hitler than Stalin' was a prevailing sentiment among many Britons […]. Fear of provoking Germany […] by closer union with the great ideological enemy of Nazism, was a recurring factor in British calculations"[198]. Bolshevism was regarded in Western Europe's conservative circles as an existential threat to Western civilization[199]. The Communists in both the USSR and the Communist parties in Western countries were seen as having internationalist goals – thus possibly threatening the British

[195] Phillips, Adrian (2019). *Fighting Churchill, Appeasing Hitler. Neville Chamberlain, Sir Horace Wilson, & Britain's Plight of Appeasement. 1937-1939*. New York and London: Pegasus Books.
[196] Bouverie, Tim (2019). *Appeasing Hitler. Chamberlain, Churchill and the Road to War*. London: The Bodley Head.
[197] Crowson, Nick J. (1997). *Facing Fascism. The Conservative Party and the European Dictators. 1935-1940*. London and New York: Routledge.
[198] Stedman, Andrew D. (2011). *Alternatives to Appeasement. Neville Chamberlain and Hitler's Germany*. London and New York: Bloomsbury, p. 148.
[199] Anievas, Alexander (2011). "The International Political Economy of Appeasement: The Social Sources of British Foreign Policy During the 1930s". *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 37, Num. 2, pp. 601-629, DOI: https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210510000513, p. 616-7.

Empire – while the Nazis were mostly perceived as having "only" regional interests.

For this reason, albeit with reservations, conservative circles, parties, and interest groups throughout Europe were more inclined to place greater trust in the right than in the left. For some years, precisely because of their apparently regional agenda (the Ruhr, Austria, Sudetenland: the desire to federate the German-speaking peoples under one single state) the Nazis were not perceived as a danger comparable to the "red plague" threatening Europe – s ee the cases of the "Biennio rosso" in Italy (1919-1920); the Bavarian Republic of Councils (1918-1919); or the Hungarian Soviet Republic (between March and August 1919). Thus, both Fascist dictatorships and European liberal democracies in Munich wanted to isolate the Soviet Union. It is not a coincidence that no one wanted the USSR at the Conference[200]. British appeasers hoped to please the Führer on the issue of Sudetenland so that he – hopefully – would not turn to Stalin.

As British élites were determined to defeat Communism both at home and abroad[201] (for the first time in British history, the Labours came to Downing Street in 1924 and then again from 1929 to 1931), some among the British ruling class considered Hitler to be a moderate exponent of German discontent[202]. Confirming the lethal mix of appeasement and isolationism, Halifax himself said there was no point in fighting Hitler unless he interfered with Britain or the Dominions[203]. In early September 1938, on the contrary, Churchill was anxious to enlist the USSR's support against Nazism[204], historian Tim Bouverie recalls. While a fervent anti-Communist, the future PM was associated with the forces pushing the government toward the USSR[205] to deter Hitler's policy goals. In doing so, Churchill intended to pressure the Nazis by dreading Germany's greatest historical fear: that of encirclement between West and East. He would later explain that the Thirties were a series of missed

[200] Steiner, Zara (1999). "The Soviet Commissariat of Foreign Affairs and the Czechoslovakian Crisis in 1938: New Material from the Soviet Archives". *Historical Journal*, Vol. 42, Num. 3, pp. 751-779, DOI: https://doi.org/10.1017/S0018246X99008626.

[201] Trubowitz, Peter; Harris, Peter (2015). "When states appease: British appeasement the 1930s". *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 41, Num. 2, pp. 289-311, DOI: https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210514000278.

[202] Parker, Robert A. C. (1993). *Chamberlain and Appeasement. British Policy and the Coming of The Second World War*. Houndmills and London: Palgrave.

[203] Thorne, Christopher (1967). *The Approach of War 1938-9*. London: Macmillan and Company Limited.

[204] Bouverie, Tim (2019). *Appeasing Hitler. Chamberlain, Churchill and the Road to War*. London: The Bodley Head.

[205] Phillips, Adrian (2019). *Fighting Churchill, Appeasing Hitler. Neville Chamberlain, Sir Horace Wilson, & Britain's Plight of Appeasement. 1937-1939*. New York and London: Pegasus Books.

opportunities to have built an anti-Fascist coalition that might have averted the War[206].

While many British Conservatives publicly supported the appeasement, in private they maintained some doubts. However, as diplomat Harold Nicholson wrote, Chamberlain filled his cabinet with yes men[207] and knew Britain lacked preparedness[208], and opinions like Churchill's were constantly a minority among the Tories. Furthermore, Chamberlain stubbornly refused any piece of advice from his Foreign Office experts, McKercher comments[209]. Finally, a role in appeasement concerning the fear of Communism in Europe was played by Sir Nevile Henderson, the British ambassador to Germany from 1937 to 1939. In his memoirs, he described appeasement as "the search for just solutions by negotiation in the light of higher reason instead of by the resort to force"[210]. Defined as a "homme néfaste", "a misfortune", and "Nazi ambassador in Berlin", Henderson failed to accurately convey the British view to Hitler[211]. The ambassador believed the aspirations of ethnic Germans or German-speaking people scattered in Central-Eastern Europe were crashed by the Versailles Treaty and trusted in the German cause during the Sudetenland Crisis. Like Chamberlain, he wanted to secure an agreement with Germany also because had huge concerns about Communism's spread and its influence on the popular classes.

Domestic audience

A fifth and last motivation for Great Britain's appeasement towards Germany was the British government's consideration of the internal domestic audience, which among other challenges was dealing with the fallout Great Depression's consequences. Chamberlain himself would have wished to be remembered for his domestic policies[212]: but the opposite happened. As Trubowitz and Harris point out, "Though he is mostly remembered today for his foreign policy, Chamberlain himself viewed his succession to the Prime Minister as the capstone to a

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[206] Stedman, Andrew D. (2011). *Alternatives to Appeasement. Neville Chamberlain and Hitler's Germany*. London and New York: Bloomsbury.

[207] Nicolson, Harold (1967). Ed. Nicolson, Nigel. *Diaries and Letters 1930-39*. London: Collins.

[208] Wheeler-Bennett, John W. (1948). *Munich. Prologue to Tragedy*. London: MacMillan / Co. Ltd.

[209] McKercher, B. J. C. (2008). "National Security and Imperial Defence: British Grand Strategy and Appeasement, 1930-1939". *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, Vol. 19, Num. 3m pp. 391-442, DOI: 10.1080/09592290802344954, p. 425.

[210] Crowson, Nick J. (1997). *Facing Fascism. The Conservative Party and the European Dictators. 1935-1940*. London and New York: Routledge.

[211] Neville, Peter (2000). *Appeasing Hitler. The Diplomacy of Sir Neville Henderson, 1937-39*. Houndmills and London: Palgrave.

[212] Dutton, David (2001). *Neville Chamberlain*. London: Arnold

long career as a domestic reformer"[213]. Indeed, the conservative leader was interested in matters of social insurance, reform of local government, and public health. Before the War, he was overseeing a development policy on London transport and never had much interest or experience in foreign policy[214]. With the "Realpolitik" (peace and security) on the one hand, and the "Innenpolitik" (primarily domestic and economic concerns) on the other, it should be acknowledged that Chamberlain was dealing with a very complicated situation on both sides.

It would be unfair to blame him entirely for the appeasement. Though there have been accusations of gullibility and naiveté[215], which tormented Chamberlain to his death, he had sincere horror for the war, which would have devastating repercussions on the peoples of Europe, and had an unshakable faith in his ability to negotiate. Leaders are not only international actors. Their constituencies, parties, and audiences, but also stakeholders and groups of power, play an important role in their decisions. While he never campaigned to get to Downing Street (he was appointed by the Conservative Party in 1937), as Prime Minister, Chamberlain owed answers to the British people. He assessed that the citizens' interest was not to be called to arms or to be plunged into a major political crisis over a dispute in distant a country. In democratic regimes, leaders must secure the political backing of the electorate, and on the other hand, it is quite rare for citizens to evaluate the foreign policy of leaders.

The PM "led a party eager to avoid war and to devote scarce government resources to domestic ends. Appeasement emerged as the favored strategy for dealing with the rise of Germany as a hard-headed and calculated response to an unforgiving set of political circumstances"[216]. Chamberlain's and the Conservatives' electoral demands were headed towards maintaining good relations with Germany. If sacrificing part of Czechoslovakia for the "peace" promised by Hitler was the price, the Chamberlain government would and could pay it. Moreover, placating the working class' discontents was crucial for the conservatives: both to neutralize potential unrest in the country and to wrest some support from Labor's voters. Social spending was important to contrast leftist electoral proposals. A great expenditure of resources on

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[213] Trubowitz, Peter; Harris, Peter (2015). "When states appease: British appeasement the 1930s". *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 41, Num. 2, pp. 289-311, DOI: https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210514000278, p. 299.

[214] Adams, R. J. Q. (1995). *British Politics and Foreign Policy in the Age of Appeasement, 1935-39*. Houndmills and London: Palgrave MacMillan.

[215] Hall, Ian (2006). "Power Politics and Appeasement: Political Realism in British International Thought, c. 1935–1955". *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, Vol. 8, Num. 2, pp. 174-192, DOI: https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-856X.2005.00208.x.

[216] Trubowitz, Peter; Harris, Peter (2015). "When states appease: British appeasement the 1930s". *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 41, Num. 2, pp. 289-311, DOI: https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210514000278, p. 296.

foreign affairs was something the conservative government could not afford. The PM could hardly ignore the working-class opposition to rearmament. While the Conservative Party represented much of the country's élites, it was also voted in by the middle-class people and occasionally working-class voters who were against conflictual relations with Germany.

Another aspect to consider is also that of public opinion and the press: much of the British press failed to understand Hitler's rise and goals and this enabled to lower the guard in Great Britain and the country's ruling class on the danger of National Socialism. The press allowed itself to be manipulated by the government, Richard Cockett stresses[217]. Before and after Munich, newspapers praised Chamberlain's attempts to prevent "the war that nobody wanted". When the PM triumphantly came back from Munich, there was a strong pro-appeasement sentiment among the public. Opinion polls showed that the majority of Great Britain was in support of Chamberlain's stance. Back in March 1938, to the question "Should Britain promise assistance to Czechoslovakia if Germany acts as it did towards Austria?", 43 percent answered "no", while 33 percent "yes"[218]. Chamberlain could not ignore this.

Conservative-oriented Great Britain was strongly pro-appeasement and showed hostility to the practice's critics[219]. Overall, as anticipated, Chamberlain's position was by no means easy: domestically he was under pressure from appeasers (Halifax) and anti-appeasers (Churchill). The future PM publicly condemned appeasement[220]. Thus, no surprise that Chamberlain was convinced that he had to exclude "warmongers": very few anti-appeasement conservatives wanted to put their careers at risk[221]. Churchill openly ridiculed appeasement as the strategy of "one who feeds a crocodile, hoping that it will eat him last"[222]. To give an idea of the split within the Conservative party, Churchill condemned "the idea that safety can be purchased by

[217] Cockett, Richard (1989). *Twilight of Truth. Chamberlain, Appeasement, and the Manipulation of the Press*. New York: St. Martin's Press, p. 121.

[218] Trueman, C. N. (2015). "Public Opinion and Appeasement in 1938". From: https://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/world-war-two/causes-of-ww2/public-opinion-and-appeasement-in-1938/, 03.07.2015.

[219] Beloff, May (1972). "Appeasement – For and Against". *Government and Opposition*, Vol. 7, Num. 1, pp. 112-119, DOI: https://doi.org/10.1017/S0017257X00018741.

[220] Reynolds, David (2001). "Churchill's Writing of History: Appeasement, Autobiography, and The Gathering Storm". *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, Vol. 11, pp. 221-247, DOI: https://doi.org/10.1017/S0080440101000123.

[221] Beloff, May (1972). "Appeasement – For and Against". *Government and Opposition*, Vol. 7, Num. 1, pp. 112-119, DOI: https://doi.org/10.1017/S0017257X00018741.

[222] Treisman, Daniel (2004). "Rational Appeasement". *International Organization*, Vol. 58, Num. 2, pp. 345-373, DOI: https://doi.org/10.1017/S002081830458205X.

throwing a small State to the wolves is a fatal delusion"[223], while British diplomat Eric Phipps did not see any harm in rapprochement with Germany through reconciliation and inclusion[224].

In conclusion, this chapter outlined five main reasons for Great Britain's appeasement of Nazi Germany. While these arguments are certainly not exhaustive, they do reflect the major arguments brought up by historians. Some emphasise more the first point (the need for peace and security in Europe), others more on the economic issue (argument three); and others emphasise how buying time was important to prepare for a possible future conflict (argument two). Less commonly cited are reasons four and five – the containment of Bolshevism and the domestic audience's concerns. Most historians agree in condemning Chamberlain's policy in retrospect. Reasons have been adduced over the years, but the general sentiment is and remains to condemn the short-sightedness and overall policy of the Conservative government. This chapter has provided only a few reasons, which – with the historical background of the previous chapter – will help to understand the content of the third chapter, i.e. the contestation of the policy of appeasement as a liberalism's policy in IR.

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[223] Beck, Robert J. (1989). "Munich's Lessons Reconsidered". *International Security*, Vol. 14, Num. 2, pp. 161-191, DOI: https://doi.org/10.2307/2538858.
[224] Johnson, Gaynor (2005). "Sir Eric Phipps, the British Government, and the Appeasement of Germany 1933-1937", *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, Vol. 16, Num. 4, pp. 651-669, DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/09592290500330958.

Chapter III: Why appeasement is not a classical liberalism's policy

As discussed in the Introduction, appeasement might be associated with liberalism, and the main reasons for this association lie, among others, in the fact that liberalism (in all its forms: IR, political, economic, and philosophical) promotes trade, peace, and cooperation – which were among Great Britain's main concerns during the Sudetenland crisis. Until World War II's aftermath, there was basically only one theory of IR (liberalism of Wilsonian nature) tested and available: it was easy then for any critics (historians and later IR scholars) to label the 1938 appeasement as liberal. In other words, when the reasons for the 1938 appeasement and the nature of appeasement began to be studied after the War, many of the theories of IR had not yet been born[225]. Realism was theorized later by Morgenthau, while early on Carr had not yet formulated a full realist theory. On the contrary, classical liberalism in IR had been flourishing since the early XX century with liberal-oriented books such as Angell's *The Great Illusion*, which suggested replacing struggles among States by trade among them[226].

The economist maintained that commerce and peace were to be preferred to war and instability of the international system. These motivations had a major impact, especially in the Anglo-Saxon world, where, by the way, centuries earlier the concept of economic liberalism was born. The "great illusion", Angell contested, was the popular belief that wars were necessary to progress. From the right to the left, particularly in Britain many political traditions have rested on liberal assumptions and understanding. After World War I's end, liberal institutionalism and Wilsonianism triumphed, both because Americans and the British had won, and because of the trade-peace nexus found in the rejection of war its natural rationale. This contributed to liberalism's success, in IR, economics, and politics. Of course, liberalism was challenged, particularly by its collectivist counterparts: democratic socialism (e.g., socialist parties), right-wing socialism (National Socialism, Fascism), and left-wing socialism (Communism).

For the Angellian vision to triumph, the liberalism-based League of Nations was established and supposed to settle conflicts: more checks and balances in IR, more fora for collective security, more transparent instead of (popular at that time) secret diplomacy, concrete deals

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[225] Ashworth, Lucian M. (2013). *A History of International Thought: From the Origins of the Modern State to Academic International Relations*. London and New York: Routledge.

[226] Angell, Norman (2015 [1910]). *The Great Illusion. A Study of the Relation of Military Powers to National Advantage*. Jungle Land Publishing.

among nations towards effective cooperation to ensure peace, security, and geopolitical stability, and a rule-based international order. The League was complementary to the post-Great War treaties, which were also meant to limit the defeated powers' armaments and establish a new world order. The 1928 General Treaty for Renunciation of War as an Instrument of National Policy or Kellogg-Briand Pact was inspired by classical liberalism, as it implied that nations needed to limit armaments and avoid resorting to warfare. Of capital importance were Articles I and II. "The High Contracting Parties solemnly declare […] that they condemn recourse to war for the solution of international controversies, and renounce it, as an instrument of national policy in their relations with one another"; secondly, the parties "agree that the settlement […] of all disputes […], which may arise among them, shall never be sought except by pacific means"[227].

The failures of the premises of these treaties have facilitated critics' attacks on liberalism in all its facets. The renouncement of war as a tool for managing conflicts and regional concerns is an aspect of the liberal tradition – see, for instance, the works of Immanuel Kant, Benjamin Constant, and Alexis de Tocqueville, who over the decades expressed themselves on the subject. Many times PM during the French Third Republic, Aristide Briand was a staunch internationalist: his commitment to peace was witnessed by the 1925 Treaty of Locarno, which earned him the Nobel Peace Prize with Weimar Republic Chancellor Gustav Stresemann. On the other side, Frank Kellogg was the U.S. Secretary of State, a Republican with liberal ideas in foreign policy, who also won the Prize in 1929. The pact was ridiculed because of its strong moral emphasis – some called it irrelevant in terms of foreign policy. The legalism on which it rested was relying on the principles of liberalism and Wilsonianism.

Because of its legalistic character and the absence of mechanisms for its enforcement, the pact was considered ineffective. Although the Briand-Kellogg then did not stop the rush toward militarism, it enabled some room for widespread optimism after the Great War, and this contributed to labelling every policy aimed to prevent conflict as liberal – the previous chapter's five reasons are proof of this. For example, peace and security (the first reason for Great Britain's appeasement) are among liberalism's main goals and concerns. Or the third: preserve trade among partners. Or, again, the fourth: combat what Hayek called "the road to

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[227] Kellogg-Briand Pact (1928). "Kellogg-Briand Pact". From: https://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/kbpact.asp.

serfdom"[228] of totalitarianism – specifically Communism. Appeasement is considered to be a classical liberalism's policy because there was no other IR theory yet, but on the other hand, Chamberlain's choices were to be ascribed to the practical reasons explored in the previous chapter to avoid war. Peace and security were among the two big aims of a generation that wanted to prevent new massacres. And to preserve these, appeasement appeared the only way to the British ruling class.

After the historiographical background on the Sudetenland Crisis, and the reasons Great Britain appeased Nazi Germany, this third analytical section contests the assumption that liberalism might be the appeasement's sponsor. It should be remembered also the critical distinction already made in the Introduction: the Thesis argues against seeing appeasement as belonging to liberalism in the policy sense, not in the analysis sense. This final chapter answers the research question, as it offers five reasons why appeasement may not be associated with liberalism in IR. 1) Appeasement might lead to conflict, not peace; 2) it disregards international norms; 3) it is a power-based concept; 4) it does not contemplate morality; 5) it does not prompt win-win solutions or absolute gains. The chapter argues that appeasement is at odds with liberalism in IR. On the contrary, appeasement is closer to the realist tradition – but this does not mean that appeasement is a fully realist policy. Favouring agreements with dictators, and violating States' integrity, is far from liberalism.

Prompting conflict, not peace

The first reason why appeasement is not to be considered a classical liberalism's policy is that it leads to conflict, not peace. The British politicians who pushed for appeasement did not know or did not expect or pretended or deluded themselves that appeasing Hitler might result in a new war. Appeasement encourages the hunger for new territories and further conquest. Appeasement is not deterrence: Hitler was more encouraged to grab Lebensraum after the Munich Conference. Building on the experience of appeasement in the cases of Abyssinia, the Rhineland occupation, the Spanish War, and the Anschluss (in none of these cases Great Britain reacted firmly), the Führer had good reason to bet on Britain's and France's acquiescence with Czechoslovakia (and later with Poland). Contrary to what London and Paris believed, appeasement would not and did not satisfy Germany. On the contrary, it prompted it to extend its ambitions even further. This worried Great Britain, which played into Hitler's

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[228] von Hayek, Friedrich A. (1944). *The Road to Serfdom*. London: Routledge.

hands during the Sudetenland Crisis in the hope that this would lead to the "peace of our time".

The Western powers' sacrifice of their fellow democracy revealed a tragic realist logic: it told that Czechoslovakia was not strategic and of no interest to Great Britain, so it could be easily sacrificed for short-term peace on the continent. It is true that liberalism in IR abhors conflict and foresees diplomatic solutions. But it is one thing to sit at a table and avoid the outbreak of a major conflict with mutual concessions; it is quite another to acquiesce in outright blackmail by the stronger counterpart. Indeed, appeasing Germany did not avoid the conflict's outbreak, eventually. Right after Munich, Nazi Germany was showing no signs of placating its goals of territorial conquest in Central and Eastern Europe. Appeasement of tyrannies is not compatible with liberalism in IR. In any of its forms, liberalism is not pacifism or blind acquiescence. The peace movements represented a microcosm of British society. As Cecelia Lynch argues, pacifism was hidden by the prevailing narratives labelled as "idealist" as opposed to "realist"[229].

The cold calculation of offering a far Central European country into the Nazis' jaws to preserve the status quo of European stability is something closer to realism than liberalism in IR, as it reflects realism's typical power dynamics. The moral code of liberalism in IR would have required London to defend Prague. As R. J. Q. Adams points out, since the peace in Paris after World War I, Britain attempted to lessen the powers of the treaties in the interests of peace internationally, as well as for trade matters and general prosperity[230]. Britain understood the political necessity to be less coercive with Germany and thus resorted to appeasement. But the appeasement-generated peace was not real peace. Peace is not the result of appeasement towards the invader or conflict's postponement. Appeasement went hand in hand with rearmament: rearmament degenerates into the realist security dilemma's spiral.

Disregarding international norms

A second reason why appeasement is not a classical liberalism's policy in IR is that it does not stop the dictator's appetite for territorial expansion. Making concessions encouraged Hitler to more land grabbing after he ascertained that democratic powers renounced their principles and closed eyes on defining the principles of territorial integrity and State

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[229] Lynch, Cecelia (1999). *Beyond Appeasement. Interpreting Interwar Peace Movements in World Politics*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press.

[230] Adams, R. J. Q. (1995). *British Politics and Foreign Policy in the Age of Appeasement, 1935-39*. Houndmills and London: Palgrave MacMillan.

sovereignty – which are key to international norms and were enshrined within international treaties and the League of Nations' principles. Classical liberalism in IR is based on the need to establish common norms that must be respected by all States in international politics. International norms are important not only for the status quo's maintenance and to tackle anarchy (i.e., the absence of a leviathan controlling States' behavior), but also for the day-to-day management of the States' relations and global governance. The push for a normative framework's adoption to regulate international affairs derives from the Wilsonian institutionalism and became synonymous with liberalism.

The normative framework of international norms was meant to promote the maintenance of peace and security through the borders' inviolability. Though dressed up with legal grounds, the appeasement on the Sudetenland made a mockery of international law. Liberalism in IR acknowledges States' dignity and sovereignty and promotes both; during the Munich crisis, however, a diktat was imposed on Czechoslovakia, "as in other liberal and democratic countries, have a perfect right to exalt the principle of self-determination"[231], as Churchill affirmed. The 1938 appeasement created a winner (Germany), a loser (Czechoslovakia), and temporary winners (Britain and France). Appeasing Hitler encompassed liberal democracy's destruction. A liberal posture in IR cannot allow itself to adopt appeasement policies, precisely because this policy's first victims are the very elements dear to liberalism, not least, national sovereignty. At a normative level, the certainty that the League of Nations could not be useful in settling disputes between States is typically realist – realism stresses that institutions are not profit to tackle anarchy and prevent power chase among states.

Liberalism in IR, on the contrary, would prescribe States to stand for cooperation with the regional and global institutions during crises among States. Of course, often the reality of things and politics is quite different. Realist IR scholar Carr criticized liberalism and denounced the laissez-faire liberal doctrine, as well as the belief that global peace will be attained through law, institutions, and the force of reason[232]. Carr's arguments undermine the faith in liberalism in the Thirties, as well as the idea that multilateral institutions are suitable for solving States' disputes – an argument that has been deepened with Waltzian neorealism. The 1938 appeasement led to the progressive dismantling of the fragile liberal order born after

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[231] Churchill, Winston (1938). "October 5, 1938. House of Commons". From: https://winstonchurchill.org/resources/speeches/1930-1938-the-wilderness/the-munich-agreement/.

[232] Lynch, Cecelia (1999). *Beyond Appeasement. Interpreting Interwar Peace Movements in World Politics*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press.

the Great War and already under pressure from internal strife within States by Communism, nationalism, and the Great Depression. If governments find room to expand at the expense of other States – thus accumulating power –, conflict will be closer. This seems to have been disregarded by the Franco-British leadership when handling the Sudetenland case.

Power- and balance-based

A third reason why appeasement is not to be strictly considered a classical liberalism's policy in IR is that it is based on power politics among States and the system of power balancing. London and Paris failed to understand how Austria and Czechoslovakia were vital for the European balance, as once absorbed by Germany, it brought military and economic advantage to the Nazis, altering the balance of power in Europe. Following the realist logic of areas of influence and balance of power in the Continent, Chamberlain knew well that the social and economic affairs of Central-Eastern Europe were out of Great Britain's immediate interests. While Chamberlain aimed at maintaining the balance of power in Europe (which is one of realism's main principles), the Munich Agreement and Czechoslovakia's sacrifice illustrated how calculations on the States' political power mattered[233] more than liberal values (sovereignty, democracy protection, etc.) and their preservation. And as London and Paris were still mindful of the German aggression during World War I, they were also understandably frightened.

Appeasement was an agreement between States in the pursuit of realistic power politics and concessions in territories at the expense of minor powers. Appeasement is not deterrence. Realism, on the contrary, entails power struggles and does not make a relatively peaceful international society possible in the end. "While politics cannot be satisfactorily defined exclusively in terms of power, it is safe to say that power is always an essential element of politics"[234], realist Carr recalls. British journalist and correspondent Shiela Grant Duff explains that the balance of power has always been Great Britain's top concern[235]. Indeed, to avoid catastrophes, States usually balance each other[236], as confirmed by neorealism theorist Kenneth Waltz – but this usually occurs if the two actors are rational, and their goals are

[233] Trubowitz, Peter; Harris, Peter (2015). "When states appease: British appeasement the 1930s". *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 41, Num. 2, pp. 289-311, DOI: https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210514000278, p. 298.
[234] Carr, Edward Hallett (1939a). *The Twenty Years' Crisis. 1919-1939. An Introduction to the Study of International Relations*. London and Basingstoke: The Macmillan Press Ltd, p. 102.
[235] Grant Duff, Shiela (1938). *Europe and the Czechs*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Limited, p. 15.
[236] Waltz, Kenneth N. (1979). *Theory of International Politics*. New York: Random House.

limited. However, by sacrificing Czechoslovakia, Chamberlain, and popular pro-appeasement conservatism counterproductively rejected and altered the stability and balance of power in Europe. Many Englishmen (including journalists and politicians) knew little about Czechoslovakia, Sir Horace Wilson points out[237].

The 1938 appeasement was at odds with British XIX century policy based on "the maintenance of a balance of power in Europe, the preservation of Continental hegemony by any one power, the protection for the independence of smaller States, the discouragement of the use of force and the overthrow of treaties"[238], Schroeder recalls. In this sense, it might be interpreted as more realist than liberal in terms of foreign policy. Both Austria and Czechoslovakia were important for the balance of power in Europe. Grant Duff explicitly defines Czechoslovakia as a "keystone in the European balance of power"[239]. Political leaders always try to minimize their political exposure to risky international situations via the balance of power and balancing each other[240], Waltz argues. Chamberlain found it difficult to balance Germany[241]. Until February 1938, he affirmed: "It was still possible to hope that the League might afford collective security"[242]. However, he did not resort to it – perhaps, like many realists, he was convinced that such institutions are not effective during crises. And as Hitler was not a reasonable man[243], he did not want to stick to the European power balance.

No morality and idealism

A fourth reason why appeasement may not be strictly considered a classical liberalism's policy in IR is that it is not in line with classical liberalism's principles of morality and idealism. Realism might have *its* morality, for sure, but it simply does not give morality the weight that liberalism in IR does in international politics. If one maintains that the 1938 appeasement was more realist than liberal, one has to remember realist morality: while the sacrifice of the Sudetenland in 1938 was immoral, the noble pursuit of peace was not, realist

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[237] Wilson, Sir Horace (1938). "The Prime Minister's Visit to Germany. Notes by Sir Horace Wilson circulated to the Cabinet by direction of the Prime Minister". CAB 24/279/2. From: https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/D7731192, 16.09.1938.
[238] Schroeder, Paul W. (1976). "Munich and the British tradition". *Historical Journal*, Vol. 19, Num. 1, pp. 223-243, DOI: https://doi.org/10.1017/S0018246X00018379, p. 223-4.
[239] Grant Duff, Shiela (1938). *Europe and the Czechs*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Limited.
[240] Waltz, Kenneth N. (1979). *Theory of International Politics*. New York: Random House.
[241] Trubowitz, Peter; Harris, Peter (2015). "When states appease: British appeasement the 1930s". *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 41, Num. 2, pp. 289-311, DOI: https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210514000278.
[242] Chamberlain, Neville (1939). *In Search of Peace: Speeches 1937-38*. London: Hutchinson, p. 100.
[243] Kennedy, Paul M. (1978). "'Appeasement' and British Defence Policy in the Interwar Years". *British Journal of University Studies*, Vol. 4, Num. 2, pp. 161-177, DOI: https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210500117176.

might argue. The modalities of 1938 realism with which London and Paris decided not to stand up for Prague, were widely regarded as immoral, thus inconsistent with classical liberalism in IR. Since World War I's end, liberalism has taken on different connotations: many have mistaken it for Wilsonianism, idealism, and institutionalism. However, modern liberalism also relies on these concepts, which have their roots in the European Enlightenment.

Liberalism also draws on a certain kind of morality – which does not involve the dismantling of a State, its independence, institutions, and economy (Czechoslovakia) in favor of a more powerful State (Germany). In particular, when one talks about morality and liberalism, one refers to the values of freedom, solidarity, cooperation, and mutual help. As their logic is simply an interest- or power-based one, realists do not often have a morality to defend, accepting to conduct foreign policy based on the lesser of evils (or what it is convenient for them at that moment) making then win-win outcomes difficult to achieve. If appeasement was to be liberal, Great Britain and France, and Czechoslovakia would have declared war on Germany on the premises of violations of borders in 1938. But this did not occur. On the contrary, the March 1939 full invasion of the remaining parts of Bohemia and Moravia (the ailing Second Republic) showed appeasement's failures also in the moral field: Great Britain and France did not intervene then too. Not even when Hitler did openly violate the borders set in Munich five months earlier.

Morality is the most obscure and difficult problem in international studies, realist Carr affirms[244]. Classical iberalism in IR gives idealism and morality a prominent place. On the contrary, realism is based on concepts of strength and power, not morality. What matters is the instinct of States to gain prominence and power in the global arena. This was evident on March 15th, 1939, when appeasement was "morally bankrupt"[245], as Mary Heimann explains. According to realism, Czechoslovakia would not have a say on its territorial integrity in 1938, and indeed it was abandoned by fellow Western democracies. It is difficult to define what a "moral policy" is: in liberalism's case, this might be traced back to the Enlightenment values and Christian principles. Morality, in politics, means being consistent with the principles one affirms and believes to be right while respecting other political actors' integrity.

Formulating a "moral" alternative or a tout court alternative to appeasement or offering

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[244] Carr, Edward Hallett (1939a). *The Twenty Years' Crisis. 1919-1939. An Introduction to the Study of International Relations*. London and Basingstoke: The Macmillan Press Ltd.
[245] Heimann, Mary (2009). *Czechoslovakia: The State that Failed*. Yale: Yale University Press.

guidelines of liberal-oriented policy suggestions is not within this Thesis' scope. What might be inferred is that liberalism would never tolerate or allow the swallow-up of Czechoslovakia. Liberalism in general acknowledges States' equal dignity and participation in the political realm, and it is not based solely on interest or power relations. Rather, it promotes the acknowledgment of all States' dignity, respect of borders, non-interference in internal affairs, and reach out to countries in need. If liberalism were to offer the main spectacles through which political actors in historical case act in politics, it would have rejected appeasement. Appeasement disregards liberal values and enables dictatorship to thrive. An opportunistic, not idealistic policy, based on power balance, rather than sentiment, or fair play. Since the Czech territories could not be saved anymore, there was no need in trying new attempts[246].

No win-win and absolute gains

A last reason why appeasement should be considered not belonging to the arsenal of liberalism in IR is that it prompts win-lose solutions and relative gains – typical of realism – instead of win-win solutions and absolute gains – typical of liberalism. When analyzing IR theories, one should not be rigid, since whenever possible (though rarely) even realism might contemplate win-win situations. However, under the realist logic there will be usually losers and winners in international politics – as was the case with Sudetenland between Germany and maimed Czechoslovakia. Conversely, confronted with the reality of politics, a liberal-oriented policy might occasionally abandon the pursuit for win-win solutions and absolute gains – as in the case of London during the Sudetenland Crisis. International politics cannot just be reduced to a power game; however, the various theories of IR have different approaches to how and how much individual States "win" or "lose" in IR.

Realists believe in power politics (someone loses and someone wins) in the geopolitical arena: after the Munich Agreement it was clear that Hitler won, and the others lost – no historians contest this. Thus, liberalism has nothing to do with the form appeasement took in the Thirties. At least on a theoretical level, liberalism in IR would prescribe politicians to stand up for their principles and not accept power politics or the law of the strongest actor in international politics. While liberalism in IR is not pacifism, it prescribes that the attacked State can defend itself. Liberalism advocates for win-win solutions and does pursue absolute gains – which is

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[246] Ben-Arie, Katriel (1990). "Czechoslovakia at the time of 'Munich': The Military Situation". *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 25, Num. 4, pp. 431-446, DOI: https://doi.org/10.1177/002200949002500403.

not the case of appeasement in 1938. Only one State (Germany) won in Munich; two others (Great Britain and France) believed they had won; one lost (Czechoslovakia). London and Paris were satisfied with Hitler's promises that after the incorporation of Sudetenland, Germany was not claiming other territories.

During the Munich negotiations, the two liberal democracies missed the opportunity to pursue win-win solutions with the two fascist dictators – Hitler and Mussolini. No wonder, then, that Germany emerged as the only winner from the Munich Agreement. On the contrary, realism sees win-lose solutions or outcomes and relative gains as inevitable – which mirrored the States' situation after the Munich Agreement. Carr, again: "Peaceful change can only be achieved through a compromise between the utopian conception of a common feeling of right and the realist conception of a mechanical adjustment to a changed equilibrium of forces"[247]. Compared to classical liberalism in IR, appeasement might be considered more a realist policy also because only Germany emerged victorious from Munich; while Chamberlain waved false promises of peace on his return to London. Nazi Germany won; liberal democratic Great Britain did not win; Czechoslovakia lost. However, London's attitude was thus in continuity with realism's power games and the harsh winners-losers logic.

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[247] Carr, Edward Hallett (1939a). *The Twenty Years' Crisis. 1919-1939. An Introduction to the Study of International Relations*. London and Basingstoke: The Macmillan Press Ltd, p. 223.

Conclusion

While contesting the idea that this practice should be considered a classical liberalism's policy of IR (because of liberalism' concerns with trade, peace, and cooperation), among History and IR, the Thesis explained how Great Britain went through the Sudetenland Crisis and arrived at the Munich Conference and the appeasement towards Nazi Germany. With a consistent alternation of primary and secondary sources at the methodological level (which helped to provide an answer to the research question), the Thesis unfolded from a more descriptive and historical reconstruction chapter ("1918-1939. The road to a new war") to a mix of analysis and description ("Great Britain's reasons to appease") and offered an original analysis that refuted appeasement as belonging to the liberalism in IR ("Why appeasement is not a classical liberalism's policy"). Historically, for Great Britain, appeasement was driven by seeking neutrality and peace in Europe; the desire to take time to prepare for a possible future conflict; the concerns about the State of the economy; the need to contain Communism; the need to look at the domestic audience.

Albeit there is still scarce literature on the connection between appeasement and IR theories in general – and even less (if nothing) on liberalism in IR and appeasement – the Thesis did manage to answer the research question. Considering the Sudetenland Crisis and the motivations that pushed Great Britain to appease Germany, appeasement cannot be primarily regarded as a classical liberalism's policy of IR, and on the contrary, is more realist for the following reasons: appeasement prompts conflict, not peace; it disregards international norms; it is a power- and balance-based concept; it has basically no morality and idealism; and it does not contemplate win-win solutions and absolute gains. Challenging an alleged affiliation of appeasement as part of liberalism's galaxy does not necessarily mean that appeasement *is* realist per se. The implications of these findings have both historical and IR-related consequences. On the historical side, the appeasement policy was not liberal in the sense of classical liberalism. On the IR aspect, because of the five reasons outlined in the third chapter, appeasement is not to be considered part of liberalism' arsenal, as it is at odds with liberalism in IR's prescriptions.

It should be stated once again that the Thesis argued against seeing appeasement as a part of liberalism in the policy sense; not in the analysis sense. The Thesis reframed appeasement within the IR theories and contested appeasement as mainly belonging to liberalism in IR. In

this way, it contributed to the academic debate. Starting from an underdeveloped debate on the nature terms of IR theories and appeasement, the three analytical chapters shed some light on appeasement's disruptive nature, taking the Sudetenland Crisis as a case study. Neither historians nor IR scholars have much analysed the nexus between appeasement and IR – both, as seen in the historiography, largely criticised this practice in the respective fields. At the historical and academic level, some attempts have been made with other theories, particularly critical theories, such as Marxism and feminism. According to the literature consulted (about fifty books and sixty journal articles read), there is a substantial lack of studies on the specific relationship between liberalism in IR and appeasement. This Thesis aimed to start a new debate: exploring appeasement and IR theories, particularly discussing appeasement and liberalism connections.

Concerning future academic research, appeasement, the 1938 Sudetenland Crisis, the Munich Conference, and the Munich Agreement will continue to attract the attention of both historians and IR scholars. Given the findings of this Thesis (appeasement should not be seen as primarily as classical liberalism's policy in IR), appeasement will involve as much debate in the future as it has in the past, as historian Paul M. Kennedy confirms[248]. From the historical profile, there is no shortage of readings on appeasement as a practice and as a historical case in 1938. For decades, the topic has aroused much interest and publications in many fields; and this would suggest that appeasement is not a closed chapter yet. The Thesis framed a rough and early attempt to discuss the relation between appeasement and IR theories, but concerning future research, it would also be interesting to look at other aspects that contest appeasement as a policy close to liberalism – the Thesis explored just five reasons. Secondly, future research should focus on framing appeasement within the IR theories' realm. This Thesis' urgency was not to affirm that appeasement is a realist policy, but to challenge the apparently obvious hypothesis that it might be considered a classical liberalism's policy because its concerns with trade, peace, and cooperation.

As for the Thesis' limitations, these are mainly connected with future research: many other elements pushed Great Britain to appease Germany – here just five are taken into consideration. Secondly, the other liberal democracy present in Munich, France, has not been analysed, though it had similar concerns as Great Britain. The legacy of appeasement is almost

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[248] Kennedy, Paul M. (1978). "'Appeasement' and British Defence Policy in the Interwar Years". *British Journal of University Studies*, Vol. 4, Num. 2, pp. 161-177, DOI: https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210500117176, p. 177.

unanimously seen as a negative event in European history by both historians and IR scholars. From a historical standpoint, one can argue however that given the results appeasement was a mistaken policy during the Sudetenland Crisis, as it did not manage to preserve the peace. The Munich Agreement is still a source of controversy[249]. The lesson of Munich is that appeasement is not a good solution to deal with dictators; appeasement failed to deter Hitler (and before him Mussolini with Abyssinia) and paved the way to the destruction of peace in Europe. "Munich remains a dirty word, and synonymous with diplomatic weakness"[250], historian Daniel Hucker affirms.

Since 1938, in Austin J. App's words, Munich Pact has been equated with "shameful appeasement"[251]. But to abandon Czechoslovakia was widely held as both necessary and inevitable[252]. Many have studied the alternatives to appeasement. Andrew Stedman proposed six of them: 1) Isolation and absolute pacifism; 2) Economic and colonial appeasement; 3) League of Nations; 4) Alliances; 5) Armaments and defences; 6) War and the threat of war[253]. Among these, war was perhaps the most obvious alternative, but Great Britain was not ready for war. Would a program of colossal rearmament have deterred Hitler? Hard to say, but from the end of the First Czechoslovak Republic, London and Paris started 8in a realist fashion) their rearmament programs. Today like in 1938, military strength is the only language that Fascists understand. Chamberlain's name has become inextricably connected with appeasement[254]. The short-sightedness in Munich by him and his cabinet was detrimental to Europe. Chamberlain's policy has been a failure and sold British honor and led to war[255]. But it is disproportionate to cast the guilt on a single man.

The concept itself of appeasement has changed meaning with time. Until Munich, it was considered a method of keeping the peace between powers – hence the criticism of liberalism and its association with appeasement – but later the policy became identified with the wrong

[249] Robbins, Keith G. (1969). "VI. Konrad Henlein, the Sudeten Question and British Foreign Policy". *Historical Journal*, Vol. 12, Num. 4, pp. 674-697, DOI: https://doi.org/10.1017/S0018246X0001058X.
[250] Hucker, Daniel (2008). "The Unending Debate: Appeasement, Chamberlain and the Origins of the Second World War". *Intelligence and National Security*, Vol. 23, Num. 4, pp. 536-551, DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/02684520802293114, p. 536.
[251] App, Austin J. (1979). *The Sudeten-German Tragedy*. Takoma Park: Boniface Press.
[252] Thorne, Christopher (1967). *The Approach of War 1938-9*. London: Macmillan and Company Limited.
[253] Stedman, Andrew D. (2011). *Alternatives to Appeasement. Neville Chamberlain and Hitler's Germany*. London and New York: Bloomsbury.
[254] Goldstein, Erik (1999). "Neville Chamberlain, the British official mind and the Munich crisis". *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, Vol. 10, Num. 2-3, pp. 276-292, DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/09592299908406133.
[255] Carr, Richard (2011). "Veterans of the First World War and Conservative Anti Appeasement". *Twentieth Century British History*, Vol. 22, Num. 1, pp. 28-51, DOI: https://doi.org/10.1093/tcbh/hwq036.

ways of how peace can be achieved[256]. Considering the 1938 Sudetenland Crisis, at that time there were hardly any other political concrete solutions. As Gustav Schmidt points out, neither Churchill nor Eden nor the Labourists offered alternatives to appeasement and occasionally spoke in favor of appeasement in respect of Italy and Japan[257] – which on the other side of the world was land grabbing from China since the early Thirties with Great and Britain apparently acquiescence. Appeasement might be considered the only tool the conservatives had: Chamberlain was very cross-pressured. This leads to the conclusion that beyond liberalism and realism, the foreign policy conduct of a government must necessarily be of a combination the different policies – liberal and realist. A trade-off between the two is often needed as it is imposed by political and geopolitical circumstances.

While conducting foreign policy, a wise combination of the different ideals is needed – Ashworth stressed the importance of pragmatism to cope with urgencies[258] – liberal democracies must cultivate self-confidence. Liberal values must be protected, but first, they must be enforced when there is an opportunity to do so. Particularly when dealing with unconventional, irrational, and unappeasable figures such as Hitler, foreign policy must be based on compromises. But not compromises on vital values. Once Prime Minister in May 1940, the fervent anti-communist Churchill allied with Stalin out of necessity. The wise politician is the one who does not rely on absolutes in politics. Equally dosing a sometimes liberal and sometimes realist foreign policy might be more effective when handling complex situations. True, appeasement might be understood as a classical liberalism's policy of IR because it has trade, peace, and cooperation as its ultimate goal. But on the other hand, appeasement cannot be considered *primarily* liberal since it disrupts peace; it is based on the disrespect of international norms; it is power- and balance-based; it is not based on a certain morality and idealism; and it does not contemplate win-win solutions and absolute gains.

Appeasement was a wrong, anti-liberal, illegal, immoral policy that entailed the sacrifice of a fellow liberal democracy for power considerations and short-sighted State's interests, in the hope that the Sudetenland's sacrifice would deter Germany's expansionism. Far from being

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[256] Rasmussen, Mikkel Vedby (2003). "The History of a Lesson: Versailles, Munich and the Social Construction of the Past". *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 29, No. 4, pp. 499-519, DOI: https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210503004996.

[257] Schmidt, Gustav (1986). *The Politics and Economics of Appeasement: British Foreign Policy in the 1930s*. New York: St. Martin's Press, p. 9-10.

[258] Ashworth, Lucian M. (2013). *A History of International Thought: From the Origins of the Modern State to Academic International Relations*. London and New York: Routledge.

an irrational practice[259], it does not work with unappeasable actors, as these latter will always find excuses to expand (the "Czech provocations," the Lebensraum, the protection of the Sudeten minority) and will never be satisfied. Their behaviour is dictated by goals of domination: If Hitler wanted to plunder Romania's oil, conquest "Lebensraum" in Eastern Europe, or englobe the Polish Corridor, he needed to grab Czechoslovakia first[260]. Furthermore, liberal democracies must not compromise with their vital values: an attack on one democracy is an attack on all democracies – the attack on Czechoslovakia turned into an attack on Poland and then on all the countries of the West in the spring of 1940. If democracies think themselves dead, then they are already dead.

Preserving *liberal* democracy and the liberal order means preserving peace by fighting for the preservation of institutions, international law, and sovereignty. Not giving in to blackmail and power politics. Appeasement did not lead to peace and was a form of concession to the autocracies and abandonment of a staunch ally, Czechoslovakia – the only fully-functioning democracy in Central Europe in the interwar years – that had not attacked Germany and wanted a peaceful and prosperous future in the Europe of nations. Finally, appeasement is at odds with classical liberalism not just because it is counterproductive, but because it encourages the aggressor's recalcitrance and rewards them for their rogue behaviour[261]. Appeasing Hitler in 1938, as well as appeasing today's autocrats in their blatant violations of the international order and Stats' sovereignty, has proven and will always prove to be detrimental to the whole world. Peace is inseparable from liberty and justice. Like in 1938, if liberal democracies are unable to reach out to other fellow liberal democracies in need or under attack from autocrats today, sooner or later, they will be doomed to succumb.

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[259] Anievas, Alexander (2011). "The International Political Economy of Appeasement: The Social Sources of British Foreign Policy During the 1930s". *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 37, Num. 2, pp. 601-629, DOI: https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210510000513.

[260] Bouverie, Tim (2019). *Appeasing Hitler. Chamberlain, Churchill and the Road to War*. London: The Bodley Head.

[261] Dimuccio, Ralph B. A. (1998). "The Study of Appeasement in International Relations: Polemics, Paradigms, and Problems". *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 35, Num. 2, pp. 245-259, DOI: https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343398035002007, p. 252.

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Documents on German Foreign Policy 1918-1945 (1955e): "Minutes of the Fourth Meeting of the International Commission". In: *Series D Volume IV*. United States Government Printing Office: Washington. From: https://avalon.law.yale.edu/imt/intcomm4.asp.

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