Lecture 3:3: “World War II”

Source 5

The Munich Pact (1938)

On 30 September 1938, when he disembarked at Heston Airport in North London, British Prime Minister made the following statement with regards to his meeting with Adolf Hitler and the crisis in the Czechoslovakian Sudetenland, “We, the German Führer and Chancellor, and the British Prime Minister, have had a further meeting today and are agreed in recognizing that the question of Anglo-German relations is of the first importance for two countries and for Europe.

“We regard the agreement signed last night and the Anglo-German Naval Agreement as symbolic of the desire of our two peoples never to go to war with one another again. We are resolved that the method of consultation shall be the method adopted to deal with any other questions that may
concern our two countries, and we are determined to continue our efforts to remove possible sources of
difference, and thus to contribute to assure the peace of Europe.”

Upon his return to 10 Downing Street Chamberlain told a cheering crowd, “My good friends
this is the second time in our history that there has come back from Germany to Downing Street peace
with honor. I believe it is peace in our time.”

**Context:**

A four-party conference [Germany, Great Britain, France, and Italy] in Munich, Germany, conceded
Adolf Hitler’s claim to Czechoslovakian territory, the Sudetenland. This policy became known as
appeasement.


**Questions:**

1. Why did Europe’s major democracies, Great Britain and France, repeatedly fail to support the
continent’s nascent democracies, Spain and Czechoslovakia, when the latter were assaulted by
authoritarian forces?
2. Can you make the argument that terms of the treaties that ended World War I and the Great
Depression led directly to the outbreak of World War II?

**Assignment:**

Hold a joint press conference with volunteers portraying the main Munich Agreement players - Adolf
Hitler of Germany, Neville Chamberlain of Great Britain, Benito Mussolini of Italy, Edouard Deladier
of France, Eduard Benes of Czechoslovakia, and the man who wasn’t there Josef Stalin of the Soviet
Union, and have them respond to questions regarding the positions each person took during the
negotiations and / or their response to its outcome.
Bibliography:

Bell, P. M. H. *The Origins of the Second World War in Europe* 2nd ed.