

# **Not This Again.**

The Causes of the Second World War

# A.J.P Taylor

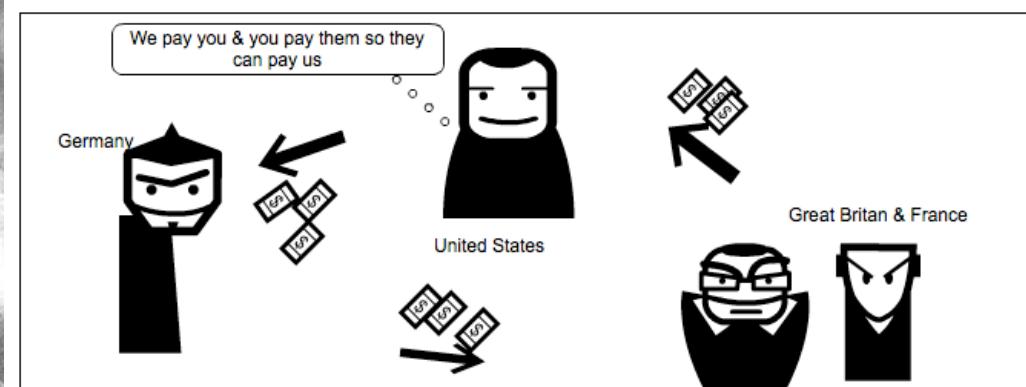
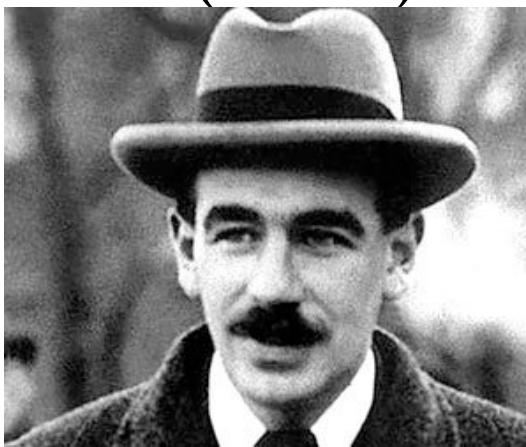


- 1960s; British Left-Wing Liberal Revisionist
- Wrote *The Origins of the Second World War*
  - Forgotten problem b/c of Cold War. Most historiography focused on battles & outcome of the war
  - Seemed obvious and not worth writing about → Hitler's fault, GER accepts war guilt, appeasement would've worked if it weren't for Hitler.
  - Revisionists might question JPN, but not Hitler b/c he declared war on USA
  - Four Powers ran Nuremberg, pre-War docs destroyed...
  - **Taylor's Thesis:** “No one is guilt-free; no one truly to blame.” WWII is not inevitable; Hitler was a normal world leader at the time and a normal German/Austrian.



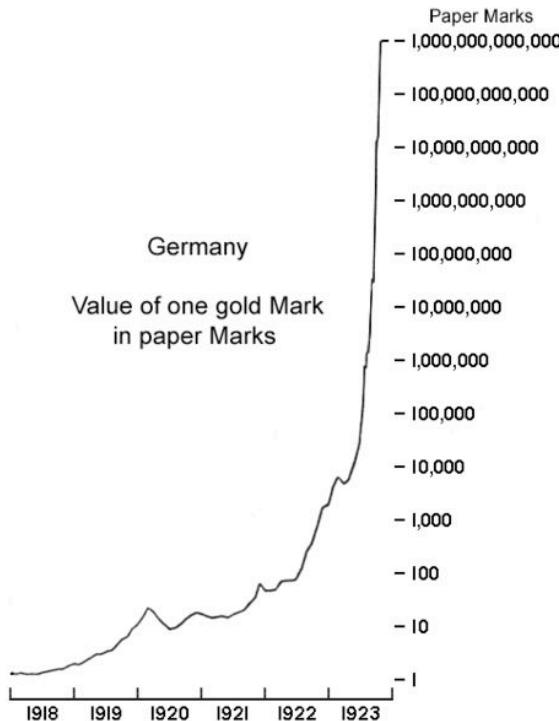
# Kagan's Long-Term Causes – Versailles

- US doesn't ratify treaty; UK non-committal, fear FRA and demilitarize → FRA dictates policy alone
  - Revisionists & Keynes convinced Versailles unfair (291)
  - Harding supports rebuilding GER, UK wants to rekindle trade relationship b/c of depression
  - Reparations declared in 1921 → GER makes one payment
- **Dawes Plan** (1924) – GER could've paid back 6% of national income, but US reduced it to 3.3%;  
**Young Plan** (1929) to 2.6; cancelled in 1932.



# Hyper-inflation

- “Since the Reichstag refused to impose new taxes, the only alternative was the printing press” (305)
  - Reparations payments tied to value of Mark
  - GER defaults on payments in 1923; lives destroyed
  - BEL & FRA occupy Ruhr (illegal?) → FRA & US gain



# Taylor's Observations

- GER still most powerful in EUR (24)
- POL is going to have problems in Danzig (26)
- No one cares about USSR (36)
- (32) US demands for payment of Allied loans, but forgiving reparations was a strange idea & kept intervening in EUR problems for financial reasons



- UK & FRA not getting along (33, 45); UK thinks treaty is “wicked” once it secures GER navy (46)
- Avg. GER blamed Versailles for everything (47)
  - GER actually *made* \$ from US loans in 1920s (44)
  - Keynes, Labour, Americans felt bad for GER (48)
  - Taylor: Reparations/treaty didn’t break GER, their domestic policy did



This treaty is  
WICKED!



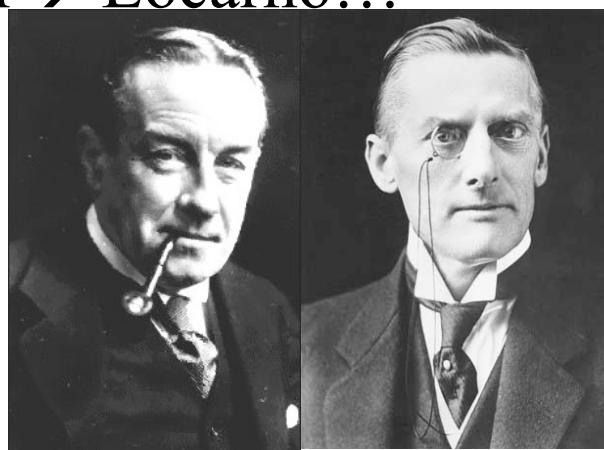
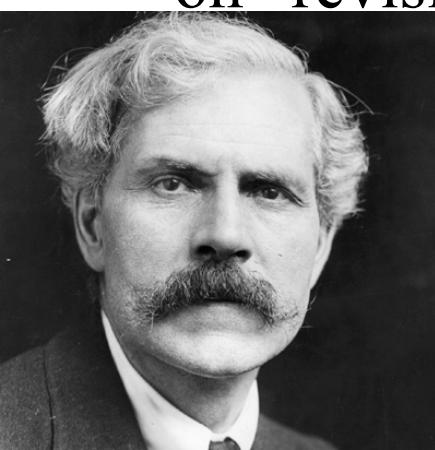
# Gustav Stresemann

- GER Chancellor (1923-1929)
  - Agrees to comply with Versailles (K) →
  - Dawes Plan kicks FRA out of Ruhr → never gets it back
- Hated ToV, but wanted to dismantle it peacefully. (T)
  - Most GER: revision of ToV would revive GER power
  - Stresemann: GER power would lead to revision of ToV
- Could compete with Bismarck as a statesman (51)



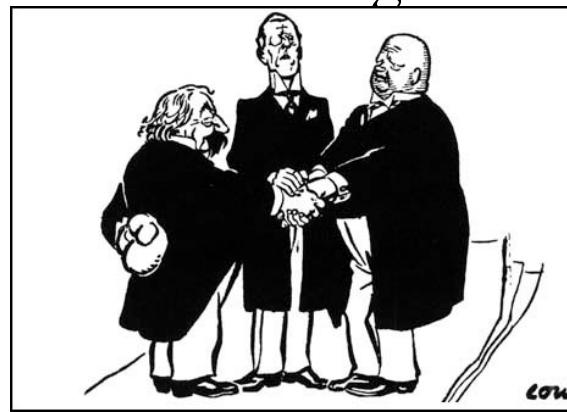
# UK & FRA

- Ramsay MacDonald – UK Labour PM (52)
  - Tried to stand up to GER; Believed in Geneva/disarmament for ALL & tried to repair FRA relations; Taylor says revere him → Brits didn't. →
- Austen Chamberlain – Conservative/Pro-French Sec. of State under Baldwin; rejected Mac's ideas
- Aristide Briand – FRA For. Min (53-54)
  - After Ruhr, doesn't take the hard line, tells GER to respect ALL borders → GER really hated Polish border and planned on “revising” later → Locarno...



# Locarno Pact (1925)

- Geneva Protocol for the Pacific Settlement of Disputes (1924) – LoN unresolved disputes to arbitration instead of war, give military aid to victims of aggression
- GER Failure to disarm by 1925 → Allies push back removing troops from GER
- Locarno Agreements (Stresemann) (308)
  - 1. Treaty of Mutual Guarantee (**Rhineland Pact**) – nonaggression pact by border states (GER, FRA, BEL)
  - 2. Demilitarize the Rhineland by UK, FRA, BEL, GER, ITA and give military assistance to anyone victim of violence
  - 3. Arbitration b/w GER and neighbors (esp. to East)



# Impacts (308-09K;54-56T )

- Stresemann intended to prevent UK/FRA alliance → but UK didn't want to support French anyway
- GER think it's more legit than Geneva b/c involved
- GER leverage over Eastern borders; FRA can't help
- Save GER from 2x Front war
- Allies could not prevent war; could only help victim  
(But who was victim?)
- “Spirit of Locarno”; Everyone happy
- What was Italy doing there?
- Taylor: Ends WWI (54)



# German Development Timeline

- GER Industrial production ↑ in 1929 than before WWI; 2x Exports
- 1920s – Brit 10-year plan not to engage militarily, severe cutbacks in military (pg. 312-313)
- 1926 – GER permanent member of LoN
- 1921 – Military alliances w/ Soviets; reaffirm in Treaty of Berlin in 1926
- 1929 – French agree to leave Rhineland by 1930 (Young Plan)
- **Freedom Law** – Nazis vs. war-guilt clause, evacuation of Rhineland and rejection of Young Plan (4M signatures → defeated in Reichstag)
- Nazis hate Stresemann (didn't get A-L back)
  - Signs GER was powerful and wanted more



?

# Kagan's Gonna Blame Britain

- If Hitler hadn't come to power, GER still would have tried to take over POL Corridor and no one would have been able to stop them (due to US/UK policy of appeasement)
- UK Appeasement of GER ultimate reasons when GER rebuilds, strengthens and grows in 1920s (318)
- Why appeasement?:
  1. Colonial territories beginning to rebel, get costly and not provide soldiers
  2. Huge national debt--from 650 million to 7500 million pounds
  3. US taking over as world superpower for finances
  4. British politicians believed economic growth comes through peace
  5. Huge losses suffered in Great War (9% of men under 45), fear of new weaponry (beginning of Mutually Assured Destruction)



BOOOOO!

# The Weimar Republic

- 1929 – Stresemann dies, stock market crashes, debt galore, tariffs abound (322), deflation only cure (61)
- Depression → Blame Versailles (62)
- 1930 – Socialist gov. fell; Gens. Groener & von Schleicher in charge; Brüning chancellor (323)
  - Fiscal restraint except military spending; use Art. 48 of Weimar Const. to avoid Reichstag
  - New elections to get rid of opposition → Nazis win a lot (324)
- Unemployment @ 3 million in 1930 → 5.6 million in 1931 (10% of pop)
  - Brüning: Wait it out! Ruled by decree (325, 62)

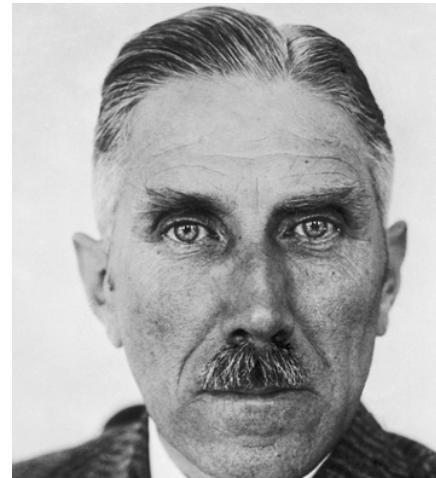


Funny how just  
when you think  
life can't possibly  
get any worse it  
suddenly does.

Douglas Noel Adams

- March 1931 – GER/AUS customs union surprise (step toward *Anschluss*); FRA break AUS banking system → World Court says Versailles violated (326)
- Brüning loses support of President Hindenburg and Schleicher (army) → Brüning gone in 1932 (327)
- **Lausanne** (1932) – Allies reduce reparations to small sum over three years; allow GER rearmament
  - Papen in power → WR most unpopular “bad timing”
- **Kagan:** Pre-Nazi and Nazi FP basically same, and now it was possible (328)

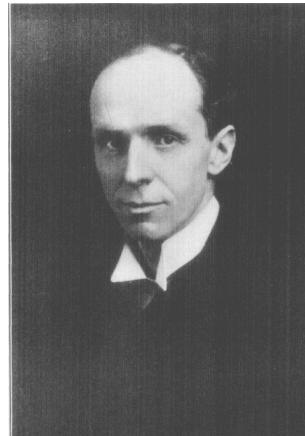
“How could any competent observer suppose that a country with 7M unemployed, no gold reserves, and an ever-shrinking foreign trade would suddenly become a great military power?” (Taylor 65)



# Britain

- “Learning” from mistakes of causes of WWI
- Britain didn't want another arms race and alliance system; therefore, disarmament best way to peace; WWI revisionists saying capitalism, arms manufacturers led to WWI (Taylor qtd. in Kagan 330)
- **Labour Returns** (1929-1931) – “Peace, freedom and justice”
  - Even *Churchill* believed in domestic programs, war w/ Japan highly unlikely
  - Naval holiday from 1921-1936; army and air force even worse
  - **Ten-Year Rule** ends, but do not immediately rearm

“There has scarcely been a period in the world's history when war seems less likely than it does at present”  
– Robert Cecil



Japan!?  
Pish-Posh!

I may be drunk, Miss, but in the morning  
I will be sober and you will still be ugly.  
-Winston Churchill



# Manchuria (62-64T, 332-333K)

- 1931 – LoN challenged when JPN invades; CHN weak & not in control of region → good case for JPN
- Lytton Commission – JPN not aggressor, but condemned for using force → leaves LoN
- **Taylor:** LoN not weak. It worked by ending conflict; set up economic sanctions. Coll. Sec. working.
- **Kagan:** UK should have taken note; UK & LoN didn't brand Japan an aggressor or invoke Art. XVI; “trick” of failing to stop JPN while gaining their hostility” (333)



# Adolf Hitler (Taylor)

- 1/30/1933 – Hitler was an opportunist. Didn’t seize power. Appointed constitutionally because he could secure a majority in the Reichstag by Papen, who thought Hitler would be a “tame figurehead” (68)
- Hitler’s system were dreams, not planned at all (69)
- Nothing original in policies; had a “gift of changing commonplace thoughts into action” (70)
- Mastered the waiting game (71); World leaders knew he was dangerous, but no one did anything (72)



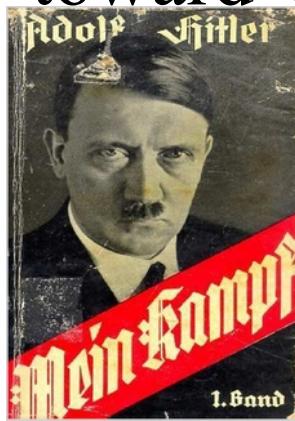
Honestly, how could they know?





# Hitler Comes to Power (Kagan)

- Hitler was fanatic ideologue, written in Mein Kampf
  - *Lebensraum* to East (against Bolshevism), racism, conquer new territory but don't assimilate conquered
  - Annihilate France, break Franco-Polish connection and then seize Russia; use alliance w/ Britain to do so;
  - GER concedes to Brit. Colonies, world trade and navy; ally w/ Italy
- Domestically different—totalitarian
- Benefited from class conflict, economic distress, fear of Bolshevism
- Conciliatory toward West while planning its demise



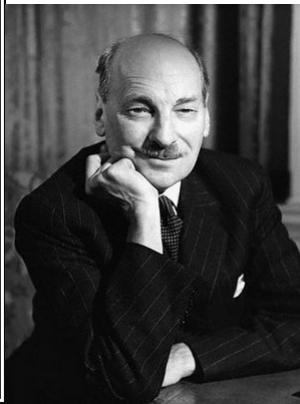
# UK/FRA On Defense

- Lausanne (1932) – Hitler asked FRA and UK To disarm → sure to refuse → GER refuses to disarm
- Evidence that West knew Hitler's true nature; Rumbold (339)
- Franco-Soviet Pact (1935) – Support each other if attacked; no specifics on how (French wanted to deter Hitler-Stalin Pact)
- Kagan (342): UK refused to recognize true nature of Hitler b/c didn't want to take action; general pop. against war (**Peace Ballot**); JPN more of a foe than GER → encourages military buildup →
- Atlee (Labour) – Nope + Churchill – Now for rearming = Baldwin trying to make everyone happy →
- N. Chamberlain (Chancellor of Exchequer) – military buildup fiscally impossible, favors disarmament →
- Finally settled on limited liability army for colonial defense → sends message to EUR That UK wouldn't help



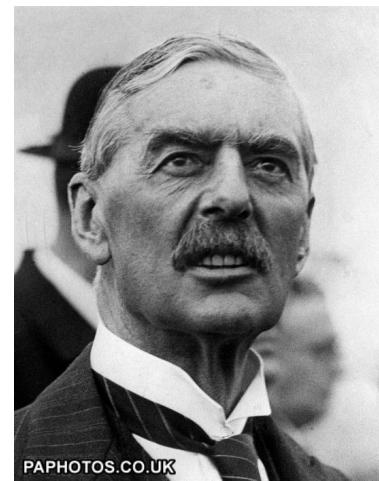
Mr. Attlee is a very modest man. Indeed he has a lot to be modest about.

(Winston Churchill)

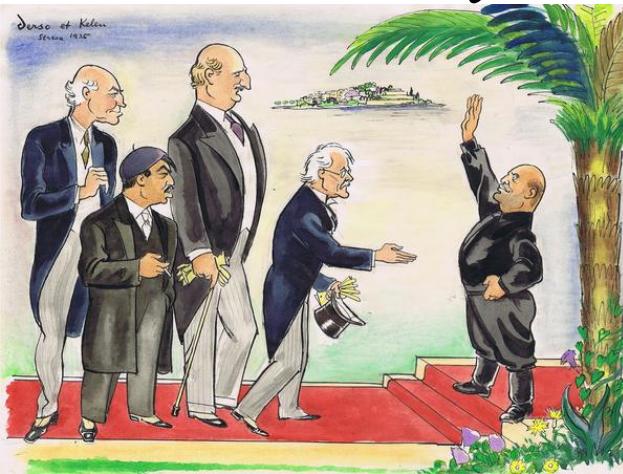


Oh,  
Winston...

I vote we do nothing.



- **Stresa Front** – Mussolini, Laval (FRA) and MacD meet to denounce Hitler's military buildup → stand together to support ToV; Mussolini → Ethiopia (344)
  - **Taylor**: Did any of the three mean what they said? (85)
- Baldwin & Hitler sign naval treaty that GER can buildup to 35% of Brit.; 45% of subs →
  - UK Fleet remains in North Sea
  - Allows Japan success in Pacific (Churchill unhappy)
  - Diplomatic victory for Hitler & Brit. gains nothing AND sanctions GER rearmament
  - **Taylor**: Pacifism in UK a misnomer. Lots of support for sanctions and military (89) (Different from Kagan)
- **Taylor** – End of Versailles; “A system cannot be a substitute for action” (86)

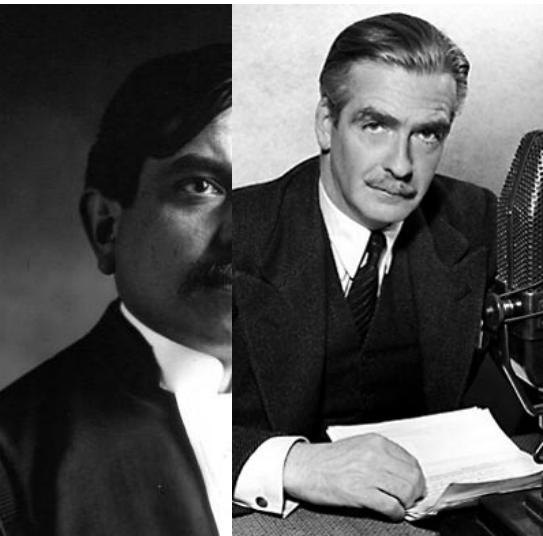


# Short-Term: Abyssinian Crisis

- Ethiopia in LoN; Led by Haile Selassie
- (1934) Mussolini wants to take ABY and restore Rome
- Anglo-German naval agreement → France and Italy ally
- Mussolini mobilizes forces to coast of ABY → Britain offers Italy part of ABY & ABY gets part of Somaliland & sea access → BM rejects; wants glory of victory → UK public wants appeasement → Baldwin instructs navy to get ready for war
- UK claims outwardly to support LoN against BM while secretly tells France it can't afford to go to war; Brit. Tries to negotiate w/ BM, says won't close Suez Canal
- **Oct. 3, 1935** – Italy invades ABY
- Allies think it'll take 2yrs to conquer so LoN imposes econ. sanctions month later, but not even on oil → only takes 1yr. (91-95)



- **Dec 1935 – Hoare (UK FM) – Laval Agreement** – concessions to BM → rejected in Parliament → Hoare resigns → Eden replaces him → BM Takes over ABY by May
  - sanctions end in July
  - **COLLECTIVE SECURITY OVER & End of LoN (95)**
  - Italy alienated → joins GER; USSR expelled in '39 for invading FIN
  - UK rejects oil embargo (which could have brought BM down) *WHY!?*
    - Didn't want BM to side w/ Hitler
    - Avoid war
    - France didn't support it
    - Weak army and navy
- Easy task to cut off Suez Canal (354); UK Admiral thought naval morale up → Hitler thought Brit would do this, but UK didn't →
- **Feb. 1936** – Even w/ weak military GER re-occupies of the Rhineland → confident allies will take no action (97)



THE NATION SPEAKS OUT.  
SIR SAMUEL HOARE. "BE OF GOOD CHEER, SO LONG AS YOU REMAIN TRUE TO  
YOURSELF, BRITAIN WILL NEVER FAIL YOU."

# Taylor's Half-Armed Peace

- War caused by blunders of Allies as much as wickedness of dictators (103)
- GER benefits econ b/c of war prod., but could've grown similarly w/ other public works (104)
- *Lebensraum* didn't create war, but militarism created *Lebensraum*.
- Public Hitler: End Versailles (From *Mein Kampf*) (108)
- Gentleman's Agreement b/w GER & AUS



# Hitler vs. the World

- *Remilitarization of the Rhineland* (March 7, 1936) – Violation of Cl. 42 & 43 of Versailles, Art. 4 of Locarno Treaty (Ger. Signed voluntarily)
- Kagan – Hitler feared early death → forces timetable of events when not needed; needed Rhineland to avoid two-front war in order to attack East
- French military policy *defensive* (Maginot Line; Anti-Plan 17)
- Hitler uses Franco-Soviet Pact as justification for occupation
  - They violated Locarno so we can too → then calls for peace w/ Eur.



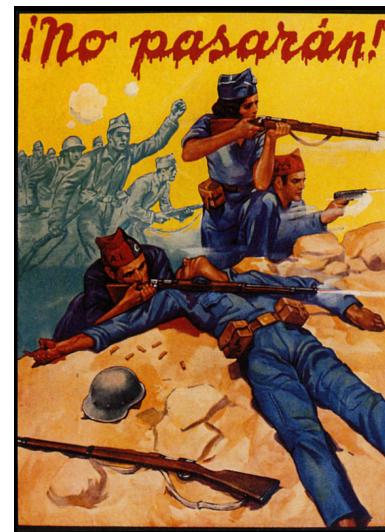
# Back to FRA & UK

- FRA & UK prefer to negotiate w/ Hitler than to enforce ToV
  - LoN/people agree w/ politicians: GER can do what they want in own backyard
  - Hitler admitted that had French stormed Rhineland in March 1936, GER would have easily been defeated (360)
  - Hitler's popularity at home & fear abroad ↑
  - GER can fortify Western front, use resources of Rhineland
  - Belgium = neutral → Maginot Line gap → **Rome-Berlin Axis** in 1936 → France would not aid East if GER attacked (114)
- Kagan: Turning point in stopping Hitler/West lacked leadership at this time; Taylor says little would have changed (362)



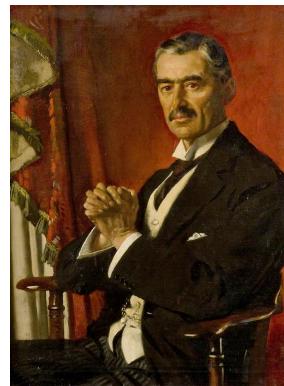
# Slowly, but Surely...

- July '36 – **Spanish Civil War** breaks out → GER & ITA support Fascist Francisco Franco
- Nov '36 – Rome-Berlin Axis; **Anti-Comintern Pact** b/w GER & JPN → later ITA
- 1935 Baldwin elected to begin rearmament; slow
  - needed to protect Low Countries
  - unsure about alliance w/ France
  - stressed buildup of Navy and RAF → didn't want second WW
- UK proposed extensive rearmament plan, but leading econs and N. Chamberlain say no \$\$.



# Neville Chamberlain

- Chamberlain → PM in 1937
  - decides not to prepare Army for Continental service →
  - 1938 army down to 3 divisions to be used in East; tell French to not count on any support
- Chamberlain's rearmament developed RAF, b/c Luftwaffe = biggest threat → wrong b/c most Ger. went to support ground troops
- UK: Two camps of non-Appeasers (135)
  - 1. Motivated by power, not morality
  - 2. Disliked Jewish position, but otherwise, Hitler ok
- NC thinks AH will be grateful for UK concessions (offers AUS, CZE, Danzig → driven by hope, not fear (136)



I've got a  
good feeling  
about this...

- UK developed radar, *Hurricane* and *Spitfire* planes successfully, but didn't have money for air bases in France, so couldn't use planes effectively
- NC's “unique” approach to diplomacy
  - Stood by himself as lead negotiator to maintain appeasement
  - Rearmament only necessary to ensure diplomacy
  - Help Hitler achieve plans w/out war; replaced those that disagreed
- French FM Delbos/PM Chautemps try to seek UK aid, but NC assures them UK will not stop invasion of Czech. →
  - French forced to wait-and-see; NC leads Franco-British team until outbreak of war



# Taylor Weighs In

- 1938 spending gap: 16.6% GER to 7% UK/FRA
- Allies happy w/ equal arms, b/c they wrongly assumed defense > offense (116)
- Allied failure rooted in technical misjudgment (117)
- 2 Years of “Half-Armed Peace” → clear US/RUS would not aid allies → War would be EUR (130)



# Anschluss

- 1937 – Hitler decides to take Czech, Austria, then France and Britain and then ready to take over East
  - **Hossbach Memorandum** – Many historians claim this doc shows Hitler's resp. for WWII (132)
  - **Taylor's Response:** None of the things it said came true! Hitler was patient and played it by ear.
  - **Why then?:** Isolate EM Schacht on rearmament
  - Generals think military is not ready for such aggression → Hitler fires them & replaces them w/ followers (141)



- 1938 – Hitler forces Austrian Chancellor **Kurt von Schuschnigg** to legalize the Austrian Nazi Party →
- (140-144) KvS found evidence AUS Nazis were going to revolt → Shared w/ Papen → Papen fired before he could tell AH → KvS tells AH → AH says he violated “Gentleman’s Agreement” → “Compromise” → Hitler waits.
- Sch. calls plebiscite for indep. & Hitler has to take Austria by force (but first gets BM’s approval (385)) → KvS resigns. → AH’s man becomes Chancellor for a day →
- Taylor: AH had to change his plan for AUS. Totally improvised. KvS’s fault. AH got away with murder (149)



- March 12, 1938 – Anschluss – Germans occupy w/out resistance; FRA & UK almost relieved that it finally happened (**Kagan 386**) →
  - Churchill worried about opening door to all of SE Eur for GER
  - Enabled GER To surround Czech on 3 sides



# Czechoslovakia

- 3M Sudeten Germans wanted to be GER (151)
- Ally of FRA, reproach to AH= No “aiding” CZE→
- Full-scale war or nothing – **Taylor**
- Opportunity for AH, even though he thought FRA would come to their aid (152)
- **Konrad Henlein** – leader of Sudeten GER Party in CZE (Hitler Puppet) vs. **President Benes** (Metternich of Democracy w/ a strong army) (153)
- Benes wanted to call bluff, UK/FRA wanted to avert crisis; Totally UK’s fault – **TAYLOR** (155)
- **Operation Green** – GER plan for attack on CZE (390)
  - Britain listens to Hitler's claim that only Sudetenland would be seized
  - France allied to Czech, but won't step up w/out British aid



# Munich Timeline

- **March 21, 1938** – Allied forces meet and issue report that overestimates the strength of Germans, underestimates strength of Britain and allies; decide to have Czech's treat Germans in Sudetenland fairly (391)
- **April 10** – French PM E. **Daladier** (against app.) & FM **Bonnet** (“app. personified”, meets NC to warn of Hitler's evil ways; → NC & FM **Halifax** say “AH could be won for peace” (157))
- **May 19-22** – UK forces CZE to become GER satellite → AH bluffs → CZE mobilizes troops
  - Britain agrees to support France, but neither country wants to go to war; NC says UK Is too weak to go to war but he is largely the cause of that weakness (393)



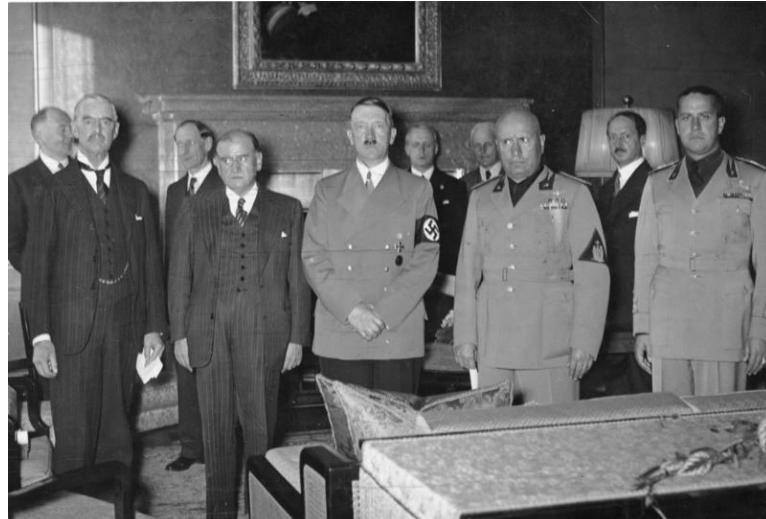
- **Sept. 4** – Benes agrees to demands of GER Sudetenland → world sympathy for CZE; Sudetens speechless b/c they no longer have grievance (169; 394)
- 9/12 = Allied deadline to resolve; AH will attack on 10/1 → Nothing happens on 9/12 = *Adv. Hitler* (171)
- **Sept. 15** – NC travels to Bavaria to meet Hitler
  - Hitler demands annexation of Sudetenland → Chamberlain agrees
  - AH promises not to act → “Triumph of Appeasement!” (175)
  - Never tells AH of plebiscite idea (intent of his visit from Par.)
  - Willing to overlook demands of Hitler to right wrongs of Versailles
  - NC negotiates with cabinet for self-determination in Sud. → doesn't ask for outright cession as Hitler had said (398)



- **Sept. 18** – FRA tells UK to underwrite AH → NC agrees → FRA now tied to UK and war (176-77)
- **Sept. 21** – France and Britain send ultimatum to Benes to give up Sud.; “peace at any price”
  - He does after initial rejection (399)
  - USSR agrees to help CZE; UK/FRA say they’ll aid 10/1 invasion → Allies not as good at bluffing ah AH (182-83)
  - NC flies to tell Hitler can’t honor agreement b/c of riots (which Hitler caused) in Czech → orders occupation to begin
- **Sept. 27** – NC continues appeasement, but Labor and Conservatives & public now favor war
  - One last effort to avoid war, but Hitler rejects it and FRA & UK mobilize
- **Sept. 28** – BM urges AH to wait → “Thank God for the PM!”; Did not make demands, graciously accepted (184); AH would’ve backed down (403) = Very different world for K&T

# Munich Conference

- Hitler sends letter to NC saying he would back down in Czech → NC responds by calling Conference w/ Mussolini, NC, Daladier, Hitler
- **Sept. 29** – Munich Conference “No ink.” (403, 185)
  - Agrees that occupation of Sud. would be Oct. 1-10
  - Czechs forced to accept it
  - NC “Peace in our time” → Churchill and Attlee → No.



# I've Got It! Peace in Our Time



K's T: 404-405  
Against Revisionism 408-409