

MUNICH 1938

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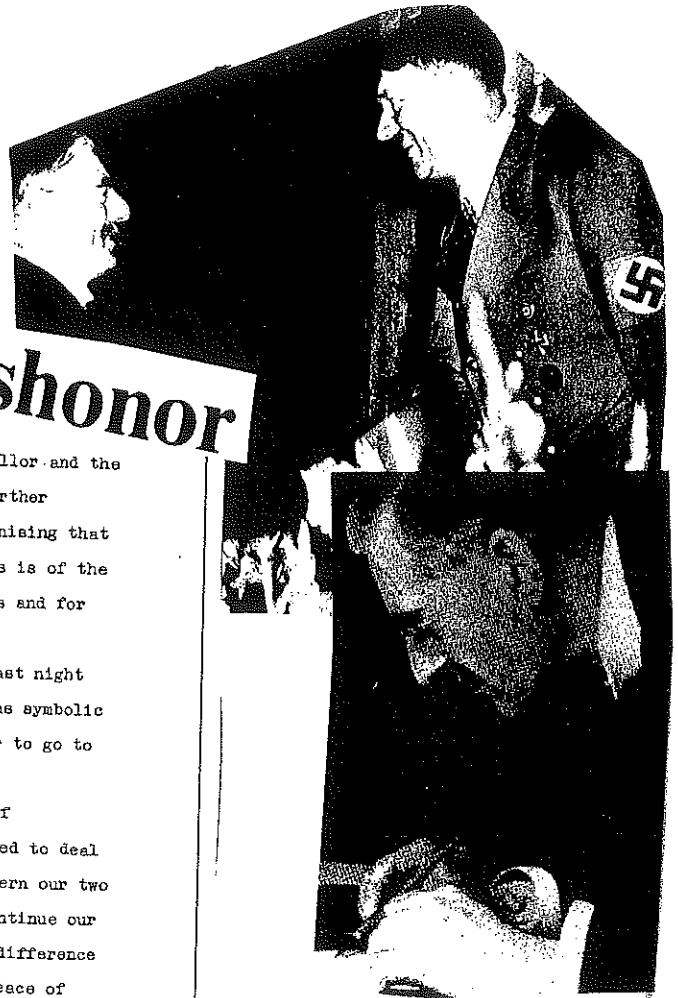


Peace with Dishonor

We, the German Führer and Chancellor and the British Prime Minister, have had a further meeting today and are agreed in recognising that the question of Anglo-German relations is of the first importance for the 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.



Chamberlain (above) signs the Munich Agreement. The document above is a meaningless statement he got Hitler to sign; it says only that their two nations would settle problems peacefully. Chamberlain brandished this on returning home as meaning "peace in our time." At left, he greets Hitler at Godesberg, where their second meeting was held.

Handwritten signature: Neville Chamberlain

Handwritten date: September 30, 1938

At the Munich Conference, on September 30, 1938, British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain and Hitler shake hands (above) before signing the Munich Agreement. Chamberlain returns to England (right) holding a copy of the agreement in his hand. He proclaimed it meant "peace in our time." The agreement (above right) was so vague it was meaningless. Months afterward, Hitler arrives in Czechoslovakia (opposite), ignoring the promises made at Munich.



Handwritten text: Chamberlain after Munich: "I believe it is peace in our time."

Hitler had often spoken his contempt for the non-German Czechs and had brutally destroyed their country, yet there were Czech Nazis to guard his route and fawn on him, and crowds to cheer him (left), when he entered Prague, March 15, 1939, the day of annexation to Germany. Happy faces like those in the picture, however, were a small minority that day. Above, Nazi airmen use a training device to sharpen their bombing marksmanship during the same

In March of 1938, only two weeks after *Anschluss* with Austria, Hitler was already planning his strategy against Czechoslovakia. Thereafter, Europe moved from crisis to crisis as his pretense of wishing only to protect the rights of Czechoslovakia's Sudeten German minority turned by September into open demands for annexation of the Sudetenland. Even the German General Staff was certain the Allies would fight this time if pressed and warned Hitler his Army was not ready—but there was no fight in Britain or France. The Czechs were resolute but were bluntly told that unless they assented to any agreements made by their timid allies, they might have to fight alone. Soviet offers of alliance were discouraged. And while Hitler threw Europe into a succession of war scares, Prime Minister Chamberlain (above) made three humiliating trips to appease the Nazi dictator. On September 30, he and French Premier Daladier signed away the remnants of their countries' honor at Munich. Hitler gained all he had asked for, and Chamberlain went home deluded into believing he had purchased peace.