

Hitler Signs the Munich Agreement (September 30, 1938)

Abstract

The successful “annexation” of Austria in March 1938 convinced Hitler that the time had come for the invasion of Czechoslovakia that he had been planning for the past year. While military preparations for the planned October 1, 1938, attack were proceeding, Hitler staged the so-called Sudeten Crisis. Acting on his instructions, the Sudeten German Party agitated for autonomy and reparations from the Czechoslovak government, which was accused, in a massive slander campaign, of terrorizing and oppressing the approximately three million German Sudetens. Although the Nazi regime left no doubt as to its aggressive intentions, the British government in particular hoped to prevent a European war through negotiations. But Hitler’s goal was not to arrive at a compromise, as British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain discovered over the course of numerous negotiation sessions in September 1938. Every time Chamberlain made a concession, Hitler increased his demands. Only when war seemed inevitable did Hitler surprise Chamberlain by backing down and agreeing to a conference between German, French, and British government leaders to be organized by Göring and chaired by Mussolini. After thirteen hours of negotiations, these leaders signed the so-called Munich Agreement on September 30, 1938. The agreement called for five Sudeten German zones to be ceded to the German Reich. The Czechoslovak government was not allowed to participate in these negotiations. On October 1, 1938, German troops followed by the Gestapo and the SD [*Sicherheitsdienst*] marched into the area annexed as the “Sudetenland District.”

Source



Source: Hitler signs the Munich Agreement. In the background, Mussolini (r.) and Göring in conversation. Photo: Heinrich Hoffmann.

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