

## 7 Appeasement

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It is all too easy to comment upon the deficiencies contained in a book published thirty-eight years ago on the basis of the then available evidence, and to list the changes that would be needed to bring that volume up to date with more recent scholarship.<sup>1</sup> Both the questions asked by historians, and the materials open to them (especially in respect of twentieth-century sources) change significantly from one decade to the next. If historians are, in E. H. Carr's phrase, part of a vast caravan winding through time, it is hardly surprising that perspectives about "appeasement" have altered between 1961 and 1999 – a much more considerable period of time than that between the end of the Second World War and the publication of A. J. P. Taylor's book. Since the past three decades have also seen the opening up of the vast trove of British official records<sup>2</sup> on the interwar years, it is inconceivable that *The Origins of the Second World War* would not be "dated" in many respects – as its author later acknowledged.<sup>3</sup> What may perhaps be more surprising is the extent to which many of Taylor's judgments and (for want of a better word) "hunches" have stood the test of time. This was true when the first edition of this collection of essays appeared in 1986; and because there have been no dramatic advances in the scholarship on appeasement, it remains true today.

A greater difficulty in an essay such as this is to deal with a single strand – that of British appeasement policy – in isolation. To do so is difficult not merely because British attitudes and actions were, in Taylor's book, integrated into the overall story of why the Second World War occurred but because our own judgments of how well-founded, say were Whitehall's worries about the size of the Luftwaffe will be affected by new researches on German aerial rearmament. Similarly, our assessments of British policy towards Poland, Russia and the USA in the 1930s can be placed in a different light by newly released archival materials from those countries, as well as from France, Japan and other actors. Above all, the issue of how well, or how poorly, the British understood Hitler's real intentions can be fully analyzed only by reference to scholarship on German policy, which is outside the bounds of this particular essay.<sup>4</sup> Students wishing to comprehend British appeasement will always need to understand other, non-British, perspectives as well.

The enormous literature on “the meaning of appeasement”<sup>5</sup> can be dealt with briefly here, since its significance for our purposes lies chiefly in the way Taylor’s revisionist work challenged a well-established orthodoxy. Although appeasement originally was a positive concept – as in the “appeasing” of one’s appetite – the failure of Neville Chamberlain’s policies turned it into a pejorative term by 1939, a tendency which grew ever stronger as the costs of the war mounted and the full horrors of Nazi policy were gradually revealed. Since Hitler was by then regarded as the Devil incarnate, it followed that Chamberlain and Daladier’s diplomacy in the late 1930s had been hopelessly misconceived and morally wrong.<sup>6</sup> Instead of standing up to the führer’s manic ambitions, they had weakly appeased them.

Taylor’s revisionism assaulted this orthodoxy on both the intellectual and the moral front. In his view, the restoration of Germany as a leading power, if not *the* leading power, in Europe was natural and inevitable. The Versailles settlement was an artificial, spatchcocked one, leaving ethnic minorities on the wrong side of hastily drawn boundaries; and it was seen as inadequate and unfair not only by all Germans but by most enlightened Britons, once their wartime anger had subsided. Changes, said Taylor, were therefore fairly inevitable: “The only question was whether the settlement would be revised and Germany become again the greatest Power in Europe, *peacefully or by war*” (p. 79; emphasis added). Far from being a madman, Hitler was merely another in a line of German statesmen – like Stresemann, for example – who thought that he could get revisions by negotiation, since the British in particular were making sympathetic noises. The führer’s distinctiveness lay not in what he wanted but in the fact that, when negotiations for border rectifications became tense, he had better nerves than anyone else and possessed the gambler’s instinct for knowing when he could get away with a risky deal, and what his opponent’s weaknesses were. Because the German case for revision was a sensible one, and because Hitler had strong nerves while the appeasers did not, he could always rely upon other governments to rush forward and offer an improved settlement to satisfy German claims. This was particularly true after May 1937, when Neville Chamberlain assumed the premiership in Britain. He was determined to start something:

Of course he resolved on action in order to prevent war, not to bring it on; but he did not believe that war could be prevented by doing nothing....He believed, too, that the dissatisfied Powers – and Germany in particular – had legitimate grievances and that these grievances should be met...he had no difficulty in recognizing where this injustice lay. There were six million Germans in Austria, to whom national reunification was still forbidden by the peace treaties of 1919; three million Germans in Czechoslovakia whose wishes had never been consulted; three hundred and fifty thousand people in Danzig who were notoriously German....Here was a program for the pacification of Europe. It was devised by Chamberlain, not thrust upon him by Hitler.

(p. 172)

While this policy of revision worked successfully in the two crises of 1938 – that is, concerning the incorporation of Austria and the Sudeten Germans into the Reich – it broke down over the Polish issue in the year following. By that time, and especially after the German acquisition of the rump state of Czechoslovakia in March 1939, British public opinion wanted Chamberlain and his cabinet colleagues to take measures to “stop Hitler.” In a tragicomedy of good intentions going astray, the British government – with France in its wake – found itself tied into binding military commitments to a stubborn and reckless Polish regime under Beck. Since Chamberlain was still determined to settle things peacefully and was sending messages to that effect to Berlin, Hitler felt that he could proceed to solve the Danzig dispute by hints of action but without serious risk of war with the west; indeed, with the very strong chance that Chamberlain would arrange things in just the same way as he had done at Munich. It was only because the Poles declined to be as conciliatory as the Czechs that Hitler’s – and Chamberlain’s – expectations went awry. Although none of them planned to be at war with each other, by September 3 that very state of affairs existed. Far from being a maniac, Hitler had acted in a rational (if calculated) manner. But the appeasers, having willingly undermined the European status quo on numerous occasions in the 1930s, had now bungled things, and had gone to war “for that part of the [1919] peace settlement which they had long regarded as least defensible” (p. 335).

The cries of outrage which greeted the publication of such views thirty-eight years ago are understandable, and perhaps even more so now in the light of recent scholarship on the Holocaust.<sup>7</sup> On the one hand, there was Taylor’s refusal to make moral judgments, or to give much weight to the significance of Nazi ideology, domestic politics, and racial doctrines. Then there were the critics who were alarmed at the possible implications of Taylor’s suggestion that German hegemony in Europe was “natural,” and ought not to have been resisted; if that applied to Hitler’s Germany in the 1930s, might it not also apply to Khrushchev’s Russia in 1961 – the year of the Berlin crisis as well as of the publication of Taylor’s book? Above all, there were those infuriated by his flippantly throwaway style and sweeping remarks: that Hitler had no “preconceived plan” (p. 98); or that the Hoare – Laval scheme was “perfectly sensible” (p. 128); or that Munich was “a triumph for all that was best and most enlightened in British life” (p. 235); or that “it seems from the record that [Hitler] became involved in war through launching on 29 August a diplomatic manoeuvre which he ought to have launched on 28 August” (p. 336). All this was strong stuff.

The greatest indignation was, of course, reserved for Taylor’s implicit (and sometimes explicit) “de-demonization” of Hitler, an interpretation that many critics thought untenable on both moral and factual grounds.<sup>8</sup> By contrast, Taylor’s view of the British appeasers appeared less controversial, if only because the prevailing image of Neville Chamberlain was already a negative one. *The Origins of the Second World War* may have portrayed Britain’s appeasement policy in a more dynamic and purposeful way than was hitherto imagined, but by showing how eager London was to comply with, or even anticipate, the führer’s

wishes, it still seemed unflattering. Consequently, the notion that policy was both unwise and immoral was scarcely shaken, as could be seen in Gilbert and Gott's swingeing indictment, *The Appeasers*, published two years later.<sup>9</sup> Taylor himself might not wish to draw moral judgments about Chamberlain, or Samuel Hoare, or Horace Wilson, but many other historians were very willing to do so.

Apart from his general argument that British appeasement policy unwittingly contributed to the outbreak of the Second World War, Taylor offered detailed remarks on the leading British personalities in this story, the arguments they deployed, and the phases they went through. All of this was based upon published British and German diplomatic documents for the interwar years, and upon older memoirs and biographies. Within another decade, however, virtually the entire official records for the 1930s (not to mention more and more private collections) were opened to historians – giving them the unexpected opportunity to measure Taylor's book, and other works, against the government's own documents. By an Act of 1967 the Labour government reduced from fifty years to thirty years the period of time in which public records were kept confidential, though there were exceptions. Had that not happened, historians today would only now be digesting the cabinet files on, for example, "colonial appeasement" in 1937, and much of what follows in this essay would have been impossible to write. For the past thirty years, therefore, there has been a vast swathe of scholarly books and articles dealing with British appeasement policy, although it would be fair to say that, during the past decade, there have been distinct signs of a tapering-off in the originality of viewpoints and arguments.

Many of Taylor's observations, it ought to be said at once, have stood the test of time rather well. His somewhat cynical view of statesmen, strengthened no doubt by his years of studying Bismarckian diplomacy, put him in good stead in describing the role of people such as Simon, MacDonald and Hoare. Recent biographies – of Hoare, Simon, even Eden – have fleshed out their personalities but have not fundamentally altered Taylor's portrait.<sup>10</sup> His coverage of Sir Nevile Henderson's debilitating functions as British ambassador in Berlin – constantly toning down the firmness of the foreign office's messages, and making deprecating noises to his German listeners about the Jews or the Czechs or the Poles – have required no amendments now that the files are open.<sup>11</sup> Above all, Taylor's observations on Halifax, although brief, ring very true: the foreign secretary's aloofness, his sense of conscience (occasionally fostered by his foreign-office staff) his sensitivity to what the Conservative Party and the country at large would think fair, made the "Holy Fox" one of the few people – perhaps the only one – who could influence the prime minister during the Munich and Prague crises (p. 188–9 and ff.).<sup>12</sup>

By contrast, the portrait of Chamberlain in these pages seems one-dimensional. Taylor captures the prime minister's personal decisiveness and sense of purpose, the businessman-turned-politician who knew how to run an organization on efficiently utilitarian lines; and many a later book, benefiting from the cabinet papers, has shown how *dirigiste* was the administration that Chamberlain controlled.<sup>13</sup> On the other hand, historians who have gained access to the prime

minister's private letters, especially those to his sisters, have shown Chamberlain to be increasingly uncertain about Hitler as 1938 turned into 1939. One week's expressions of confidence that all was going well, and that the likelihood of war was fading, mingle with much more gloomy assessments in the week following.<sup>14</sup>

No doubt these shifts of mood can be explained in part by the fluctuating reports of happenings on the continent, but Chamberlain's letters suggest a more complex figure than Taylor presents: sometimes briskly efficient, sometimes proud and privately boastful of his successes, sometimes worried and even bewildered at the turn of events. Perhaps this is why recent studies present such contradictory interpretations, with Aster returning to the "guilty men" view, Charmley portraying the prime minister as a far-sighted *realpolitiker*, and Parker seeking to draw a balance. We still await the second volume of Professor Dilks's biography of Chamberlain<sup>15</sup> before we have the full picture, but the image which is emerging has already shown how difficult it is to assess the prime minister's character in a few swift sentences. As it is, this continued focus on the "high politics" of the Chamberlain cabinet distracts scholarship from broader issues.

On the internal politics of Great Britain in the interwar years, and their effect on foreign policy, Taylor has not much to say, although the remarks he makes are usually accurate enough. For example, he shrewdly notes that Baldwin's pro-League statements in 1935 were intended to outwit the Labour Party just as a general election was pending. Similarly, Taylor's discussion of the spring 1939 considerations of an Anglo-Russian alliance to assist Poland nicely captures the dilemma in which Chamberlain found himself; if London negotiated with Moscow (which the prime minister and his colleagues greatly disliked) and was successful, it would be seen as vindicating the arguments of such varied critics of the government as Churchill, Lloyd George, and the Labour Party; if London refused to negotiate, or did so and failed to reach a settlement with Stalin, it would be blamed – by the British public, by a suspicious Hitler, and by posterity (as indeed it was). While Taylor does not provide Maurice Cowling's full picture of the internal political dynamics of appeasement diplomacy – that is, of a Chamberlain needing a successful "deal" with Germany not only to preserve peace but to secure his own political position and confound his critics to the left and the right<sup>16</sup> – he does hint at this domestic dimension.

Researches into the internal political aspects of British policy have therefore tended to supplement Taylor's version rather than replace it. Cowling, for example, has gone even further in his argument, suggesting that Chamberlain's deeper concern was that another great war (with its total mobilization of national resources) would lead to significant advances by Labour and the Trades Union movement – just as the First World War had done. The preservation of peace was, therefore, intricately linked with the fate of the Conservative Party, a fact which (Chamberlain felt) the more reckless or "irregular" Tories like Churchill did not comprehend.<sup>17</sup> Just as such an account does not contradict Taylor, so also do the writings about the "anti-appeasers" scarcely affect his picture: for the message of such works has generally been that Chamberlain's opponents, too, were uncertain of how to respond to the unprecedented circumstances of

the late 1930s. There were all sorts of divisions among the ranks of the Conservative critics, although this still remains inadequately researched (there is no study of the Tory Party and foreign policy, for example, and little use of constituency records). What we do know is that some Conservatives disliked the appeasement of Germany, but strongly urged the appeasement of Italy; most of them – even Churchill – softened their attacks when the prospect of being invited to join the government seemed closer; the “Eden group” tried to keep its distance from the “Churchill camp,” and so on. In the same way, the Labour Party was neither as forthright nor as consistent in its criticism of appeasement as it later liked to think. Attlee and his colleagues (who deserve fuller study) were very wary of being portrayed as warmongers, and warier still of co-operation with the old imperialist war-horses on the right of the Conservative Party. The revelation of such uncertainties gives us a better idea nowadays of how Chamberlain was able to preserve his commanding position in British politics for so long.<sup>18</sup>

British public opinion – the press, varied pressure-groups and the legendary “man in the street” – is not a key feature in *The Origins of the Second World War*. To be sure, Taylor refers to that general mood of pacifism, non-interventionism, and dislike of “foreign politics” which conditioned the entire interwar period and made every administration, from Lloyd George’s coalition onward, reluctant to accept commitments in Europe and eager to see an amicable settlement of all international disputes. Over the past three decades, the study of British public opinion – especially the ideas and movements associated with pacifism, the Peace Ballot and the League of Nations’ Union, but also strands of opinion on the Right<sup>19</sup> – has become a major growth industry. The press’s views of Germany, the Left Book Club, the public’s attitude towards the Abyssinian crisis, or the Spanish Civil War, have all found their historians.<sup>20</sup> Here again, we are talking about additions to Taylor’s version of events, not challenges to it.

Public opinion’s two most significant disruptions of the official policy of appeasing the dictators occurred, first, in late 1935, when the news of the Hoare-Laval pact provoked an explosion of discontent against this undermining of League of Nations’ principles; and, second (and more importantly), in the spring of 1939, when large segments of British public opinion, including many former supporters of Chamberlain’s appeasement policies, decided that Hitler had to be stopped and urged all manner of embarrassing proposals upon the government: guarantees to east-European states, an alliance with Russia, further rearmament, closer ties with the French, and so on. Taylor gives a good account of how Chamberlain became increasingly trapped between two uncontrollable forces – the exogenous force of Hitler, moving to further actions or threats of action, and the endogenous force of a resentful British public – but much more might have been said about the vital change in mood and circumstances. There is little or nothing in his account, for example, of the anger and disgust produced in Britain by news of the *Kristallnacht*, (November 9, 1938), nor of the rabid speeches of late 1938 in which Hitler denounced Chamberlain’s interfering

diplomacy and proclaimed the Munich settlement a victory for brute force – exactly the opposite of what the prime minister was saying.<sup>21</sup>

Where Taylor seems less correct is in his assumption (which he repeated on many occasions in the 1960s and 1970s) that the Munich agreement was overwhelmingly supported by the British press, with only *Reynold's News* in opposition. In fact, both left-of-center papers like the *Manchester Guardian*, the *Daily Herald* and the *News Chronicle*, and the distinctly right-wing *Daily Telegraph*, wanted a firmer line taken toward Nazi Germany, and were joined in this by many individuals.<sup>22</sup> What is even more significant, and until recently less wellknown, were the persistent and very determined efforts made by Chamberlain and his colleagues to control the media – by influencing the press lords and editors, by getting critical talks suppressed on BBC Radio, by censoring the contents of the newsreels shown at the enormously popular cinemas so – as to give to the world the impression that the nation was behind the prime minister and his policies.<sup>23</sup> In view of this recent evidence, the older idea of a general consensus in British public opinion in favor of appeasement which broke only with the news of the German entry into Prague in March 1939 now looks distinctly wrong. The much more likely position was that opinion was already divided during the Czech drama, although this was obscured by the combination of the government's censorship efforts, the reluctance of Chamberlain's critics to appear as warmongers, and the cautiousness produced by natural apprehension at the prospect of a major war. As soon as the shudders of relief at the avoidance of hostilities were over, however, the sense of unease returned, reinforced by one of shame at the fate of the Czechs, and anger at Hitler's speeches and programs. Seen in this light, the uproar over the Prague crisis was but one step (even if the most important one) in the dramatic switch of British public opinion against appeasement.<sup>24</sup> This metamorphosis of British opinion, and the government's efforts to steer it, still requires more work.

Appeasement – in the older sense of an attempt to settle differences by negotiation and concession – was not a new feature in British diplomacy: as historians have pointed out, many elements of appeasement went back to Gladstone's time, or even further.<sup>25</sup> What was quite new, and altogether more difficult for the British government to handle, was the unprecedented state of the international system after 1919. By that time, the USA was by far the most powerful financial and industrial (and, potentially, military) state in the world – yet it rapidly abandoned most of its diplomatic responsibilities, even while the ups and downs of its enormous economy continued to affect trade, investment, and prosperity across the globe. The other great continent-wide power, Russia, had been shattered by the First World War and was now ruled by the mysterious and threatening Bolsheviks. The Austro-Hungarian empire had dissolved into a cluster of intensely jealous rivals. By contrast, Germany's territories (despite reductions in size, especially in the east) remained basically intact; and its power potential, as measured in terms of population, industrial capacity, and national efficiency, was great – greater than France's in the long run. If and when the Germans organized themselves to assert their claims for a revision of the 1919

treaty, they would be inherently in a very strong position. Neither the “successor-states” of eastern Europe nor a nervous, politically fragmented, and economically weaker France would be able to resist for more than a relatively short period – unless aided by another Great Power. Yet, with the USA excluding itself, and the USSR in partly enforced, partly self-chosen isolation, only Britain remained; and it found it less easy to escape into isolation, much as it wanted to.

This fundamental change in the international balances as compared with the pre-1914 era Taylor captured very well, illuminating basic trends to which he had already drawn attention in his important earlier work, *The Struggle for Mastery in Europe, 1848–1918*.<sup>26</sup> The First World War, then, had not “solved” the German question: if anything, it had made it “ultimately more acute.” “If events followed their course in the old ‘free’ way,” Taylor suggested, “nothing could prevent the Germans from overshadowing Europe, even if they did not plan to do so” (p. 48). To be sure, Britain could have carried out her traditional balance-of-power policy, but many things conspired to make that seem less useful than ever before. In the first place, for the entire 1920s it was Germany’s weaknesses and France’s (and even Poland’s) strengths which caught the eye. Second, as noted above, the British public in the post-Versailles era did not want any further commitments in Europe; and, like most British ministers, soon came to feel that the 1919 boundaries ought to be revised – by peaceful means, of course, and under the aegis of the newly created instrument of the League of Nations. The fact that Japan now appeared as a potential threat in the far east, where Britain had much more substantial interests than any other European country, also made it easy “to understand why the British felt distinct from the Powers of Europe and why they often wanted to withdraw from European politics” (p. 68). After the Abyssinian crisis and the Spanish Civil War had revealed not only a new potential enemy in the form of Mussolini’s Italy but how ineffectual was the League of Nations, the international reasons for settling German grievances seemed more pressing than ever – or so it appeared to the firm-minded Chamberlain when he took over in 1937.

In discussing the general external structure in which the British government now had to carry out its diplomacy, Taylor’s book is very lucid. It is also essentially correct in its portrayal of British policy toward potential allies among the other Great Powers. Thus, London’s dismay at the difficulties of persuading the United States’ government to do anything substantial either in Europe or in the far east, and Neville Chamberlain’s personal suspicion that the Americans were “all words, and no actions,” have been amply confirmed in the excellent studies by David Reynolds and Callum MacDonald.<sup>27</sup> In the same way, Taylor’s picture of the far greater dislike shown by Chamberlain and his colleagues towards the Soviet Union – as a general threat to the western order of things and, more specifically, in the context of a possible Anglo-Russian alliance to support Poland in 1939 – has not been shaken by the newer literature. And, since Taylor distinguishes between this general mistrust of Russia, on the one hand, and a (non-existent) policy of trying to provoke a German–Russian war, on the other, his portrayal is much more balanced than those strained pro-

Moscow writings which seek to explain appeasement as fundamentally an anti-Marxist device (pp. 256, 279ff.).<sup>28</sup> Finally, he nicely captures the ambivalent British feelings towards France: resenting it for being the “disturber of the peace” and so paranoically anti-German in the 1920s, disliking the fact that its very existence (not to mention its unwise obligations in eastern Europe) made British isolation from the continent possible, and yet also fearful, at least by late 1938 or early 1939, that the French government was suffering such a crisis of morale that it might agree to everything demanded of it in Berlin unless it were given firmer British backing. In this latter sense, too, the six-month period following Munich was a watershed in British policy and strategy: for the “continental commitment,” avoided by Whitehall for some twenty years, could not in the last resort be repudiated.<sup>29</sup>

The individual phases of British appeasement policy in the interwar years are dealt with by Taylor in a less balanced way, even if one readily concedes that the importance which historians attach to individual episodes must, to some degree, be a matter of choice as well as of existing documentary evidence. Only forty-seven pages are devoted to the 1920s; while the period from the Manchurian crisis to the *Anschluss* gets 100 pages; and the Czech and Polish crises of 1938–39 command nearly 150 pages. (It is chiefly for this reason that our own comments have focused heavily upon the late 1930s as well.) There is a fair-sized coverage of such topics as the Locarno pact of 1925 (pp. 81–6), the disarmament conference of 1932–33 (pp. 93–107), and the Abyssinian crisis of 1935–36 (Chapter 5); and while the very substantial literature has added many further details to our knowledge of those negotiations, the differences which have emerged have more to do with moral and ideological perspectives – for example, Frank Hardie’s strongly disapproving account of *The Abyssinian Crisis*<sup>30</sup> – than they do with historical accuracy. Taylor’s remarks on the role of pessimistic admiralty opinion in influencing British policy in 1935 is, for example, amply confirmed in the late A. J. Marder’s article on that point.<sup>31</sup> But it is curious that there are only two pages (pp. 90–2) on the very important Manchurian crisis of 1931–39,<sup>32</sup> and less than a half-page (p. 118) on the Anglo-German naval treaty of 1935, toward which the British government attached such importance and which has, in consequence, attracted the attention of a number of scholars.<sup>33</sup> There is also very little in *Origins* about the various schemes for “colonial appeasement,” that is, the satisfying of German grievances by the return of some of her former colonies. In fact, this was not especially important to a dictator intent in the first place on revising the European order; but it did obsess many Germans and consume the attention of many Britons (both for and against such a colonial deal), and was a major strand in British appeasement policy for some time – as recent works show.<sup>34</sup>

In a wide-ranging and clever article on appeasement published in 1965, after the appearance of Taylor’s book but before the opening of the official records, Donald Watt presciently suggested that, when further evidence was available, it was probably going to be difficult to maintain the simplistic older line according

to which the appeasers merely “lacked guts.” Watt felt that a future investigation of the files might reveal, *inter alia*,

the fears of Britain’s Conservative leaders of the unrealism of current British opinion, and the existence of a degree of military weakness in 1935–36 which paralyzed Britain’s military planners, giving them years of sick apprehension as their daily companion. It may reveal three services so unable to agree on a common strategy that one was imposed on all three of them by the Treasury, obsessed not with Britain’s economic strength at home, but with the state of her gold and dollar balances, her foreign investments, and her earning power abroad. It may reveal a Commonwealth divided on everything else but its dislike of Versailles and its wish for non involvement in European affairs.<sup>35</sup>

Some of these aspects are indeed referred to by Taylor, but only briefly, such as defense weaknesses, or the influence of the treasury; and the role of the dominions, or the empire as a whole, is not mentioned at all. Yet if one feature of the historiography of appeasement since the opening of the official records stands out, it is the massive attention which has been paid to the evidence of Britain’s frightening economic and strategical–global weaknesses in the 1930s.

Taylor is brief but reasonably good in referring to “economic appeasement,” presumably since the published German and British documents detailed at least some of the efforts made by Whitehall to soften German resentments by offers of trade credits, access to raw materials, exchange arrangements, and outright loans; but his remarks upon the baneful influence of the treasury on British rearmament now look very dated. As a flood of works has shown, it was simply not true that a nice burst of Keynesian “pump-priming” by means of higher armaments’ spending would have solved Britain’s problems, reducing unemployment and strengthening the armed services. It is of course likely that in the early 1930s some extra expenditure on the forces would have had beneficial effects in strategic, industrial, and employment terms; but the amount of cash that was needed to rebuild a two-ocean navy, to provide the Royal Air Force with both its fighter defenses and its long-range bombers, and to equip the army for a European field role – all of which the chiefs of staff desired – was well beyond the industrial and financial capacity of the country. The long economic decline, exacerbated by the world slump after 1929, had eroded the British industrial base to an alarming extent. There were incredibly few skilled workers, especially in the vital engineering trades. There were insufficient machine-tools. There were few modern factories, and no modern shipyards. What was more, simply throwing money at these problems could never produce easy and fast solutions; it might, indeed, weaken the British economy still further by provoking inflation, hurting the balance of payments, and producing bottlenecks. For such an ailing patient, only a gentle stimulus seemed proper.<sup>36</sup>

By the late 1930s, the treasury’s arguments were proven to be correct, even when – or, rather, especially when – it had lost its battle to keep defense spending

down to levels which it judged to be economically safe. The great increases in government expenditures by that time, and the large defense loans, did cause inflation; the many orders abroad for the machine-tools, steel, aircraft, and instruments which a weak British industry could not produce itself, drastically raised the amount of imports; yet the transition of the economy from a peacetime to a wartime basis meant that the proportion of manufacturers devoted to exports was falling rapidly. The balance of payments was worsening, the standard rate of income-tax was higher than at any time since 1919, and the floating of government loans to pay for defense was weakening Britain's credit and leading to a run on sterling. With the treasury warning in early 1939 that the continuation of defense spending at the present rate "may well result in a situation in which the completion of our material preparations against attack is frustrated by a weakening of our economic stability, which renders us incapable of standing the strain of war or even of maintaining those defenses in peace,"<sup>37</sup> it was perhaps not surprising that Chamberlain still strove for a compromise settlement of the Danzig issue.

But if the treasury's words were gloomy, they were nothing like as dark as those of the chiefs of staff, the "Cassandras in gold braid," as Correlli Barnett has described them.<sup>38</sup> Years of underfunding, together with the constraints imposed by the Ten-Year Rule, had left Britain and its empire in a dreadfully weak position militarily – as the service chiefs were eager to explain after 1932, when the first attempts to assess the defense requirements of the empire were made. A whole series of reports were then laid before a worried cabinet for the next six years, always with the same depressing message. The Royal Navy had been run down far below Washington treaty standards, and was incapable of sending a "main fleet to Singapore" and of maintaining a one-power standard in European waters, hence the admiralty's concern to restrain German naval rearmament by the 1935 treaty.<sup>39</sup> There was not one adequately defended base throughout the entire empire. A minuscule army could not possibly play a role in preserving the European equilibrium – which is why the chiefs of staff frowned upon talks with the French military in 1938, and repeatedly warned the cabinet that Britain could not do much to help Czechoslovakia.<sup>40</sup> Above all, perhaps, there was the weakness in the air: far from the British being in a position to deter Germany by means of a long-range bomber force, it seemed itself much more vulnerable to aerial attack from the imposing Luftwaffe.<sup>41</sup> Going to war against one of the dictator states would be difficult enough; fighting all three was impossible. Appeasement was the only solution. Or, as the chiefs of staff pointed out in December 1937:

[W]e cannot foresee the time when our defence forces will be strong enough to safeguard our trade, territory and vital interests against Germany, Italy and Japan at the same time....[We cannot] exaggerate the importance from the point of view of Imperial Defence of any political or international action which could be taken to reduce the number of our potential enemies and to gain the support of potential allies.<sup>42</sup>

Here was an argument for appeasement which at first sight was utterly compelling. Yet apart from a brief mention of Britain's supposed vulnerability to aerial attack – which Chamberlain used in order to cow cabinet critics during the Munich crisis – the reader gains little sense from Taylor's account of the significant role of defense weaknesses in appeasement policy. This is not a charge of negligence on his part: the mass of evidence was simply not available to scholars in the late 1950s.

As if this catalogue of gloom were not enough, the global international crisis of the 1930s threatened to split the British empire apart. Ever since 1919 Afrikaners and French-Canadians – not to mention, after 1921, the fiercely independent Irish Free-Staters – had bitterly opposed any idea of “imperial defense” and expressed even more hostility to the notion of being dragged into a war in consequence of European quarrels. And while Australia and New Zealand were more willing to cooperate with Britain, they too were worried that European issues would divert resources from the more immediate danger of Japanese aggression in the Pacific. In addition, the dependent empire was much less tractable than in the days of Disraeli or Salisbury. A widespread Indian nationalist movement, Egyptian discontents, a potential civil-war situation in Palestine by the late 1930s, were all pinning down British troops and resources and, last but not least, reinforcing Whitehall's arguments for not being committed to Europe.<sup>43</sup> Moreover, these fissionary movements *within* the empire could not be completely separated from the *external* threats to the Mediterranean route and especially to the British possessions in the far east – a region whose significance, were one to measure it in terms of books published on that aspect of British policy alone – overshadowed everything else!<sup>44</sup>

Not only did the chiefs of staff and the treasury have contradictory ideas of the British government's existing priorities – with one side pressing for more defense spending, and the other pressing for financial stability – but their prognostications for a future conflict, should one actually come, were actually at odds. From the armed services' viewpoint, Britain had a chance of successfully fighting Germany and Italy only if the war were a long one, during which the population and material resources of the empire could steadily be mobilized. In the treasury's opinion, Britain could afford to fight only a short war, since it would very swiftly run out of gold and dollar holdings.<sup>45</sup> Impaled on the horns of this dilemma, was it surprising that cabinet ministers should endeavor to avoid a conflict of any kind?

Because the official archives have revealed this catalogue of industrial, financial, strategic and imperial weaknesses with which successive British governments grappled in vain during the interwar years, the tendency of recent writings has been much more emphatic (and even sympathetic) toward the appeasers. In consequence, the “guilty men” interpretation of the 1940s and 1950s looks unbalanced and unfair. Far from finding Chamberlain's policy in the late 1930s inexplicable, it now seems quite understandable to many historians. As one of them has put it: “If one begins to tot up all the plausible motivations for appeasement...one sees that these are far more than enough to explain it. It

was massively over-determined; any other policy in 1938 would have been an astounding, almost inexplicable divergence from the norm."<sup>46</sup>

All this newer evidence of British weakness affects Taylor's arguments only indirectly. To the extent that many of these writings have suggested that appeasement was unavoidable and predetermined, they do place Chamberlain and his colleagues in a more favorable light than that in which they appeared in *Origins*. But such materials would probably not have affected his central thesis, that the coming of war in September 1939 was an accident, and one caused more by the erratic moves of the appeasers and the stubbornness of the Poles than by Hitler's own calculations. Nor, one suspects, would they have altered his own skeptical view that the politicians rarely consulted "their military experts in a detached way before deciding on policy. They decided policy first; and then asked the experts for technical arguments with which this policy could be justified" (p. 155). It was because of that habit, Taylor writes, that even when British leaders used such "practical arguments" as aerial weaknesses during the Czech crisis it was to reinforce their own conviction that appeasement was morally right (p. 254).

Given the weight of this newer evidence, few historians today will be as cynical and cavalier as Taylor was then about the role of military (or treasury) advice on British policy. None the less, his remarks may be useful in reminding us that strategic memoranda are not the "be-all and end-all" of historical causation, and that we still have the task of properly integrating the newer evidence into our larger understanding of what appeasement meant.

As noted above, the weakness of the older "guilty men" argument appeared to be that it denounced Chamberlain and his colleagues for a failure both of morality and of willpower without much appreciation (or knowledge) of the difficulties under which British governments of the 1920s and 1930s labored. By contrast, most of the later works have focused upon the seemingly compelling strategic, economic, and political motives behind British policy at that time, but without much concern for the moral and ideological aspects of it. That is to say, the mass of cool treasury memoranda and the well-honed strategic assessments of the chiefs of staff, available for everyone to see in the Public Record Office, now occupy such a prominent position in the story that they are in danger of overshadowing those very important personal feelings behind appeasement: the contempt and indifference felt by many leading Englishmen towards east-central Europe, the half-fear-half-admiration with which Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy were viewed, the detestation of communism, the apprehensions about future war.

Of course the warnings of the treasury and the chiefs of staff about Britain's impending financial and strategical bankruptcy were important; but the facts are that such statements were not infallible, and that they were sometimes used by Chamberlain to justify policies he already wanted to pursue. For example, as Correlli Barnett and Williamson Murray have pointed out, both the chiefs of staff and the cabinet were making some excessively gloomy predictions during the Czech crisis. Germany's own weaknesses were not considered. The value

of the Czech army was ignored. Britain's vulnerability to aerial attack was repeatedly stressed, but without consideration of whether the Luftwaffe would or could throw itself against London while Germany was engaged in a central European war. Furthermore, the cabinet minutes reveal that when some ministers (Duff Cooper, Stanley) actually wanted to take a stronger stand against Hitler, despite the risks to Britain and its empire, they were swiftly overwhelmed by counter-arguments from Chamberlain and his friends.<sup>47</sup> Objectors within the cabinet had to be silenced, just as the press and the BBC had to be controlled. Even when, by early-to-mid 1939, British public opinion was moving strongly against appeasement, when Britain's aerial defenses were much improved, and when the dominions were more supportive of a firm line, Chamberlain and his fellow-appeasers were still seeking, in secret rather than in the open, to buy off Hitler. After Prague, making concessions to Germany was neither as logical nor as "natural" as it might have been in 1926 and 1936; on the contrary, it seemed to many a policy lacking in both practical wisdom and moral idealism. Yet it was still being attempted by Downing Street, which suggests that the convictions of individuals – in this case, Chamberlain's – must play a central part in our explanation of British policy, which cannot be fully understood simply in terms of "objective" strategical and economic realities.

Appeasement, then, is not a simple phenomenon which can be defined in a few sharp words. Older histories tend to see it as a shameful and bankrupt policy of surrender to the dictator-states. Taylor has portrayed it as a series of well-meaning bungles which eventually embroiled both Hitler and the west in a war neither of them desired. Some scholars have seen it as a natural and rational strategy in the light of Britain's weaknesses in the world by the 1930s. Others have pointed out that it was, albeit in a more intensified form, a normal continuation of the British diplomatic tradition of attempting to settle disputes peacefully.

Appeasement was, in fact, all of the above, and needs to be understood as such. It also needs to be investigated at different levels of causality, so that distinctions can be made between the nebulous, sometimes confused mentality of the appeasers on the one hand, and the cluster of military or economic or imperial or domestic-political motives which justified, or seemed to justify, concessions to the dictators on the other. Only when it is approached in such a way will the historians rise above simplistic one dimensional descriptions, and deal with appeasement as the complex, variegated, shifting phenomenon which it really was. This essay, then, closes with a call for further work on appeasement. Taylor's book, together with the opening of official and private archives, provoked and inspired a flood of scholarship on British policy in the 1930s. Although the tide has ebbed, it should be clear that many subjects remain inadequately explored. One can hope that the recognition of appeasement's complex nature will spur scholars to examine all aspects of British policy before the Second World War.

## Notes

- 1 This essay is concerned with the text of the original (1961) edition of Taylor's *The Origins of the Second World War*, and not with the "Second thoughts" Foreword of the 1963 edition, nor with either "War origins again," *Past & Present*, no. 30, 1965, or "1939 revisited," the 1981 Annual Lecture of the German Historical Institute, London.
- 2 Intelligence records remain a notable exception, and thus far only official historians have gained access to them. See F. H. Hinsley *et al.*, *British Intelligence in the Second World War: Its Influence on Strategy and Operations*, vol. 1, London, 1979. For efforts to trace intelligence records by roundabout means, see D. Dilks, "Appeasement and intelligence," in D. Dilks (ed.), *Retreat from Power*, 2 vols, London, 1981, vol. 1, pp. 139–69; and Wesley K. Wark, *The Ultimate Enemy: British Intelligence and Nazi Germany, 1933–1939*, Ithaca, NY, 1985.
- 3 Taylor, "1939 revisited".
- 4 See Chapter 6, "Misjudging Hitler," in this collection of essays; G. L. Weinberg, *The Foreign Policy of Hitler's Germany*, 2 vols, Chicago, IL, 1970 and 1980; N. Rich, *Hitler's War Aims*, vol. 1, New York, 1973; W. Carr, *Arms, Autarky and Aggression*, London, 1972; E. Jäckel, *Hitler's World View*, Cambridge, MA, 1981; K. Hildebrand, *The Foreign Policy of the Third Reich*, London, 1973; Wilhem Deist *et al.* (eds), *Germany and the Second World War*, vol. 1: *The Build-Up of German Aggression*, Oxford, 1990, are all helpful here.
- 5 The general survey literature is now so large as to be almost beyond control; but historiographical pieces to note are D. C. Watt, "The historiography of appeasement," in A. Sked and C. Cook (eds), *Crisis and Controversy*, London, 1976; D. Dilks, "Appeasement revisited," *University of Leeds Review*, 1972, pp. 38–49; P. Kennedy, "Reading history: appeasement," *History Today*, October 1982, pp. 51–3. There are also very important analyses by German scholars such as B. I. Wendt, G. Schmidt, G. Niedhart, W. Gruner, R. Meyers, and others – some flavor of which can be gleaned from the important collection, edited by W. J. Mommsen and L. Kettenacker, *The Fascist Challenge and the Policy of Appeasement*, London, 1983, and summarized in part in P. Kennedy, "The logic of appeasement," *Times Literary Supplement*, May 28, 1982.
- 6 The works by Wheeler Bennett, Namier, and Churchill are very much in this tone, as are pro-Moscow books and articles. For a recent restatement of this view, see Sidney Aster, "'Guilty Men': The case of Neville Chamberlain," in Robert Boyce and Esmonde M. Robertson (eds), *Paths to War: New Essays on the origins of the Second World War*, London, 1989, pp. 233–68.
- 7 The literature on the Holocaust is massive, but see Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews*, New York, 1985 edn; Michael Burleigh and Wolfgang Wippermann, *The Racial State: Germany, 1933–1945*, Cambridge, 1991; Christopher Browning, *Ordinary Men: Reserve Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland*, New York, 1992; Saul Friedlander, *Nazi Germany and the Jews*, New York, 1997. A useful historiographical summary is Michael Marrus, *The Holocaust in History*, Hanover, NH, 1987.
- 8 Some sense of this outrage can be gleaned from contributions in E. M. Robertson (ed.), *The Origins of the Second World War*, London, 1971, and W. R. Louis (ed.), *The Origins of the Second World War: A. J. P. Taylor and His Critics*, New York, 1972. The most sustained repudiation of the Taylor line is in volume 2 of Weinberg's *Foreign Policy of Hitler's Germany*, which is meaningfully subtitled *Starting World War II, 1937–1939*. D. C. Watt's panoramic study also identifies Hitler as chiefly responsible for the war: see *How War Came: The Immediate Origins of the Second World War, 1938–1939*, London, 1989, p. 610. See also Deist *et al.*, *Germany and the Second World War*, vol. 1.
- 9 M. Gilbert and R. Gott, *The Appeasers*, London, 1963.

- 10 David Dutton, *Simon: A Political Biography of Sir John Simon*, London, 1992; Robert Rhodes James, *Anthony Eden*, London, 1987; David Dutton, *Anthony Eden: A Life and Reputation*, New York, 1997.
- 11 Compare Taylor's remarks on Henderson with A. L. Goldman, "Two views of Germany: Neville Henderson vs. Vansittart and the foreign office, 1937–39," *British Journal of International Studies*, vol. 6, 1980, pp. 247–77. A good recent treatment of Henderson is D. C. Watt, "Chamberlain's ambassadors," in Michael Dockrill and Brian McKercher (eds), *Diplomacy and World Power: Studies in British Foreign Policy, 1890–1950*, Cambridge, 1996, pp. 145–54.
- 12 Compare M. Cowling, *The Impact of Hitler*, Cambridge, 1975, pp. 271ff. R. A. C. Parker also has some astute comments on Halifax in *Chamberlain and Appeasement: British Policy and the Coming of the Second World War*, London, 1993, pp. 122–3; as does D. C. Watt, *How War Came*, pp. 79–80. Also see Andrew Roberts, *The "Holy Fox": A Biography of Lord Halifax*, London, 1991.
- 13 Cowling, *Impact of Hitler*; Colvin, *The Chamberlain Cabinet*, London, 1971; K. Middlemas, *Diplomacy of Illusion*, London, 1972; C. Barnett, *The Collapse of British Power*, London and New York, 1972. The best recent study of Chamberlain is Parker, *Chamberlain and Appeasement*.
- 14 Some of these ups-and-downs are covered in L. W. Fuchser, *Neville Chamberlain and Appeasement*, New York, 1982. See also D. C. Watt's perceptive essay, "Misfortune, misconception, mistrust: episodes in British policy and the approach of war, 1938–1939," in M. Bentley and J. Stevenson (eds), *High and Low Politics in Modern Britain*, Oxford, 1983, pp. 214–54.
- 15 Aster, *Guilty Men*; John Charmley, *Chamberlain and the Lost Peace*, London, 1989; Parker, *Chamberlain and Appeasement*. D. Dilks, *Neville Chamberlain*, vol. 1, Cambridge, 1984, only goes to the year 1929.
- 16 Cowling, *Impact of Hitler*.
- 17 Cowling, *Impact of Hitler*. Charmley, in *Chamberlain and the Lost Peace*, argues this point with particular gusto, suggesting even that resistance to German expansion to the point of war was not in Britain's long-term strategic interests. Charmley, however, downplays the potential costs to Britain – both material and moral – of a German conquest of Europe.
- 18 N. Thompson, *The Anti-Appeasers*, Oxford, 1971, confirms Cowling's descriptions of these divisions, as does D. Carlton in his critical biography *Anthony Eden*, London, 1981. For a study of an earlier period which makes use of Conservative constituency records, see Stuart Ball, *Baldwin and the Conservative Party: The Crisis of 1929–1931*, New Haven, CT, 1988. The best study of Labour's foreign policy remains J. F. Naylor, *Labour's International Policy*, London, 1969, pp. 252ff. But also see Ben Pimlott, *Labour and the Left in the 1930s*, Cambridge, 1977, and *Hugh Dalton*, London, 1985.
- 19 The literature is now too extensive to be listed in its entirety but readers can consult M. Ceadel, *Pacifism in Britain 1914–45*, Oxford, 1980; D. S. Birn, *The League of Nations' Union, 1918–1945*, London, 1981; D. Lukowitz, "British pacifists and appeasement," *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 9, 1974, pp. 115–28. For the right (apart from the works on fascism in Britain), see R. Griffiths, *Fellow-Travelers of the Right*, London, 1980.
- 20 F. R. Gannon, *The British Press and Germany, 1936–39*, Oxford, 1971; J. Lewis, *The Left Book Club*, London, 1970; D. Waley, *British Public Opinion and the Abyssinian War, 1935–36*, London, 1975; K. W. Watkins, *Britain Divided: The Effect of the Spanish Civil War on British Public Opinion*, London, 1963.
- 21 On which, see Weinberg, *Foreign Policy of Hitler's Germany*, vol. 1, pp. 516ff.; T. Taylor, *Munich: The Price of Peace*, London, 1979, pp. 937ff. See also the excellent analysis of the erosion of pro-appeasement feelings during late 1938 and early 1939 in L. Kettenacker, "Die Diplomatie der Ohnmacht," in W. Benz and H. Graml (eds),

- Sommer 1939. Die Grossmächte und der Europäische Krieg*, Stuttgart, 1979, esp. pp. 239, 247ff. Watt, in *How War Came*, pp. 99–108, treats the shift in official opinion.
- 22 This is not to say that the *Telegraph* or the *Manchester Guardian* did not share, to some extent, the relief that war had been avoided in 1938, but their line was altogether much firmer than the government's. See Gannon, *British Press and Germany*; Thompson, *The Anti-Appeasers*, pp. 165ff.; P. Kennedy, "Idealists and realists: British views of Germany, 1864–1939," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, series 5, vol. 25, 1975, pp. 154ff.
  - 23 A. Adamthwaite, "The British government and the media," *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 18, 1983, pp. 281–97. Also see Richard Cockett, *Twilight of Truth: Chamberlain, Appeasement, and the Manipulation of the Press*, London, 1989.
  - 24 Kettenacker, "Die Diplomatie der Ohnmacht."
  - 25 P. Kennedy, "The tradition of appeasement in British foreign policy, 1865–1939," *British Journal of International Studies*, vol. 2, 1976, pp. 195–215; I. W. D. Gruner, "The British political, social and economic system and the decision for peace and war: reflections on Anglo-German relations, 1800–1939," *British Journal of International Studies*, vol. 6, 1980, pp. 189–218; M. Gilbert, *The Roots of Appeasement*, London, 1966.
  - 26 A. J. P. Taylor, *The Struggle for Mastery in Europe, 1848–1918*, Oxford, 1954. Also see P. Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000*, London, 1988, pp. 275–343.
  - 27 D. Reynolds, *The Creation of the Anglo-American Alliance, 1937–41*, London, 1981; C. A. MacDonald, *The United States, Britain and Appeasement*, London, 1981.
  - 28 Compare G. Niedhart, *Grossbritannien und die Sowjetunion, 1934–1939*, Munich, 1972, as well as the two very good articles by Niedhart and Hewdon, in Mommsen and Kettenacker (eds), *Fascist Challenge*. Also see Parker, *Chamberlain and Appeasement*, pp. 216–45, which echoes Taylor on Chamberlain's anti-Soviet prejudices. Also useful is Anita Prazmowska, *Britain, Poland and the Eastern Front, 1939*, Cambridge, 1987. The pro-Moscow versions are briskly (perhaps too briskly?) dealt with in D. N. Lammers, *Explaining Munich: The Search for Motive in British Policy*, Stanford, CA, 1966.
  - 29 For the military aspects, see especially M. Howard, *The Continental Commitment*, London, 1972, chs 4–6. For the general political and cultural side see A. Wolfers, *Britain and France Between Two Wars*, New York, 1966 (first published 1940); J. C. Cairns, "A nation of shopkeepers in search of a suitable France, 1919–1940," *American Historical Review*, vol. 79, 1974, pp. 710–43, and the brief but pertinent comments in E. M. Gates, *End of the Affair*, London, 1981, pp. 895ff. More recent treatments are Martin S. Alexander, *The Republic in Danger. General Maurice Gamelin and the Politics of French Defence, 1933–1940*, Cambridge, 1992, pp. 236–78; P. M. H. Bell, *France and Britain, 1900–1940*, London, 1996, pp. 167–231.
  - 30 See F. M. Hardie, *The Abyssinian Crisis*, London, 1974, whose definition of appeasement (p. 4) is "not mere failure to resist an act of aggression but connivance at it." For Abyssinia, see also Gaines Post, Jr, *Dilemmas of Appeasement: British Deterrence and Defense, 1934–1937*, Ithaca, NY, 1993, pp. 81–115. Locarno and its results are covered in J. Jacobson, *Locarno Diplomacy: Germany and the West, 1925–1929*, Princeton, NJ, 1972; A. Orde, *Britain and International Security, 1920–1926*, London, 1978. The 1932–3 Disarmament conference is covered in the excellent book by E. W. Bennett, *German Rearmament and the West 1932–1933*, Princeton, NJ, 1979.
  - 31 A. J. Marder, "The Royal Navy and the Ethiopian crisis of 1935–36," *American Historical Review*, vol. 75, 1970, pp. 1,327–56.
  - 32 On which see the important study by C. Thorne, *The Limits Of Foreign Policy: The West, the League and the Far Eastern Crisis of 1931–1933*, London, 1972.
  - 33 E. H. Haraszti, *Treaty-Breakers or Realpolitiker? The Anglo-German Naval Agreement of June 1935*, Boppard, 1973; D. C. Watt, "The Anglo-German naval agreement of 1935," *Journal of Modern History*, vol. 28, 1956, pp. 155–75; J. Dülffer, "Des deutsch-englische

- Flottenabkommen vom 18. Juni 1935," in W. Michalka (ed.), *Nationalsozialistische Aussenpolitik*, Darmstadt, 1978, pp. 244–76.
- 34 On the German side, see W. W. Schmokel, *Dream of Empire: German Colonialism, 1919–1945*, New Haven, CT, 1964, and K. Hildebrand, *Vom Reich zum Weltreich*, Munich, 1969. On the British side, see Andrew Crozier, *Appeasement and Germany's Last Bid for Colonies*, London, 1988, and the coverage in Gilbert and Gott's *Appeasers*.
- 35 D. C. Watt, "Appeasement, the rise of a revisionist school?," *Political Quarterly*, vol. 36, 1965, pp. 191–213.
- 36 For Keynes, see Roger Middleton, *Towards a Managed Economy: Keynes, the Treasury and the Fiscal Policy Debates in the 1930s*, London, 1985; P. E. Clarke, *The Keynesian Revolution in the Making, 1924–1936*, Oxford, 1988. For obstacles to rearmament, see R. A. C. Parker, "British rearmament 1936–9: treasury, trade unions and skilled labour," *English Historical Review*, 1981, pp. 306–43; G. A. H. Gordon, *British Seapower and Procurement Between the Wars: A Reappraisal of Rearmament*, London, 1988. For the political economy of rearmament, see the relevant and provocative sections of Keith Middlemass, *Politics and Industrial Society: The Experience of the British System since 1911*, London, 1979, and Correlli Barnett, *The Audit of War: The Illusion and Reality of Britain as a Great Power*, London, 1996 edn. For a challenge to the notion of decline, see Gordon Martel, "The meaning of power: rethinking the decline and fall of Great Britain," *International History Review*, vol. 13, 1991, pp. 662–94.
- 37 Cited in R. P. Shay, Jr, *British Rearmament in the Thirties: Politics and Profits*, Princeton, NJ, 1977, p. 243. Also very important is G. C. Peden, *British Rearmament and the Treasury, 1932–1939*, Edinburgh, 1979. Many of these points are summarized in P. Kennedy, "Strategy versus diplomacy in twentieth-century Britain," *International History Review*, vol. 3, 1981, pp. 45–61.
- 38 Barnett, *Collapse of British Power*, ch. 5, analyzes the role of the strategic advisers; but see also N. Gibbs, *Grand Strategy*, vol. 1, London, 1976, and R. Meyers, *Britische Sicherheitspolitik, 1934–1938*, Düsseldorf, 1976. The general findings of these works are reviewed in P. Kennedy, "Appeasement and British defence policy in the inter-war years," *British Journal of International Studies*, vol. 4, 1978, pp. 161–77.
- 39 British naval policy is covered in S. Roskill, *Naval Policy Between the Wars*, 2 vols, London, 1968 and 1976. The strategical "juggling-act" is covered nicely in L. R. Pratt, *East of Malta, West of Suez: Britain's Mediterranean Crisis, 1936–1939*, Cambridge, 1975.
- 40 Howard's *Continental Commitment* covers the army's dilemma well, but the most thorough study now is B. Bond, *British Military Policy Between the Two World Wars*, Oxford, 1980.
- 41 Among the innumerable studies on air policy and aerial defense, see U. Bialer, *The Shadow of the Bomber: The Fear of Air Attack and British Politics, 1932–1939*, London, 1980; H. Montgomery Hyde, *British Air Policy Between the Wars*, London, 1976, and M. Smith, *British Air Strategy Between the Wars*, Oxford, 1984.
- 42 Cited in Howard, *Continental Commitment*, pp. 120–1.
- 43 Barnett, *Collapse of British Power*, is best here; but see also R. Owendale, *Appeasement and the English-Speaking World*, Cardiff, 1975; R. Meyers, "Britain, Europe and the dominions in the 1930s," *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, vol. 22, 1976, pp. 36–50; and Max Beloff, *Imperial Sunset*, vol. 2: *Dream of Commonwealth, 1921–42*, London, 1989.
- 44 W. R. Louis, *British Strategy in the Far East, 1919–1929*, Oxford, 1971; C. Thorne, *Allies of a Kind*, Oxford, 1978; S. L. Endicott, *Diplomacy and Enterprise: British China Policy, 1933–1937*, Vancouver, 1973; A. Trotter, *Britain and East Asia, 1933–1937*, Cambridge, 1975; B. A. Lee, *Britain and the Sino-Japanese War, 1937–1939*, Stanford, CA, 1973; W. D. McIntyre, *The Rise and Fall of the Singapore Naval Base*, London, 1979; J. Neidpath, *The Singapore Naval Base and the Defence of Britain's Eastern Empire, 1919–1941*, Oxford, 1981; A. J. Marder, *Old Friends, New Enemies: the Royal Navy*

and the Imperial Japanese Navy, Oxford, 1981; P. Haggie, *Britannia at Bay: The Defence of the British Empire Against Japan*, Oxford, 1981; P. Lowe, *Great Britain and the Origins of the Pacific War, 1937-1941*, Oxford, 1977; A. Shai, *Origins of the War in the East: Britain, China, and Japan, 1937-41*, London, 1976.

45 See, again, Kennedy, "Strategy versus diplomacy."

46 P. W. Schroeder, "Munich and the British tradition," *Historical Journal*, vol. 19, 1976, p. 242. Also see Charmley, *Chamberlain and the Lost Peace*, p. 210-12.

47 Barnett, *Collapse of British Power*, pp. 505-20. For more assessments of the balance, see W. Murray, *The Change in the European Balance of Power, 1938-1939*, Princeton, NJ, 1984, esp. ch. 7.