**World History – Appeasement**

**Primary Source Collection**

**California History Standard**

10.6 Students analyze the effects of the First World War.

10.6.3 Understand the widespread disillusionment with prewar institutions, authorities, and values that resulted in a void that was later filled by totalitarians.

10.8.2 Understand the role of appeasement, nonintervention (isolationism), and the domes­ tic distractions in Europe and the United States prior to the outbreak of World War II.

**Common Core State Standard**

Key Ideas and Details

2. Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.

3. Analyze in detail a series of events described in a text; determine whether earlier events caused later ones or simply preceded them.

Craft and Structure

6. Compare the point of view of two or more authors for how they treat the same or similar topics, including which details they include and emphasize in their respective accounts

**Guiding Questions**

Argumentative: To what extent was appeasement a continuation of the First World War, and to what extent was it a departure?

Informative: How was appeasement a continuation of the First World War?

**Primary Source Documents**

**Excerpts from Speech in Defense of the Munich Agreement, 1938, by Neville Chamberlain**

… All the elements were present on the spot for the outbreak of a conflict which might have precipitated the catastrophe. We had populations inflamed to a high degree; we had extremists on both sides ready to work up and provoke incidents; we had considerable quantities of arms which were by no means confined to regularly organised forces. Therefore, it was essential that we should quickly reach a conclusion, so that this painful and difficult operation of transfer might be carried out at the earliest possible moment and concluded as soon as was consistent, with orderly procedure, in order that we might avoid the possibility of something that might have rendered all our attempts at peaceful solution useless. . . .

The real triumph is that it has shown that representatives of four great Powers can find it possible to agree on a way of carrying out a difficult and delicate operation by discussion instead of by force of arms, and thereby they have averted a catastrophe which would have ended civilisation as we have known it. The relief that our escape from this great peril of war has, I think, everywhere been mingled in this country with a profound feeling of sympathy….

I say in the name of this House and of the people of this country that Czechoslovakia has earned our admiration and respect for her restraint, for her dignity, for her magnificent discipline in face of such a trial as few nations have ever been called upon to meet.

The army, whose courage no man has ever questioned, has obeyed the order of their president, as they would equally have obeyed him if he had told them to march into the trenches. It is my hope and my belief, that under the new system of guarantees, the new Czechoslovakia will find a greater security than she has ever enjoyed in the past. . . .

I pass from that subject, and I would like to say a few words in respect of the various other participants, besides ourselves, in the Munich Agreement. After everything that has been said about the German Chancellor today and in the past, I do feel that the House ought to recognise the difficulty for a man in that position to take back such emphatic declarations as he had already made amidst the enthusiastic cheers of his supporters, and to recognise that in consenting, even though it were only at the last moment, to discuss with the representatives of other Powers those things which he had declared he had already decided once for all, was a real and a substantial contribution on his part. With regard to Signor Mussolini, . . . I think that Europe and the world have reason to be grateful to the head of the Italian government for his work in contributing to a peaceful solution…

Ever since I assumed my present office my main purpose has been to work for the pacification of Europe, for the removal of those suspicions and those animosities which have so long poisoned the air. The path which leads to appeasement is long and bristles with obstacles. The question of Czechoslovakia is the latest and perhaps the most dangerous. Now that we have got past it, I feel that it may be possible to make further progress along the road to sanity.

From Great Britain, *Parliamentary Debates,* Commons, Vol. 339 (October 3, 1938)

**New Year Address for 1940, by Joseph Goebbels**

The London warmongering clique did not lift a finger to support its Polish ally. England saw the solution of the German-Polish problem only as an excuse to begin the long-desired battle with the German people.

The English warmongers had achieved their first goal. Ever since the Munich Agreement, London had more and more been winning the upper hand. They increasingly influenced the governments in London and Paris. The year 1939 was increasingly characterized by Germany’s encirclement. London plutocracy used the extremely tense situation to prepare war against Germany…War was avoided only because France and England were not ready for it. But as the Protectorate was established, the anti-German press campaign in London and Paris reached its first peak.

At the same time, the London warmongering clique spread alarming rumors to conceal the true situation. A lying report on 19 March claimed that Germany had given Romania an ultimatum. The Norwegian Foreign Minister denied reports from Paris about alleged German threats against the Nordic states on 21 March. On 24 March, England guaranteed the security of Holland, Belgium, Switzerland and the Eastern states. Not a day passed in which the English press did not predict some sort of German attack or spread lies about German threats against the smaller states.

Paris played the same tune. The French government passed emergency measures to strengthen the navy on 28 March. The English Chief of Staff Gort visited France.

The English-French warmongering clique now made a desperate attempt to bring Russia into the alliance against Germany. The English Commerce Minister Hudson traveled to Moscow on 28 March. London newspapers printed lies on 31 March that German troops were gathering on the Polish border. The same day, Chamberlain told the House of Commons that England would stand by Poland and Romania… London’s goal was to organize an attack on Germany from both East and West.

At the same time, English propaganda made the foolish attempt to confuse the German people by leaflets, radio and the press, the same thing they had so often done in the past. The plans failed. The German people stood firmly and unanimously behind the Führer. The English attempt to bring Russia into its encirclement campaign collapsed…

Paris and London demanded the withdrawal of German troops from Poland on 1 September. The German Reich government rejected the demand. Mussolini’s attempts to resolve the situation on 2 September collapsed because of England’s stance. On 3 September, London and Paris gave Germany an ultimatum, and declared war against the Reich soon after.

Now the mask fell from the faces of the London warmongering clique. When the government was shuffled on 3 September, leading members of the warmongering clique joined the cabinet. Churchill and Eden became official inciters of British war policy.

The war of the Western powers against the Reich had begun. The Führer’s foreign policy had succeeded in destroying Britain’s campaign of encirclement. England and France were alone against Germany…

The front and the homeland celebrated Christmas as a firm and unshakable community. The Führer was with his troops at the West Wall to celebrate Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. The year 1939 ended with the German people holding to an unshakable confidence in victory.

Another year is behind us, the proudest and most important year of the National Socialist regime. We see its passing with honor and respect. It was a German year in Europe’s history. We honor the sacrifices that the entire German people have made in this year. Some were affected more than others. We have done all we could to see that the burdens are fairly shared. This war involves the whole people. It is a war for our national existence. It has not yet seen its full extent on every front. No one can doubt that the warmongering cliques in London and Paris want to stifle Germany, to destroy the German people. They admit that openly today. They reserve their sanctimonious phrases about defeating Hitlerism, but not the German people, only for the stupid. We know what they are doing from experience, and a child once burned is more cautious the second time. No one in Germany listens to them. They want to attack the Führer through Hitlerism, the Reich through Hitlerism, and the German people through the Reich. All the Führer’s attempts at peace bore no fruit with them. We 90 million in the Reich stand in the way of their brutal plans for world domination. They hate our people because it is decent, brave, industrious, hardworking, and intelligent. They hate our views, our social policies, and our accomplishments. They hate us as a Reich and as a community. They have forced us into a struggle for life and death. We will defend ourselves accordingly. All is clear between us and our enemies. All Germans know what we are doing, and the entire German people is filled with fanatical resolve. There is no comparison here to the World War. Germany today is economically, politically, militarily, and spiritually ready to respond to the attack of the enemy.

**From:** “Jahreswechsel 1939/40. Sylvesteransprache an das deutsche Volk,” *Die Zeit ohne Beispiel* (Munich: Zentralverlag der NSDAP, 1941), pp. 229-239.

**1939 Neville Chamberlain Peace in Our Time Speech**

*[The following is the wording of the statement that Neville Chamberlain waved when he stepped off the plane after the conference in Berlin had ended on 30 September, 1939.]*

"We, the German Fuehrer and Chancellor, and the British Prime Minister, have had a further meeting today and are agreed in recognizing that the question of Anglo-German relations is of the first importance for two countries and for Europe.

"We regard the agreement signed last night and the Anglo-German Naval Agreement as symbolic of the desire of our two peoples never to go to war with one another again.

"We are resolved that the method of consultation shall be the method adopted to deal with any other questions that may concern our two countries, and we are determined to continue our efforts to remove possible sources of difference, and thus to contribute to assure the peace of Europe."

*Chamberlain read this statement to a cheering crowd in front of 10 Downing St. and said;* "My good friends this is the second time in our history that there has come back from Germany to Downing Street peace with honor. I believe it is peace in our time."

From: Schirer, The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich

Mass Rally in Buckeberg in 1934

From: www.holocaustsurvivors.org



Hitler Youth at a Nazi rally in 1936

From: www.holocaustresearchproject.org



From: The Guardian, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/apr/06/myth-of-polish-cavalry-charge>



German tanks parade in front of Hitler after the invasion of Poland. Photograph: Corbis

**Adolf Hitler**

**Excerpts from *Mein Kampf***

**(1926)**

**Volume Two, Chapter Fourteen:**

**"Eastern Orientation or Eastern Policy"**

{30}We National Socialists must hold unflinchingly to our aim in foreign policy, namely, to secure for the German people the land and soil to which they are entitled on this earth. And this action is the only one which, before God and our German posterity, would make any sacrifice of blood seem justified: before God, since we have been put on this earth with the mission of eternal struggle for our daily bread, beings who receive nothing as a gift, and who owe their position as lords of the earth only to the genius and the courage with which they can conquer and defend it; and before our German posterity in so far as we have shed no citizen's blood out of which a thousand others are not bequeathed to posterity. The soil on which some day German generations of peasants can beget powerful sons will sanction the investment of the sons of today, and will some day acquit the responsible statesmen of blood-guilt and sacrifice of the people, even if they are persecuted by their contemporaries.

{31}And I must sharply attack those folkish pen-pushers who claim to regard such an acquisition of soil as a 'breach of sacred human rights' and attack it as such in their scribblings. One never knows who stands behind these fellows. But one thing is certain, that the confusion they can create is desirable and convenient to our national enemies. By such an attitude they help to weaken and destroy from within our people's will for the only correct way of defending their vital needs. For no people on this earth possesses so much as a square yard of territory on the strength of a higher will or superior right. Just as Germany's frontiers are fortuitous frontiers, momentary frontiers in the current political struggle of any period, so are the boundaries of other nations' living space. And just as the shape of our earth's Furnace can seem immutable as granite only to the thoughtless soft-head, but in reality only represents at each period an apparent pause in a continuous development, created by the mighty forces of Nature in a process of continuous growth, only to be transformed or destroyed tomorrow by greater forces, likewise the boundaries of living spaces in the life of nations. . . .

{32}But we National Socialists must go further. The right to possess soil can become a duty if without extension of its soil a great nation seems doomed to destruction. And most especially when not some little negro nation or other is involved, but the Germanic mother of life, which has given the present-day world its cultural picture. Germany will either be a world power or there will be no Germany. And for world power she needs that magnitude which will give her the position she needs in the present period, and life to her citizens.