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THE DUFF COOPER DIARIES

1915–1951

Edited by
JOHN JULIUS NORWICH



PHOENIX

we left Czechoslovakia indefensible, which is doubtless true. I said that we couldn't possibly go back now upon what had been agreed yesterday. The French Ministers were at that very moment urging these proposals on their colleagues and we could imagine what their feelings would be if they were now told that these proposals no longer held the field. Oliver said that he accepted them with great reluctance and that he would have preferred to have adopted a different line from the first. The Prime Minister challenged Oliver to say what the policy was that he would have preferred, which put him in rather a difficult position. I said that I thought the difference was one of emphasis rather than of opinion. Some of us were thinking most about the preservation of peace, others of us were thinking more of how far we could go in the direction of humiliating surrender – but we were all agreed in wanting to avoid war and avoid humiliation.

September 20, 1938

Every morning one wakes with a feeling of sickening anxiety which gradually gives way to the excitements of the day. In the afternoon I went round to the Stanleys. Oliver and I feel strongly that there ought to be another Cabinet meeting before the Prime Minister goes back to Germany. He must insist when he sees Hitler on some minimum concessions – such as an international commission, demobilization etc.

September 21, 1938

There was a Cabinet at 3 o'clock this afternoon. On the questions of the Polish and Hungarian minorities [in Czechoslovakia] the Prime Minister reminded us that Hitler had said at their first interview that he was not interested in them; that his sole concern was with the Germans. If at their next interview Hitler took a different line, the P.M. said quite firmly that he would refuse to discuss the question but would say that he must return to consult his colleagues. There was a good deal of talk about the guarantee – who should be parties to it and whether it should be joint or several. Then came the question of *modus operandi*. The Prime Minister said he thought that Hitler would want to march his troops in at once in order to occupy the districts where there was an overwhelming German majority. Oliver said that there must be a decent interval in order to enable those who wanted to leave to do so. He couldn't abandon the Czechs and still more the German Social Democrats etc. to the tender mercies of the Nazis. I said that I had no doubt that if once we agreed to German troops marching in before the frontier had been fixed they would not stop until they had overrun the whole of Czechoslovakia. They would very easily find an excuse to do so, as they would always be having trouble on the outskirts of the occupied territory. I then said that in my opinion we had reached the limit. Not a shadow of a concession nor a word of good will had we received in return. I hoped that when the Prime Minister saw Hitler tomorrow he would say to him that he had done all and more than he had

undertaken, that he was bringing him Czechoslovakia's head on a charger – that he had incurred in order to do this charges of surrender, betrayal and cowardice. Further he could not go. He would prefer, if it were necessary, to go to war. He would do so with the country solid behind him – and with all the sympathy and probably later with the assistance of the United States.

I think that what I said produced an effect. Nobody controverted it. Sam Hoare, to my great surprise, whispered to me that he had said just the same to the Prime Minister this morning. And later he told me that he was convinced as I was that there was a point beyond which we couldn't go. The P.M. so he said was equally convinced. This is satisfactory.

September 22, 1938

When I got back to the Admiralty and read the Foreign Office telegrams I found one that had been sent off after yesterday's Cabinet meeting which seemed to envisage our agreeing to the early occupation of Czechoslovakia by German troops. As this was just the point that I had most strongly objected to in Cabinet, and as nobody had differed from the view I expressed, I immediately wrote to Edward Halifax saying that I thought I ought to make it plain that I could never consent to such procedure.

I lunched at home. We had hardly sat down before Markham came along with Halifax's reply to my letter. He said that he entirely agreed with me. That he had no intention of allowing German troops to enter Czechoslovakia except with the consent of the Czechoslovak Government. This so far as it went was satisfactory.

Winston came to see me in the afternoon. He was in a state of great excitement, and violent in his denunciation of the Prime Minister. I explained the situation to him as I saw it and encouraged him to hope for war which was what he wanted.

September 23, 1938

I had a letter from Edward Halifax this morning explaining away last night's meeting. It appears now that the breach has occurred as was to be expected over the question of the immediate occupation of Czechoslovakia by German troops. This is one point, the other is the delimitation of the frontier. Hitler has shown the Prime Minister the line that he proposes which is, of course, in advance of what we had considered would be fair. He has offered after a certain period of months to hold a plebiscite in the more advanced doubtful districts under international control. The Prime Minister has said that he is prepared to put the question of the frontier line to the Czech Government, but that he is not prepared to consent to the German troops marching in forthwith.

At 4 I went to see John Simon at his request. Walter Elliot and Kingsley Wood were there and we were joined later by Oliver, John Colville and Hailsham. Simon seemed to me to be in a robust mood – quite prepared for the

fray. He and Halifax had removed the ban on Czech mobilization in spite of a rather feeble protest from the Prime Minister at Godesberg.

During the afternoon Simon and Halifax sent a telegram to the P.M. asking for his authority to get on with all preparations including mobilization. Before dinner I took it upon myself to authorize the recalling of men from leave, the bringing of all crews up to full complement, the dispatch of 1900 men to the Mediterranean to bring that fleet up to establishment and to man the Suez Canal defences – and also one or two minor measures.

September 24, 1938

The Prime Minister left Godesberg early and was due in London about noon. The text of the German ultimatum to Czechoslovakia has arrived. It is couched in the most violent terms and the conditions are such as could only be imposed on a people defeated after a long war.

At 5.30 the Cabinet met. The Prime Minister looked none the worse for his experiences. He spoke for over an hour. What he said amounted to the fact that Hitler had adopted a certain position from the start and had refused to budge an inch from it. Many of the most important points seem hardly to have arisen during their discussion – notably the international guarantee. Having said that he had informed Hitler that he was creating an impossible situation, having said that he 'snorted' with indignation when he read the German terms, the Prime Minister concluded to my astonishment, by saying that he considered that we should accept those terms and that we should advise the Czechs to do so.

It then appeared that the terms had not been circulated to all the members of the Cabinet, and it was therefore suggested that the Cabinet should adjourn in order to give members time to read them and sleep on them and that we should meet again the following morning. I protested against this. I said that from what the Prime Minister had told us it appeared to me that the Germans were still convinced that under no circumstances would we fight, that there still existed one method and one method only of persuading them to the contrary and that was by instantly declaring full mobilization. I said that I was sure popular opinion would eventually compel us to go to the assistance of the Czechs. That hitherto we had been faced with the unpleasant alternatives of peace with dishonour or war. I now saw a third possibility, namely war with dishonour, by which I meant being kicked into war by the boot of public opinion, when those for whom we were fighting had already been defeated.

Hore-Belisha spoke in favour of mobilization and Eddie Winterton did the same. Oliver supported me as also did Buck and Walter. What was more interesting was that nobody else committed himself. Neither Simon nor Sam Hoare said a word. I pointed out that the Chiefs of Staff had reported yesterday that immediate mobilization was of urgent and vital importance, and I suggested that we might some day have to explain why we had disregarded their advice. This angered the Prime Minister. He said that I had omitted to mention

that this advice was given only on the assumption that there was a danger of war with Germany within the next few days. I said I thought it would be difficult to deny that any such danger existed.

I finally suggested that we should approach the Egyptian Government with a view to putting into force the precautionary period with regard to the protection of the Suez Canal. I said that I didn't think anybody could have any objection to the preliminary steps being taken to protect one of the most vital and vulnerable points in the Empire. The P.M., who was now in a thoroughly bad temper so far as I was concerned, said that he did object very strongly – and that he saw no reason why we should take such a step at present.

Personally I believe that Hitler has cast a spell over Neville. After all Hitler's achievement is not due to his intellectual attainments nor to his oratorical powers but to the extraordinary influence which he seems able to exercise over his fellow creatures. I believe that Neville is under that influence at the present time. 'It all depends' he said 'on whether we can trust Hitler.' 'Trust him for what?' I asked. 'He has got everything he wants for the present and he has given no promises for the future.' Neville also said that he had been told and he believed it that he had made a very favourable impression himself on Hitler and that he believed he might be able to exercise a useful influence over him.

A bad night.

Sunday September 25, 1938

The Cabinet met at 10.30. One of the first points that I raised was that of the guarantee, but we didn't get very far with it – and then each member of the Cabinet in turn proceeded to state his views. Halifax spoke first – in a low voice and with great emotion. He said that hitherto his views had been entirely in accordance with those of the Prime Minister, but that now he was afraid there was some divergence between them. Then after explaining how in the watches of the night he had gradually come to change his mind, he stated that he thought we could not advise the Czechs to accept the ultimatum and that if France went to their help he thought that we should go to the help of France. This came as a great surprise to those who think as I do. Our next unexpected ally was Hailsham. He produced an article which he had cut from the *Daily Telegraph* and which expounded with chapter and verse the numerous previous occasions on which Hitler had made firm promises which he had always broken. Therefore Hailsham came reluctantly to the conclusion that we must stand by the Czechs and the French.

A message was brought in that Masaryk¹ wished to see the Prime Minister this afternoon. I said there was one question that obviously he would ask – 'If

¹ Jan Masaryk (1886–1948), Czech Ambassador to London 1924–39. In 1941 he became Foreign Minister in the Czech Provisional Government in London and after 1945 in Czechoslovakia. He was found dead in 1948 after the Communist takeover, having either committed suicide or been killed by the Communists.

we reject Hitler's ultimatum, will England support us?' and that we ought to make up our mind what the answer was to be to that question before we left the room. I said that I had consented to the Berchtesgaden terms, because I thought it might postpone war, but that that argument no longer influenced me in face of the Godesberg terms because I thought that if we accepted them we should be swept out of office and that the country would go to war under worse leaders. I said that the issue now was not self-determination nor the manner in which it should be carried, but so far as we were concerned it was the honour and soul of England that was at stake. Those who were in favour of accepting the ultimatum, besides the Prime Minister and Stanhope, were the Lord Chancellor, Kingsley Wood, Tom Inskip, Zetland, Simon, Burgin, Morrison and Ernie Brown.¹

When everybody had spoken Neville summed up – said that while there were differences of opinion between us we must try not to exaggerate them, that it would be a great mistake to show weakness at the centre at the present time. He was going to see the Czech Minister that afternoon and the two French Ministers would be received by him and some of his colleagues later. By 'some of his colleagues' he means the Big Four – himself, Sam [Hoare], Simon and Halifax. I said that this arrangement was very unsatisfactory. The discussion had lasted for over five hours and had disclosed deep division of opinion. The section that thought as I did was not represented at all on the body that was to interview the French Ministers, and we were not satisfied that the views which we held were fairly stated on these occasions. We had reached no conclusion on the important issue to which I had referred before, namely what was to be said to the French. The Prime Minister had said that we must not show weakness at the centre – but it was better to show if than to be paralysed by it which was what was now happening. I therefore felt that it was better that I should go because my continual presence in the Cabinet was only a source of delay and annoyance to those who thought differently from me. The Prime Minister said he had been expecting me to suggest doing so but he must ask me not to take any precipitate action. I agreed not to. Oliver suggested that the Big Four should have two interviews with the French and that the Cabinet should meet between those interviews. To this the Prime Minister agreed.

At 11.30 we were sent for to go back to Downing Street. We were told that the French had been very evasive, but according to his [the PM's] own account they hadn't been nearly so evasive as he had. I practically said as much and made myself pretty offensive. The French had at least said that if Czechoslovakia were attacked they would 'fulfil their obligations', but they had not

¹ Earl Stanhope (1880–1967), President of the Board of Education; Lawrence Dundas, 2nd Marquess of Zetland (1876–1961), Secretary of State for India; William (Shakespeare or 'Shakes') Morrison (1893–1961), Minister of Agriculture (later 1st Viscount Dunrossil), and Ernest Brown (1881–1962), Minister of Labour.

apparently said in so many words that they would go to war, nor could I discover that they had been pressed to do so. However at the end the Prime Minister said that he proposed to make a final effort. He was sending Horace Wilson¹ to Hitler tomorrow with a personal letter appealing to him to allow the details of the transfer of territory to be settled by an international body of Germans, Czechs and English. If he refused this appeal, Horace Wilson was to tell him that France would fight for Czechoslovakia and that we should fight on the same side. The Prime Minister made this announcement almost casually and I could hardly believe my ears. It was after all a complete reversal of what [he] himself had advised us to do the day before. And it was a reversal of the policy which a majority of the Cabinet had supported. I had to ask him to repeat it for I thought I had misunderstood it. None of the 'yes men' who had supported his policy all day said a word in criticism of its reversal. Oliver observed rather acidly that apparently we were to tell the Germans that the French would fight, although we had just heard that the French themselves refused to say as much. However, there it was. The Prime Minister looked, for the first time, absolutely worn out, and I felt very sorry for him.

September 26, 1938

We had a Cabinet meeting at 12 this morning. The French Ministers were just leaving and I had a word with Daladier [French Prime Minister]. I asked him if he was satisfied and he said yes, that everything was very satisfactory. The P.M. told us that the French had been quite definite this morning that they would fight, and that we had quite definitely assured them that we would support them. It was odd to notice that not a murmur of protest came from any of those who had yesterday advocated a different policy. I felt it incumbent upon me in view of what I had said yesterday about resigning to state that I was in entire agreement with the policy now adopted. I added that if in our recent meetings I had expressed my opinions too frequently and too forcibly and had thereby added to the Prime Minister's heavy burden, I was very sorry.

September 27, 1938

When I got back from luncheon there was a telegram from Henderson, saying that he had seen Goering the previous evening. Goering had been 'absolutely confident'. It had been quite obvious from his conversation and from one that he had had with General Bodenschatz that the die is cast, that British mediation is at an end and that if delegates do not arrive at Berlin with full authority to make the best terms they can on their own with the Germans before 2 p.m.,

¹ Sir Horace Wilson (1882–1972), an influential senior civil servant, was an *éminence grise* to Chamberlain, who relied greatly on his advice; but he knew little about defence or foreign affairs. In 1939 he was made Permanent Under-Secretary to the Treasury and Head of the Civil Service.

tomorrow general mobilization will be ordered at that hour and occupation of Sudeten territory will begin immediately'.

Henderson's own incredible comment on this is 'If His Majesty's Government do not at this eleventh hour advise the Czechs in the name of humanity and of the Czechs themselves . . . to make the best terms they can with Berlin we shall be exposing Czechoslovakia to the same fate as Abyssinia'.

Having read this telegram I sent a message to the Prime Minister saying that in my opinion we should mobilize immediately – that I could see no justification for delay. Later I heard that the Chiefs of Staff were with the Prime Minister and later still I learnt from Backhouse that it had at last been decided to mobilize the Fleet. The Prime Minister would announce it this evening in his broadcast speech; meanwhile he wished no action to be taken which would give it publicity. This at least is satisfactory.

At 8 p.m. we listened in to the Prime Minister's broadcast. It was a most depressing utterance. There was no mention of France in it nor a word of sympathy for Czechoslovakia. The only sympathy expressed was for Hitler whose feeling about the Sudetens the Prime Minister said that he could well understand. And he never said a word about the mobilization of the Fleet. I was furious.

I then got a message to say there was a Cabinet at 9.30. The meeting was opened by the Prime Minister who recounted to us a series of gloomy reports. Horace Wilson told us of his mission to Germany. He had not delivered the important part of his message, namely that to the effect that England and France would fight, at his first interview with Hitler. When he had delivered it on the following day it was so tied up with conditional clauses that it had lost half its force. It was significant that even after he had told Hitler this the latter remarked that he couldn't believe that we should fall out. In Horace Wilson's opinion the only thing to do now was to advise the Czechs to evacuate the territory. He had drawn up a draft telegram containing this advice.

I spoke at once. I thought it important to get my oar in before the Big Four, as once they had spoken I knew that the yes men who are the majority of the Cabinet would agree with them. I said that we had listened to a recital by the Prime Minister of all the gloomiest facts he could collect. Not a word had been said about the brighter side – about President Roosevelt's¹ telegram, and one from the President of Brazil. Not a word about the much better reports that were now coming from France about the hardening of opinion and the temper of the people. Not a word about the similar tendency of world opinion regarding Hitler's ultimatum and his last speech. Our Military Attaché in Berlin was no doubt much under the influence of his Ambassador, who had shown himself a defeatist from the first. As for the Dominions, could we expect that they would ever be all united on the prospect of coming into a

¹ Franklin D. Roosevelt (1882–1945), President of the United States 1932–45. Roosevelt wanted to strengthen nations threatened or attacked by Germany while preserving American neutrality.

European War? They were not necessary to us for the conduct of a war. We began the last one with S. Africa in a state of revolution. If we now were to desert the Czechs, or even advise them to surrender, we should be guilty of one of the basest betrayals in history. I was bound to say that I had been disappointed that the P.M. in his broadcast had been unable to give them a word of praise or encouragement, and had reserved all his sympathy for Hitler. If we gave way now, I was going to say that it would be the end of England and of democracy – but I didn't really believe that – what I did believe was that it would be the end of this Government and certainly of my connection with it.

Halifax then produced another plan which the Cabinet hadn't seen but which he had sent to Henderson with instructions to submit it to Hitler. Oliver protested strongly against this very important step having been taken without consultation with the Cabinet. John Simon then eagerly denied any responsibility for Horace Wilson's draft telegram and declared that he hadn't even read it. The Prime Minister then also more or less denied responsibility. He said that as this did seem the last chance he had thought it shouldn't be thrown away without the Cabinet having an opportunity of discussing it. That I had expressed my dissent from it very eloquently and that as the Foreign Secretary agreed with me and nobody seemed in favour of it there was no more to be said. So the Cabinet broke up. As I left I said to the P.M. that I apologized for having criticized his speech – but that I had to say what I thought. I added that I had understood that he was going to announce the mobilization of the Fleet in his broadcast. He said he had meant to originally but that later he had decided not to. I said, casually, that there was, I supposed no point in keeping it secret. He agreed. I felt that if I had asked whether I could make a press announcement he might have hesitated; as it was I hurried home, got on to the Press Section in the Admiralty and told them to give it without delay to all the morning papers.

September 28, 1938

Privy Council at 10.30 for the Order-in-Council authorizing mobilization. The King kept me behind after the others had gone and we had half an hour's talk. He was very nice and very cheerful, envisaging the war with great equanimity.

I lunched at Buck's with Diana and the Cranbornes. They are of course boiling with anti-government indignation. I drove down to the House with them. Then there came the Prime Minister's speech. I listened to it in considerable gloom until he came to the end when he announced his latest *démarche* [the proposal for a four-power conference at Munich] and its unexpected success. The telegram announcing Hitler's agreement was only handed to him while he was speaking. The scene was remarkable, all Government supporters rising and cheering while the Opposition sat glum and silent. And then, when Atlee gave the plan his blessing our side, all rose again and cheered him – cheers with which the opposition had to join, though looking a little foolish.

Now I believe for the first time that there will not be a war. It seems hardly credible that four men meeting together cannot agree upon the method of handing over certain territories the cession of which has already been decided. I believe also that the mobilization of the Fleet has had something to do with it, because by that action we eventually succeeded in persuading Hitler that we were prepared to fight.

September 29, 1938

I thought I should sleep well last night but I didn't. I woke at 6 and got up at 6.30. We drove down to Heston to see the P.M. off. It was John Simon's idea that the whole Cabinet should turn up as a pleasant surprise for him. It was certainly a surprise. There is a slight sense of anticlimax. We are going on with all our war preparations.

I dined at the Other Club. They already had news to the effect that agreement had been reached at Munich and that the occupation was to begin on the 1st and to be completed on the 10th.¹ I was extremely depressed. It seemed to me that we might as well have accepted the Godesberg ultimatum and have had done with it. It was a fiery dinner. I insulted Prof. Lindemann² – Bob Boothby³ and I insulted Garvin⁴ so that he left in a rage. Then everybody insulted everybody else and Winston ended by saying that at the next General Election he would speak on every socialist platform in the country against the Government.

September 30, 1938

The full terms of the Munich agreement are in the paper this morning. At first sight, I felt that I couldn't agree to them. The principle of invasion remains. The German troops are to march in tomorrow and the Czechs are to leave all their installations intact. This means that they will have to hand over all their fortifications, guns, etc. upon which they have spent millions, and they will receive no compensation for them. The International Commission will enjoy increased powers, but our representative on it is to be Neville Henderson who in my opinion has played a sorry part in the whole business and who is violently anti-Czech and pro-German. While I was dressing this morning I decided that I must resign.

¹ The agreement stipulated that the Czechs were to evacuate specified areas; an international commission would decide the new frontiers; an international force would occupy the areas under dispute; and England, France, Italy and Germany would guarantee Czechoslovakia's independence.

² Frederick Lindemann, 1st Viscount Cherwell (1886–1957). An Oxford physicist, known as 'the Prof', he was Churchill's closest scientific adviser throughout the war.

³ Robert 'Bob' Boothby (1900–86), knighted 1953 and created a peer as Lord Boothby 1958. Conservative MP 1924–58. Member of pre-war anti-appeasement group in the Commons. After the war one of the leading supporters of a United Europe.

⁴ James Garvin (1868–1947), editor of the *Observer* 1908–42.

I motored down with Diana and Rex to lunch with Marjorie and Caroline. It was a beautiful autumn day – and I was in high spirits at the prospect of my new liberty though with many regrets at the thought of what I must forfeit – my work at the Admiralty, Admiralty House, the *Enchantress* etc.

When I got back to the Admiralty I learnt that there was to be a Cabinet at 7. Buck De La Warr came to see me about 6.30. He talked a lot of nonsense. He thinks this is a thoroughly evil Government but believes that we can thwart its intentions more successfully by remaining in it than by going out. I think it's a very good Government and I don't want to thwart it. It is merely a question of how much one can swallow. We went to the Cabinet together and had the greatest difficulty in getting into Downing Street owing to the enormous crowds of cheering people. The Prime Minister arrived at about 20 minutes past 7 amid scenes of indescribable enthusiasm. He spoke to the mob from the window. I felt very lonely in the midst of so much happiness that I could not share.

The Cabinet meeting lasted little more than half an hour. The Prime Minister explained the differences between the Munich and the Godesberg terms – and they are really considerably greater than I had understood. Nevertheless after a few questions had been asked and many congratulations had been offered I felt it my duty to offer my resignation.

I said that not only were the terms not good enough but also that I was alarmed about the future. We must all admit that we should not have gone so far to meet Germany's demands if our defences had been stronger. It had more than once been said in Cabinet that after having turned this corner we must get on more rapidly with rearmament. But how could we do so when the Prime Minister had just informed the crowd that we had peace 'for our time' – and we had entered into an agreement never to go to war with Germany?

The Prime Minister smiled at me in a quite friendly way and said that it was a matter to be settled between him and me. Oliver then made an appeal to me to reconsider my decision. He had agreed with me, he said, throughout but he now felt quite able to support and defend this policy. Leslie Hore-Belisha spoke in the same sense – and so I think did Eddie Winterton, but I cannot be sure. How soon one forgets! Then Sam Hoare intervened rather crossly. He said it was most improper and quite without precedent to discuss personal matters of this sort in Cabinet, and he hoped the discussion would not be prolonged. It was odd that he should have said this considering that last February we spent two days discussing whether Anthony should go or not. I think he said it because he hates me, is anxious to get rid of me and feared that further discussion might lead to my staying on.

Leslie drove me back to Admiralty House and came in. He urged me strongly not to go. I dined alone with Diana and went early to bed – but slept badly.

BERLIN

DIARY

The JOURNAL
of a Foreign Correspondent
1934-1941

WILLIAM L. SHIRER



New York

ALFRED A. KNOPF

1941

PRAGUE, September 13-14 (3 a.m.)

War very near, and since midnight we've been waiting for the German bombers, but so far no sign. Much shooting up in the Sudetenland, at Eger, Elbogen, Falkenau, Habersbirk. A few Sudeteners and Czechs killed and the Germans have been plundering Czech and Jewish shops. So the Czechs very rightly proclaimed martial law this morning in five Sudeten districts. About seven this evening we learned that Henlein had sent a six-hour ultimatum to the government. It was delivered at six p.m., expired at midnight. It demanded: repeal of martial law, withdrawal of Czech police from the Sudetenland, "separation" of military barracks from the civilian population. Whether it is backed by Hitler we do not know, though after his Nuremberg speech there seems little doubt that it is. Anyway, the Czech government has turned it down. It could not have done otherwise. It has made its choice. It will fight. We wait now for Hitler's move.

The tension and confusion this night in the lobby of the Ambassador Hotel, where the diplomats and correspondents gather, has been indescribable. Fascinating to watch the reactions of people suddenly seized by fear. Some can't take it. They let themselves go to a point of hysteria, then in panic flee to — God knows where. Most take it, with various degrees of courage and coolness. In the lobby tonight: the newspapermen milling around trying to get telephone calls through the one lone operator. Jews excitedly trying to book on the last plane or train. The wildest rumours coming in with every new person that steps through the revolving door from outside, all of us gathering around to listen, believing or disbelieving according to our feelings. Göring's bombers will come at midnight — unless the

Czechs accept the ultimatum. They will use gas. How can a man get a gas-mask? There are none. What do you do then? Beneš will accept the ultimatum. He must! The newspapermen racing up and down, furious about the telephones, about the Germans, keeping an ear cocked for the first bomb. Packard and Beattie of U.P., Steinkopf of A.P., Red Knickerbocker of INS, Whitaker and Fodor of the *Chicago Daily News*, Alex Small of the *Chicago Tribune*, Walter Kerr of the *New York Herald Tribune*, Gedye and Vadnay of the *New York Times*, and the English correspondents.

An element of comedy helps break the tension. Alex, behind a large beer, Phoebe Packard behind another, frown at a cable Alex has just received. It is from his boss, Colonel McCormick, instructing him with military precision how to cover the war. "Wars always start at dawn. Be there at dawn," cables the colonel, Alex says.

A timid American businessman creeps up to our table, introduces himself. "I'm getting a big kick out of this evening," he says. "You newspaper people certainly lead interesting lives."

"What'll you drink, sir?" someone asks him. We go on with our talk, shout for a telephone.

Midnight nears. Deadline for the ultimatum. An official from the Foreign Office comes in, his face grave. "Abgelehnt," he says in German. "Turned down." The ultimatum is turned down. The correspondents fly again to the telephone. Several Jews scurry out. The press agent of the Sudeten party, a big jovial fellow who usually drops in at this time to give us his news, comes in as usual. He is not jovial. "Have they turned it down?" he asks. He hardly waits for the answer. Grabbing a small bag he has left in the corner, he disappears through the door.

Packard or someone finally gets through to the

Sudetenland. They are fighting there with rifles, hand-grenades, machine-guns, tanks. It is war, everyone agrees. Bill Morrell comes through on the phone from Habersbirk. Will I pass his story on to the *Daily Express*? Yes, what is it? He is talking from the police station there, he says. In the corner of the room a few feet away, he says, under a sheet lie the bodies of four Czech gendarmes and one German. The Germans have shot dead all four gendarmes in the town, but Czech reinforcements have arrived and the government is now in control. I call up Mary, his wife, about to become a mother, and tell her Bill is all right. Time for my broadcast. I race up the street to Broadcasting House.

Out in the street, I must say, I felt just a little ashamed. The people in the street were quiet, unexcited. No troops, no police to be seen anywhere. Everybody going home to bed just as they always have. Broadcast, but we could not hear New York and I fear atmospherics. And so to bed.

PRAGUE, September 14 (morning)

A discouraging cable from Paul White. My broadcast last night failed to get through. Atmospherics or sun spots, he says. Off now for a drive through the Sudetenland to take a look at the fighting, with Hindus, Cox, Morrell.

EVENING. — Drove two hundred miles through Sudetenland. The fighting is all over. The revolt, inspired from Germany with German arms, has been put down. And the Czech police and military, acting with a restraint that is incredible, have suffered more casualties than the Sudeten Germans. Unless Hitler again interferes, the crisis has passed its peak. The

Sudeteners I talked to today very puzzled. They expected the German army to march in Monday night after Hitler's speech, and when it didn't arrive, but the Czech army did, their spirits dropped. Only at Schwaderbach are the Henleinists holding out, and that's because the Czechs can't fire into the town without their bullets hitting Reich territory. Henlein announces this afternoon from Asch the dissolution of the committee which had been negotiating here with the government. Ernst Kundt, his chief delegate, a swarthy, passionate man and the most decent of the lot, tells me he's remaining in Prague "if they don't kill me."

Some time after dinner a newsboy rushed into the lobby of the Ambassador with extra editions of a German-language paper, the only one I can read since I do not know Czech. The headlines said: Chamberlain to fly to Berchtesgaden tomorrow to see Hitler! The Czechs are dumbfounded. They suspect a sell-out and I'm afraid they're right. On the way to broadcast tonight, Hindus, who was with me and understands Czech, stopped to listen to what the newsboys were shouting. They were yelling, he said: "Extra! Extra! Read all about how the mighty head of the British Empire goes begging to Hitler!" I have not heard a better comment this evening. Broadcast again, but fear we did not get through. Mighty powerful sun spots at work against us.

PRAGUE, September 15

Feel a little frustrated. New York cables again that I failed to get through. Tonight I shall cable my piece to be read. Henlein today issued a proclamation demanding outright *Anschluss*, after

which he fled to Germany. The government has ordered his arrest as a traitor. Ed Beattie of U.P. telephoned this morning from Eger, and though he is an American to the core, Packard could not understand a word he said. Pack came running to me. "Beattie's gone nuts. Speaks in some strange language. Will you talk to him?" I got on the line. Ed explained in German he was speaking from a Czech police station, that the Czechs understood German and no English and had given him a line on condition he file his story in German so that they could check him. I took it down. Six killed there last night when Czech police stormed Henlein's headquarters in the Hotel Victoria.

Czechs, like everyone else, kept their eyes focused on Berchtesgaden today. Tonight they're asking if the peace which Mr. Chamberlain is trying to extract from Hitler does not call for them to make all the concessions. Government circles very gloomy. Murrow called from London and suggested I get off immediately to Berchtesgaden. Don't know whether I can. Czech trains have stopped running across the border and I can't find a Czech driver who will take his car across the frontier.

LATER. — Ed called to say Chamberlain was returning to London in the morning. My Berchtesgaden trip is off. Relieved. Prefer to cover this war from the Czech side.

PRAGUE, September 16

Another cable from New York. For the third successive day they could not hear me, but read my piece which arrived by cable. This *is* bad luck for radio. Berlin reports Hitler has demanded — and Chamberlain more or less accepted — a plebiscite for the Sudeteners.

The government here says it is out of the question. But they are afraid *that* is what happened at Berchtesgaden. In other words that Mr. Chamberlain has sold them down the river. I say in my broadcast tonight: "Will the Czechs consent to breaking up their state and sacrificing their strategic mountain border which has protected Bohemia for a thousand years? . . . I get the impression they will not lie down and trust their fate even to a conference of the four big western powers. . . . The Czechs say: Supposing even that a plebiscite were accepted and the Sudetens turned over to Germany. As compensation Mr. Chamberlain, they think, would give them a guarantee against aggression, solemnly signed by Great Britain, France, Germany, Italy. But what, they ask, would another treaty be worth?"

LATER. — Hoorah! Heard New York perfectly on the feedback tonight and they heard me equally well. After four days of being blotted out, and *these* four days! Runciman has left for London, skipping out very quietly, unloved, unhonoured, unsung.

PRAGUE, September 18

The Czechs are stiffening as it becomes evident that Chamberlain is ready to support Hitler's demands for taking over Sudetenland and indeed, in effect, Czechoslovakia. Milo Hodza, the Premier, broadcast to the world today and uttered a definite no to the proposition of a plebiscite. "It is unacceptable. It will solve nothing," he said. Hodza, unlike most Slovaks, struck me as being very high-strung and nervous when I saw him at Broadcasting House after he finished talking. He showed visibly the strain of the last days. Is he talking strong, but weakening, I wonder.

LATER. — I must go to Germany. At midnight Murrow phoned from London with the news. The British and French have decided they will not fight for Czechoslovakia and are asking Prague to surrender unconditionally to Hitler and turn over Sudetenland to Germany. I protested to Ed that the Czechs wouldn't accept it, that they'd fight alone. . . .

"Maybe so. I hope you're right. But in the meantime Mr. Chamberlain is meeting Hitler at Godesberg on Wednesday and we want you to cover that. If there's a war, then you can go back to Prague."

"All right," I said.

I don't care where I go now. I finally collected myself and went over and routed Maurice Hindus out of bed, telling him the news, which he refused to believe. We telephoned to two or three friends in the Foreign Office. By the tone of their voices they had heard the news too, though they said not. They said it was too "fantastic" to believe, which of course it is. Maurice and I took a walk. People were going home from the cafés but they did not seem unduly excited and it was obvious they had not heard the reports from London.

Maurice is to broadcast while I'm away. I take a plane to Berlin in the morning. To bed, four a.m., weary and disgusted.

BERLIN, September 19

The Nazis, and quite rightly too, are jubilant over what they consider Hitler's greatest triumph up to date. "And without bloodshed, like all the others," they kept rubbing it in to me today. As for the good people in the street, they're immensely relieved. They do not want war. The Nazi press full of hysterical headlines. All lies. Some examples: **WOMEN AND CHIL-**

DREN MOWED DOWN BY CZECH ARMoured CARS, or BLOODY REGIME — NEW CZECH MURDERS OF GERMANS. The *Börsen Zeitung* takes the prize: **POISON-GAS ATTACK ON AUSSIG?** The *Hamburg Zeitung* is pretty good: **EXTORTION, PLUNDERING, SHOOTING — CZECH TERROR IN SUDETEN GERMAN LAND GROWS WORSE FROM DAY TO DAY!**

No word from Prague tonight as to whether the Czechs will accept Chamberlain's ultimatum. I still hope against hope they will fight. For if they do, then there's a European war and Hitler can't win it. Ended my broadcast tonight thus: "One thing is certain: Mr. Chamberlain will certainly get a warm welcome at Godesberg. In fact, I got the impression in Berlin today that Mr. Chamberlain is a pretty popular figure around here."

ON THE TRAIN, BERLIN-GODESBERG, September 20

A weird broadcast we've just done. Paul White phoned from New York at six p.m. just as I was packing my bags. I told him he'd have to cancel my regular talk at ten thirty tonight as our train for Godesberg left at ten thirty. He suggested a broadcast from the train, interviewing the correspondents on the chances for peace or war at Godesberg. A phone call to the *Reichs Rundfunk*. Impossible to do it from the train. How about doing it from the Friedrichstrasse station, I asked. Will do, said Dr. Harald Diettrich, youthful, enterprising acting-head of the German short-wave department. A telephone call to New York. White delighted. When I arrived at the station five minutes before ten, when the broadcast was due to begin, the microphone was there and working.

But there were no American correspondents. The platform was empty. At ten I started to chat away ad lib. The only news I had was that the Hungarians and the Poles had been down to Berchtesgaden during the day to demand, like jackals, their share of the Czech spoils. This subject exhausted, I took to reading the headlines from the evening papers. The usual lies, but if I said so, the Nazis would cut me off. Headlines like this: **CZECH SOLDIERS ATTACK GERMAN EMPIRE!** I looked around. Still no correspondents. I hoped they would all miss the train. I talked along about the Czech minorities, I think it was. Finally Huss showed up. I grabbed him by the coat-tails and before he knew it he was on the air. The rest of the newspapermen finally arrived, but they seemed busy sorting out their luggage. Huss began to make frantic signs. God knows how the rest of the show sounded. I put on two or three Englishmen, then Sigrid Schultz, Webb Miller, Ralph Barnes. Philippo Boiano of the *Popolo d'Italia* motioned he wanted to speak. I knew how secretly he hated the Nazis, but I wasn't sure of his English. It was wonderful. No stage accent could have been half so good. Jouve of Havas wanted to talk too. Before I could ask him if he spoke English he was talking — in French. I started to translate what he had said, and then, out of the corner of my eye, I saw the train moving. My finishing sentence was not smooth, but I made the train. Fear the show was a flop at home, but there are more important things to think of now.

GODESBERG, September 22

The Swastika and the British Union Jack flying side by side in this lovely Rhine town — very appropriate, I find. Very appropriate, too, to hold your

meeting in a Wagnerian town, for it is here, they say, that Wotan, Thor, and the other gods of the early Teutons used to frolic.

This morning I noticed something very interesting. I was having breakfast in the garden of the Dreesen Hotel, where Hitler is stopping, when the great man suddenly appeared, strode past me, and went down to the edge of the Rhine to inspect his river yacht. X, one of Germany's leading editors, who secretly despises the regime, nudged me: "Look at his walk!" On inspection it was a very curious walk indeed. In the first place, it was very ladylike. Dainty little steps. In the second place, every few steps he cocked his right shoulder nervously, his left leg snapping up as he did so. I watched him closely as he came back past us. The same nervous tic. He had ugly black patches under his eyes. I think the man is on the edge of a nervous breakdown. And now I understand the meaning of an expression the party hacks were using when we sat around drinking in the Dreesen last night. They kept talking about the "*Teppichfresser*," the "carpet-eater." At first I didn't get it, and then someone explained it in a whisper. They said Hitler has been having some of his nervous crises lately and that in recent days they've taken a strange form. Whenever he goes on a rampage about Beneš or the Czechs he flings himself to the floor and chews the edges of the carpet, hence the *Teppichfresser*. After seeing him this morning, I can believe it.

Chamberlain and Hitler had a three-hour talk this afternoon and will have another tomorrow. Just as I was broadcasting from a little studio we've fixed up in the porter's lodge of the hotel, the two men after their conference stepped out right before my window. Hitler was all graciousness indeed and Chamberlain, looking the image of an owl, was smiling and apparently highly

pleased in his vain way with some manufactured applause by a company of S.S. guards before the door. Chamberlain, I hear, proposed an international commission to superintend the withdrawal of the Czechs from Sudetenland and an international guarantee for what is left of Czechoslovakia. New York cables our Friedrichstrassebahnhof show last night was a knock-out. Strange. New Cabinet in Prague. New Premier: one-eyed, hard-boiled General Jan Syrový, Inspector-General of the army. The Czechs may fight yet.

GODESBERG, September 23-4, 4 a.m.

War seems very near after this strange day. All the British and French correspondents and Birchall of the *New York Times*, who is an English subject, scurrying off at dawn — in about an hour now — for the French, Belgian, or Dutch frontier. It seems that Hitler has given Chamberlain the double-cross. And the old owl is hurt. All day long he sulked in his rooms at the Petershof up on the Petersberg on the other side of the Rhine, refusing to come over and talk with the dictator. At five p.m. he sent Sir Horace Wilson, his “confidential” adviser, and Sir Nevile Henderson, the British Ambassador in Berlin (both of whom, we feel, would sell out Czecho for five cents), over the river to see Ribbentrop. Result: Chamberlain and Hitler met at ten thirty p.m. This meeting, which is the last, broke up at one thirty a.m. without agreement and now it looks like war, though from my “studio” in the porter’s lodge twenty-five feet away I could not discern any strain or particular displeasure in Chamberlain’s birdy face as he said his farewell to Hitler, who also was smiling and gracious. Still the Germans are plunged in deep gloom tonight, as if they really are afraid of war now

that it’s facing them. They are gloomy and yet feverishly excited. Just as I was about to go on the air at two a.m. with the day’s story and the official communiqué, Goebbels and Hadamovsky, the latter Nazi boss of German radio, came rushing in and forbade Jordan and me to say anything over the air except to read the official communiqué. Later I grabbed a bit of supper in the Dreesen lobby. Goebbels, Ribbentrop, Göring, Keitel, and others walked in and out, all of them looking as if they had been hit over the head with a sledgehammer. This rather surprised me, since it’s a war of *their* making. The communiqué merely says that Chamberlain has undertaken to deliver to Prague a German memorandum containing Germany’s “final attitude” concerning the Sudeten question. The point is that Chamberlain came here all prepared to turn over Sudetenland to Hitler, but in a “British” way — with an international commission to supervise the business. He found Hitler’s appetite had increased. Hitler wants to take over *his* way — that is, right away, with no nonsense of an international commission. Actually, it’s not an important point for either, but they seem to have stuck to their positions.¹

In meantime, word that the Czechs have *at last* ordered mobilization.

Five a.m. now. Shall lie down on a table here in the lobby, as I must be off at six for Cologne to catch the Berlin plane.

¹ Sir Nevile Henderson in *Failure of a Mission* has told us since that during the first talk after Chamberlain had outlined his plan of complete surrender to Hitler, the Führer looked at him and said: “*Es tut mir furchtbar leid, aber das geht nicht mehr* (I’m awfully sorry, but that now is not enough).” Chamberlain, says Henderson, expressed his “surprise and indignation.”

BERLIN, September 24

Today's story is in my broadcast made at midnight tonight. I said: "There was some confusion among us all at Godesberg this morning . . . but tonight, as seen from Berlin, the position is this: Hitler has demanded that Czechoslovakia not later than Saturday, October 1, agree to the handing over of Sudetenland to Germany. Mr. Chamberlain has agreed to convey this demand to the Czechoslovak Government. The very fact that he, with all the authority of a man who is political leader of the British Empire, has taken upon himself this task is accepted here, and I believe elsewhere, as meaning that Mr. Chamberlain backs Hitler up.

"That's why the German people I talked with in the streets of Cologne this morning, and in Berlin this evening, believe there'll be peace. As a matter of fact, what do you think the new slogan in Berlin is tonight? It's in the evening papers. It's this: 'With Hitler and Chamberlain for peace!' And the *Angriff* adds: 'Hitler and Chamberlain are working night and day for peace.'"

So Berlin is optimistic tonight for peace. Unable to telephone or wire Hindus in Prague tonight to give him his time schedule. All communication with Prague cut off. Thank God for that Czech transmitter.¹

BERLIN, September 25

Hitler to make a speech tomorrow evening at the Sportpalast. Seems he is furious at the reports

¹ In the next days it furnished the only means of communication between Prague and the outside world.

from Prague, Paris, and London that his Godesberg Memorandum goes beyond his original agreement with Chamberlain at Berchtesgaden. He claims not. No war fever, not even any anti-Czech feeling, discernible here on this quiet Sabbath day. In the old days on the eve of wars, I believe, crowds used to demonstrate angrily before the embassies of the enemy countries. Today I walked past the Czech Legation. Not a soul outside, not even a policeman. Warm and sunny, the last summer Sunday of the year probably, and half the population of Berlin seems to have spent it at the near-by lakes or in the woods of the Grunewald. Hard to believe there will be war.

BERLIN, September 26

Hitler has finally burned his last bridges. Shouting and shrieking in the worst state of excitement I've ever seen him in, he stated in the Sportpalast tonight that he would have his Sudetenland by October 1 — next Saturday, today being Monday. If Beneš doesn't hand it over to him he will go to war, this Saturday. Curious audience, the fifteen thousand party *Bonsen* packed into the hall. They applauded his words with the usual enthusiasm. Yet there was no war fever. The crowd was *good-natured*, as if it didn't realize what his words meant. The old man full of more venom than even he has ever shown, hurling personal insults at Beneš. Twice Hitler screamed that *this* is absolutely his last territorial demand in Europe. Speaking of his assurances to Chamberlain, he said: "I further assured him that when the Czechs have reconciled themselves with their other minorities, the Czech state no longer interests me and that, if you please, I would give him an-

other guarantee: We do not want any Czechs." At the end Hitler had the impudence to place responsibility for peace or war exclusively on Beneš!

I broadcast the scene from a seat in the balcony just above Hitler. He's still got that nervous tic. All during his speech he kept cocking his shoulder, and the opposite leg from the knee down would bounce up. Audience couldn't see it, but I could. As a matter of fact, for the first time in all the years I've observed him he seemed tonight to have completely lost control of himself. When he sat down after his talk, Goebbels sprang up and shouted: "One thing is sure: 1918 will never be repeated!" Hitler looked up to him, a wild, eager expression in his eyes, as if those were the words which he had been searching for all evening and hadn't quite found. He leaped to his feet and with a fanatical fire in his eyes that I shall never forget brought his right hand, after a grand sweep, pounding down on the table and yelled with all the power in his mighty lungs: "*Ja!*" Then he slumped into his chair exhausted.

BERLIN, *September 27*

A motorized division rolled through the city's streets just at dusk this evening in the direction of the Czech frontier. I went out to the corner of the Linden where the column was turning down the Wilhelmstrasse, expecting to see a tremendous demonstration. I pictured the scenes I had read of in 1914 when the cheering throngs on this same street tossed flowers at the marching soldiers, and the girls ran up and kissed them. The hour was undoubtedly chosen today to catch the hundreds of thousands of Berliners pouring out of their offices at the end of the day's work. But they ducked into the subways, refused to look on, and the handful

that did stand at the curb in utter silence unable to find a word of cheer for the flower of their youth going away to the glorious war. It has been the most striking demonstration against war I've ever seen. Hitler himself reported furious. I had not been standing long at the corner when a policeman came up the Wilhelmstrasse from the direction of the Chancellery and shouted to the few of us standing at the curb that the Führer was on his balcony reviewing the troops. Few moved. I went down to have a look. Hitler stood there, and there weren't two hundred people in the street or the great square of the Wilhelmsplatz. Hitler looked grim, then angry, and soon went inside, leaving his troops to parade by unreviewed. What I've seen tonight almost rekindles a little faith in the German people. They are dead set against war.

Tess, with baby, off today from Cherbourg for America on a voyage she had booked months ago. On the phone last night from Paris she said that France was mobilizing and it was not sure the boat train would go. No word today, so suppose it did.

BERLIN, *September 28*

There is to be no war! Hitler has invited Mussolini, Chamberlain, and Daladier to meet him in Munich tomorrow. The latter three will rescue Hitler from his limb and he will get his Sudetenland without war, if a couple of days later than he boasted. The people in the streets greatly relieved, and if I judge correctly, the people in the Wilhelmstrasse and the Bendlerstrasse (War Department) also. Leaving right after my broadcast tonight for Munich.

MUNICH, September 30

It's all over. At twelve thirty this morning — thirty minutes after midnight — Hitler, Mussolini, Chamberlain, and Daladier signed a pact turning over Sudetenland to Germany. The German occupation begins tomorrow, Saturday, October 1, and will be completed by October 10. Thus the two "democracies" even assent to letting Hitler get by with his Sportpalast boast that he would get his Sudetenland by October 1. He gets everything he wanted, except that he has to wait a few days longer for *all* of it. His waiting ten short days has saved the peace of Europe — a curious commentary on this sick, decadent continent.

So far as I've been able to observe during these last, strangely unreal twenty-four hours, Daladier and Chamberlain never pressed for a single concession from Hitler. They never got together alone once and made no effort to present some kind of common "democratic" front to the two Cæsars. Hitler met Mussolini early yesterday morning at Kufstein and they made their plans. Daladier and Chamberlain arrived by separate planes and didn't even deem it useful to lunch together yesterday to map out their strategy, though the two dictators did.

Czechoslovakia, which is asked to make all the sacrifices so that Europe may have peace, was not consulted here at any stage of the talks. Their two representatives, Dr. Mastny, the intelligent and honest Czech Minister in Berlin, and a Dr. Masaryk of the Prague Foreign Office, were told at one thirty a.m. that Czechoslovakia would *have* to accept, told not by Hitler, but by Chamberlain and Daladier! Their protests, we hear, were practically laughed off by the elder statesman. Chamberlain, looking more like some bird — like the

black vultures I've seen over the Parsi dead in Bombay — looked particularly pleased with himself when he returned to the Regina Palace Hotel after the signing early this morning, though he was a bit sleepy, *pleasantly* sleepy.

Daladier, on the other hand, looked a completely beaten and broken man. He came over to the Regina to say good-bye to Chamberlain. A bunch of us were waiting as he came down the stairs. Someone asked, or started to ask: "*Monsieur le President*, are you satisfied with the agreement? . . ." He turned as if to say something, but he was too tired and defeated and the words did not come out and he stumbled out the door in silence. The French say he fears to return to Paris, thinks a hostile mob will get him. Can only hope they're right. For France has sacrificed her whole Continental position and lost her main prop in eastern Europe. For France this day has been disastrous.

How different Hitler at two this morning! After being blocked from the Führerhaus all evening, I finally broke in just as he was leaving. Followed by Göring, Ribbentrop, Goebbels, Hess, and Keitel, he brushed past me like the conqueror he is this morning. I noticed his swagger. The tic was gone! As for Mussolini, he pulled out early, cocky as a rooster.

Incidentally, I've been badly scooped this night. Max Jordan of NBC got on the air a full hour ahead of me with the *text* of the agreement — one of the worst beatings I've ever taken. Because of his company's special position in Germany, he was allowed exclusive use of Hitler's radio studio in the Führerhaus, where the conference has been taking place. Wiegand, who also was in the house, tells me Max cornered Sir Horace Wilson of the British delegation as he stepped out of the conference room, procured an English text from

him, rushed to the Führer's studio, and in a few moments was on the air. Unable to use this studio on the spot, I stayed close to the only other outlet, the studio of the Munich station, and arranged with several English and American friends to get me the document, if possible immediately after the meeting itself, if not from one of the delegations. Demaree Bess was first to arrive with a copy, but, alas, we were late. New York kindly phoned about two thirty this morning to tell me not to mind — damned decent of them. Actually at eleven thirty p.m. I had gone on the air announcing that an agreement had been reached. I gave them all the essential details of the accord, stating that the occupation would begin Saturday, that it would be completed in ten days, et cetera. But I should have greatly liked to have had the official text first. Fortunately for CBS, Ed Murrow in London was the first to flash the official news to America that the agreement had been signed thirty minutes after midnight. He picked it up from the Munich radio station in the midst of a talk.

LATER. — Chamberlain, apparently realizing his diplomatic annihilation, has pulled a very clever face-saving stunt. He saw Hitler again this morning before leaving and afterwards a joint communiqué was issued. Essential part: "We regard the agreement signed last night and the Anglo-German naval accord as symbolic of the desire of our two peoples never to go to war with one another again." And a final paragraph saying they will consult about further questions which may concern the two countries and are "determined to continue our efforts to remove possible sources of difference and thus to contribute to the assurance of peace in Europe."

LATER. *On Train, Munich-Berlin.* — Most of the leading German editors on the train and tossing down the champagne and not trying to disguise any more their elation over Hitler's terrific victory over Britain and France. On the diner Halfeld of the *Hamburger Fremdenblatt*, Otto Kriegk of the *Nachtausgabe*, Dr. Boehmer, the foreign press chief of the Propaganda Ministry, gloating over it, buying out all the champagne in the diner, gloating, boasting, bragging. . . . When a German feels big he feels *big*. Shall have two hours in Berlin this evening to get my army passes and a bath and then off by night train to Passau to go into Sudetenland with the German army — a sad assignment for me.

[LATER. — And Chamberlain will go back to London and from the balcony of 10 Downing Street that night will boast: "My good friends, this is the second time in our history" (do the crowds shouting: "Good old Neville" and singing "For he's a jolly good fellow" remember Disraeli, the Congress of Berlin, 1878?) "that there has come back from Germany to Downing Street peace with honour. I believe it is peace for our time." Peace with honour! And Czechoslovakia? And only Duff Cooper will resign from the Cabinet, saying: "It was not for Serbia or Belgium we fought in 1914 . . . but . . . in order that one great power should not be allowed, in disregard of treaty obligations and the laws of nations and against all morality, to dominate by brutal force the continent of Europe. . . . Throughout these days the Prime Minister has believed in addressing Herr Hitler with the language of sweet reasonableness. I have believed he was more open to the language of the mailed fist. . . ." Only Winston Churchill, a voice in the wilderness all these years, will

say, addressing the Commons: "We have sustained a total, unmitigated defeat. . . . Do not let us blind ourselves. We must expect that all the countries of central and eastern Europe will make the best terms they can with the triumphant Nazi power. . . . The road down the Danube . . . the road to the Black Sea and Turkey, has been broken. It seems to me that all the countries of Mittel Europa and the Danube Valley, one after the other, will be drawn into the vast system of Nazi politics, not only power military politics, but power economic politics, radiating from Berlin." Churchill — the lone, unheeded prophet in the British land.]

ON TRAIN, REGENSBURG-BERLIN, October 2

At Regensburg before dawn yesterday, then by bus to Passau on the Danube, and from there by car with a German General Staff major following the troops picnic-marching into Zone I of the Sudetenland. Back after dark last night in a pouring rain to Passau, where the military censors refused to let me broadcast; a train to Regensburg arriving there at midnight and filing my story by telephone to Press Wireless in Paris to be read in New York, since the RRG in Berlin says the military have put a *Verbot* on all broadcasts, including their own, of the occupation. No plane to Berlin, so this train and will broadcast from there tonight.

BERLIN. LATER. — Military had not yet lifted their *Verbot*, so had to read another piece I had written on train on the political significance of Hitler's great victory at Munich, quoting an editorial by Rudolf Kircher, the only intelligent and courageous editor left in Nazi Germany, in this morning's *Frankfurter Zeitung* wherein he frankly states the advantages of threat-

ening force and war and how Hitler knew all the time that the democracies were *afraid* of war. When I returned to the hotel, some general in charge of the military censorship at the German radio was on the phone saying he had just read my piece on the occupation, that he liked it, that he had had to suppress all the accounts of the German radio reporters so far, but that I could now broadcast mine. Called Paul White in New York, but he said the crisis was over and that people at home wanted to forget it and to take a rest. Which is all right with me. Can stand some sleep and a change from these Germans, so truculent and impossible now.

BERLIN, October 3

Phoned Ed Murrow in London. He as depressed as am I. We shall drown our sorrows in Paris day after tomorrow. From my window in the Adlon I see them dismantling the anti-aircraft gun on the roof of the I. G. Farben company across the Linden. Thus ends the crisis. Little things to remember: the characters in the drama: the dignity of Beneš throughout; Hitler the five times I saw him; the bird, Chamberlain; the broken little man, Daladier, who seems destined to fall down (as on February 6, 1934) each time he is in a hole. To remember too: the mine at a bridge over a little creek near Krumau which might have blown us to bits had our German army car gone two feet farther; the bravery of the Czechs in Prague the night war and bombs at dawn seemed certain; the look of fear in the faces of the German burghers in the Wilhelmstrasse the night the motorized division swept by and war seemed certain to them, and then the delirious joy of the citizens in Munich — and Berlin — when they learned on Friday that it was not only peace but victory; the