

Sudetenland Crisis of 1938

TOPIC A: *Addressing Germany's growing desire for expansion.*

TOPIC B: *Enforcing the Treaty of Versailles*

Introduction:

September, 1938 has come and tensions throughout the European continent are rising. Adolf Hitler, Chancellor of Germany, has been rearming the country since 1933, in clear violation of the terms of the Treaty of Versailles. Hitler has invaded the Rhineland between France and Germany in 1936, and just this last March, had combined Germany and Austria into a powerful entity. He has been threatening invasion of Czechoslovakia, his confidence bolstered by England's appeasement policy which allowed him to annex Austria. By rousing the support of ethnic Germans on the Czechoslovakian borders, the Sudetens and their Sudeten German Party,

Hitler is trying to justify the annexation as returning the underrepresented German people to their true country. However, Czechoslovakia's leader, Edvard Benes, is concerned that if the Nazi Germans in the Sudetenland agree to the merger with Germany, most of Czechoslovakia's defenses, which are located within the region will be in the hands of the Germans and will leave Czechoslovakia defenseless. As a council of countries from all over the European continent, the committee's objective is to negotiate an agreement that will consider each country's situations, uphold country sovereignty, and maintain and enforce the terms of the Treaty of Versailles.

TOPIC A: *Addressing Germany's growing desire for expansion.*

Germany, after World War I, was in economic ruins. Poverty was at an unprecedented high and the country lost territory in Africa, Asia, and the territory that went on to become Poland. The country was also severely demilitarized after the war, since the Allied powers, especially the United States, Britain, and France, wanted to prevent Germany from being capable enough to instigate another war. Another condition of the treaty, Article 231, forced Germany to accept total blame for the war, which meant the country was responsible for all the material damages, as well as the stigma and shame that the citizens faced because of the blame. Germany also had to conduct war crime proceedings against their own Kaiser Wilhelm and other former political leaders.

These conditions fostered growing resentment within the German population, which set the stage for the rise of the Nazi Party and Adolf Hitler. With his promises to remilitarize Germany, reclaim territory, and regain power and prominence, Hitler appealed to many Germans, who were willing to overlook the more unsavory characteristics of the Nazi dogma. Now, the fierce fervor within the German people has come to a peak, with the nation, through its political and military leaders, ready to move against the rest of Europe and avenge the perceived wrongs.

In order to address this national desire for expansion and retribution, the committee must find a way to appease the German people, research economic reparations and adjustments to the treaty that could be made in order to prevent such sentiments from rising once more. The committee must also take corrective action against those responsible for strengthening the public's bitterness and consider measures to dissuade future movements that endanger the peace and stability within Europe.

TOPIC B: *Enforcing the Treaty of Versailles*

The Treaty of Versailles' terms dictate that Germany pay exorbitant sums for reparations as well as accept total blame for the war. The country was also heavily demilitarized and economically weakened. In regards to the arms restrictions, Germany's army was limited to 100,000 soldiers, the navy restricted to small vessels under 10,000 tons, with bans on submarine and air force acquisitions and development.

The treaty also mandated that Germany cede Eupen-Malmedy to Belgium and the Hultschin district to Czechoslovakia. Germany also lost Poznan, West Prussia, and Upper Silesia to Poland, as well as returning Alsace and Lorraine to France, even though they were annexed after the Franco-Prussian War of 1871. Germany was also forced to give up all its holdings in Africa and Asia. In addition to territorial losses, Germany was forced to demilitarize the Rhineland and put the Saarland under French "special control". Overall, Germany lost 13% of its territory, and over 10% of its population was now alienated from its nation.

Now, this resentment led to Germany's violations of the Treaty of Versailles. In October, 1933, Hitler withdrew Germany from the League of Nations, citing European disarmament as the cause. Since Germany was militarily weak under the treaty, Hitler expected the other countries to disarm too, to maintain a balance of power within the continent. Since the other countries had refused to do so, Hitler justified his violation of the treaty and started to build his armed forces. In 1935, when no action was taken against his violations, Hitler started massive conscription into the German army. Convinced that Britain and France were unwilling to become wrapped up in another war with Germany, Hitler sent troops into the Rhineland. The French government did not take any action against the newly-found Germans on their border without British support, and the

British government maintained their position of appeasement and did not take any military action against Hitler and the rest of the Nazi Party.

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