Mein Kampf
Adolf Hitler

The most extreme and racist form of fascism arose in Germany under the Nazis, led by Adolf Hitler (1889-1945). After serving in World War I, Hitler joined and soon took control of the small National Socialist German Workers party. In the early 1930s, after years of relative obscurity, the Nazi party gained popularity with a nationalistic program attacking the Versailles Treaty, the Weimar Republic, the Communists, and above all, the Jews. In 1933, Hitler was appointed chancellor and Germany was soon transformed into a Nazi state. Hitler’s ideology, his mental processes, and some of the ideas behind Nazism are illustrated in his rather formless book Mein Kampf ("My Struggle"). It was written in 1924 while he was in jail for his efforts to overthrow the government of Bavaria in southern Germany. With the growing popularity of the Nazi party in the early 1930s, the book became a best-seller. In these selections from Mein Kampf, Hitler displays his anti-Semitism, argues that a racial analysis is central to an understanding of history, and indicates his vision of German expansion eastward at the expense of Russia.

If we were to divide mankind into three groups, the founders of culture, the bearers of culture. The destroyers of culture, only the Aryan could be considered as the representative of the first group. From him originate the foundations and walls of all human creation, and only the outward form and color are determined by the changing traits of character of the various peoples. He provides the mightiest building stones and plans for all human progress and only the execution corresponds to the nature of the varying men and races. . . .

Blood mixture and the resultant drop in the racial level is the sole cause of the dying out of old culture; for men do not perish as a result of lost wars, but by the loss of that force of resistance which is contained only in pure blood.

All who are not of good race in this world are chaff. . . .

With satanic joy in his face, the black-haired Jewish youth lurks in wait for the unsuspecting girl whom he defiles with his blood, thus stealing her from her people. With every means he tries to destroy the racial foundations of the people he has set out to subjugate. Just as he himself systematically ruins women and girls, he does not shrink back from pulling down the blood barriers for others, even on a large scale. It was and it is Jews who bring the Negroes into the Rhineland, and always with the same secret though and clear aim of ruining the hated white race by the necessarily resulting bastardization, throwing it down from its cultural and political height, and himself rising to be its master.

For a racially pure people which is conscious of its blood can never be enslaved by the Jew. In this world he will forever be master over bastards and bastards alone.

And so he tries systematically to lower the racial level by a continuous poisoning of individuals.

And in politics he beings to replace the idea of democracy by the dictatorship of the proletariat.

In the organized mass of Marxism he has found the weapon which lets him dispense with democracy and in its stead allows him to subjugate and govern the peoples with a dictatorial and brutal fist.

He works systematically for revolutionization in a twofold sense: economic and political.

Around people who offer too violent a resistance to attack from within he weaves a net of enemies, thanks to his international influence, incites them to war, and finally, if necessary, plants the flag of revolution on the very battlefields.

In economics he undermines the states until the social enterprises which have become unprofitable are taken from the state and subjected to his financial control.

In the political field he refuses the state the means for its self-preservation, destroys the foundations of all national self-maintenance and defense, destroys faith in the leadership, scoffs at its history and past, and drags everything that is truly great into the gutter.

Culturally he contaminates art, literature, the theater, makes a mockery of natural feeling, overthrows all concepts of beauty and sublimity, of the noble and the good, and instead draws men down into the sphere of his own base nature.

Religion is ridiculed, ethics and morality represented as outmoded, until the last props of a nation in its struggle for existence in this world have fallen.

Now begins the great last revolution. In gaining political power the Jew casts off the few cloaks that he still wears. The democratic people’s Jew becomes the blood-Jew and tyrant over peoples. In a few years he tries to exterminate that national intelligentsia and by robbing the people of their natural intellectual leadership makes them ripe for the slave’s lot of permanent subjugation.

The most frightful example of this kind is offered by Russia, where he killed or starved about thirty million people with positively fanatical savagery, in part amid inhuman tortures, in order to give a gang of Jewish journalists and stock exchange bandits domination over a great people.

The end is not only the end of the freedom of the peoples oppressed by the Jew, but also the end of this parasite upon the nations. After the death of his victim, the vampire sooner or later dies too.
And so we National Socialists consciously draw a line beneath the foreign policy tendency of our pre-War period. We take up where we broke off six hundred years ago. We stop the endless German movement to the south and west, and turn our gaze toward the land in the east. At long last we break off the colonial and commercial policy of the pre-War period and shift to the soil policy of the future.

If we speak of soil in Europe today, we can primarily have in mind only Russia and her vassal border states.

Here Fate itself seems desirous of giving us a sign. By handing Russia to Bolshevism, it robbed the Russian nation of that intelligentsia which previously brought about and guaranteed its existence as a state. For the organization of a Russian state formation was not the result of the political abilities of the Slavs in Russia, but only a wonderful example of the state-forming efficacy of the German element in an inferior race. Numerous mighty empires on earth have been created in this way. Lower nations led by Germanic organizers and overlords have more than once grown to be might state formations and have endured as long as the racial nucleus of the creative state race maintained itself. For centuries Russia drew nourishment from this Germanic nucleus of its upper leading strata. Today it can be regarded as almost totally exterminated and extinguished. It has been replaced by the Jew. Impossible as it is for the Russian by himself to shake off the yoke of the Jew by his own resources, it is equally impossible for the Jew to maintain the mighty empire forever. He himself is no element of organization, but a ferment of decomposition. The Persian empire in the east is ripe for collapse. And the end of Jewish rule in Russia will also be the end of Russia as a state. We have been chosen by Fate as witnesses of a catastrophe which will be the mightiest confirmation of the soundness of the Volkish theory.

Please answer the following questions on a separate sheet of paper.

1) What three groups does Hitler divide man into? Which group do the Aryans belong to?

2) According to Hitler, what principle organizes both people and history? What is the sole cause of the dying out of old cultures?

3) According to Hitler, what is the secret goal of the Jews? What means does the Jew use to this end?

4) Explain why and how Hitler sees Marxism as the tool of the Jew.

5) In saying “the democratic people’s Jew becomes the blood-Jew and tyrant over the peoples”, to whom might Hitler be referring? Explain.

6) What idea, central to Nazi ideology, is captured by the following quote?

   And so we National Socialists consciously draw a line beneath the foreign policy tendency of our pre-War period. We take up where we broke off six hundred years ago. We stop the endless German movement to the south and west, and turn our gaze toward the land in the east. At long last we break off the colonial and commercial policy of the pre-War period and shift to the soil policy of the future.

7) Explain why, according to Hitler, the Germans must turn their gaze toward land in the EAST?

8) Who/what does Hitler credit for the creation of a powerful Russia state?

9) Explain the following quote:

   “We have been chosen by Fate as witnesses of a catastrophe which will be the mightiest confirmation of the soundness of the Volkish theory.” (**Volk= German Nationalism**) 

10) On what points might Mussolini agree? Disagree?
The Mind of the Nazis
The Nazis twisted the intellectual tradition of the West to suit their propaganda. Their assumed link with recognized authorities of the past gave them credibility. Read the following quotes from major Nazi leaders. Beside each one, indicate which of the following individual's influence if "reflected" in the statement and how/why.
Machiavelli, Robespierre, Bismarck, Darwin, Nietzsche, Freud

1. "Gods and beasts, that is what our world is made of." – Adolf Hitler

2. “And in the last analysis, success is what matters.” – Adolf Hitler

3. “In my will it will one day be written that nothing is to be engraved on my tombstone but ‘Adolf Hitler.’ I shall create my own title for myself in my name itself.” – Adolf Hitler

4. “What luck for the rulers that men do not think.” – Adolf Hitler

5. “It is not propaganda's task to be intelligent, its task it to lead to success.” – Joseph Goebbels

6. “Put pressure on your adversary with ice cold determination. Probe him, search out his weak spot, deliberately and calculatingly sharpen the spear, hurl it with careful aim, where the enemy is naked and vulnerable, and then, perhaps say with a friendly smile, ‘Sorry neighbor, I can't help it!’” – Joseph Goebbels

7. “We must be decent, honest, loyal, and comradely to members of our own blood and to no one else. Whether the other peoples live in comfort or perish in hunger interests me only in so far as we need slaves for our culture… We Germans, who are the only people in the world to have a decent attitude toward animals, will also adopt a decent attitude to these human animals, but it is a crime against our blood to worry about them and bring them ideals.” – Heinrich Himmler
8. “It is the curse of the great that they have to step over corpses to create new life.” – Heinrich Himmler

9. “The idea of National Socialism is an accomplishment of the human soul that ranks with the Parthenon, the Sistine Madonna, and the Ninth Symphony of Beethoven.” – Alfred Rosenberg

10. “Hitler is simply pure reason incarnate.” – Rudolf Hoess

11. “Guns will make us powerful; butter will only make us fat.” – Hermann Goering

12. “When I hear anyone talk of culture, I reach for my revolver.” – Hermann Goering

13. “If people say that here and there someone has been taken away and maltreated, then I can only reply, ‘You can’t make an omelet without breaking eggs.’” – Hermann Goering

14. “Brutality is respected. The people need wholesome fear. They want to fear something. They want someone to frighten them and make them shudderingly submissive. Why babble about brutality and get indignant about tortures? The masses want them. They need them. They need something that will give them a thrill of horror.” – Ernst Roehm

15. “I have regret and condemnation for the extermination of the Jewish people, which was ordered by the German rulers, but I myself could not have done anything to prevent it. I was a tool in the hands of the strong and the powerful and the hands of fate itself.” – Adolf Eichmann
Munich Pact September 29, 1938

Agreement concluded at Munich, September 29, 1938, between Germany, Great Britain, France and Italy

GERMANY, the United Kingdom, France and Italy, taking into consideration the agreement, which has been already reached in principle for the cession to Germany of the Sudeten German territory, have agreed on the following terms and conditions governing the said cession and the measures consequent thereon, and by this agreement they each hold themselves responsible for the steps necessary to secure its fulfillment:

(1) The evacuation will begin on 1st October.

(2) The United Kingdom, France and Italy agree that the evacuation of the territory shall be completed by the 10th October, without any existing installations having been destroyed, and that the Czechoslovak Government will be held responsible for carrying out the evacuation without damage to the said installations.

(3) The conditions governing the evacuation will be laid down in detail by an international commission composed of representatives of Germany, the United Kingdom, France, Italy and Czechoslovakia.

(4) The occupation by stages of the predominantly German territory by German troops will begin on 1st October. The four territories marked on the attached map will be occupied by German troops in the following order:

The territory marked No. I on the 1st and 2nd of October; the territory marked No. II on the 2nd and 3rd of October; the territory marked No. III on the 3rd, 4th and 5th of October; the territory marked No. IV on the 6th and 7th of October. The remaining territory of preponderantly German character will be ascertained by the aforesaid international commission forthwith and be occupied by German troops by the 10th of October.

(5) The international commission referred to in paragraph 3 will determine the territories in which a plebiscite is to be held. These territories will be occupied by international bodies until the plebiscite has been completed. The same commission will fix the conditions in which the plebiscite is to be held, taking as a basis the conditions of the Saar plebiscite. The commission will also fix a date, not later than the end of November, on which the plebiscite will be held.

(6) The final determination of the frontiers will be carried out by the international commission. The commission will also be entitled to recommend to the four Powers, Germany, the United Kingdom, France and Italy, in certain exceptional cases, minor modifications in the strictly ethnographical determination of the zones which are to be transferred without plebiscite.

(7) There will be a right of option into and out of the transferred territories, the option to be exercised within six months from the date of this agreement. A German-Czechoslovak commission shall determine the details of the option, consider ways of facilitating the transfer of population and settle questions of principle arising out of the said transfer.

(8) The Czechoslovak Government will within a period of four weeks from the date of this agreement release from their military and police forces any Sudeten Germans who may wish to be released, and the Czechoslovak Government will within the same period release Sudeten German prisoners who are serving terms of imprisonment for political offences.

Munich, September 29, 1938.

ADOLF HITLER,
NEVILLE CHAMBERLAIN,
EDOUARD DALADIER,
BENITO MUSSOLINI.
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, 1938.

"We, the German Führer 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."
The leadership of Neville Chamberlain proved insufficient during the war, and in May 1940, Winston S. Churchill was appointed Prime Minister of an all-party government. Churchill proved to be an inspiring leader in the fight with Germany. On May 13, 1940 he gave his first speech to the House of Commons, a speech which displays the oratorical skills which were so effective in keeping up public morale.

On Friday evening last I received from His Majesty the mission to form a new administration. It was the evident will of Parliament and the nation that this should be conceived on the broadest possible basis and that it should include all parties.

I have already completed the most important part of this task.

A war cabinet has been formed of five members, representing, with the Labour, Opposition, and Liberals, the unity of the nation. It was necessary that this should be done in one single day on account of the extreme urgency and rigor of events. Other key positions were filled yesterday. I am submitting a further list to the king tonight. I hope to complete the appointment of principal ministers during tomorrow.

The appointment of other ministers usually takes a little longer. I trust when Parliament meets again this part of my task will be completed and that the administration will be complete in all respects. I considered it in the public interest to suggest to the Speaker that the House should be summoned today. At the end of today's proceedings, the adjournment of the House will be proposed until May 21 with provision for earlier meeting if need be. Business for that will be notified to MPs at the earliest opportunity.

I now invite the House by a resolution to record its approval of the steps taken and declare its confidence in the new government.

The resolution:

"That this House welcomes the formation of a government representing the united and inflexible resolve of the nation to prosecute the war with Germany to a victorious conclusion."

To form an administration of this scale and complexity is a serious undertaking in itself. But we are in the preliminary phase of one of the greatest battles in history. We are in action at many other points-in Norway and in Holland-and we have to be prepared in the Mediterranean. The air battle is continuing, and many preparations have to be made here at home.

In this crisis I think may be pardoned if I do not address the House at any length today, and I hope that any of my friends and colleagues or former colleagues who are affected by the political reconstruction will make all allowances for any lack of ceremony with which it has been necessary to act.

I say to the House as I said to ministers who have joined this government, I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears, and sweat. We have before us an ordeal of the most grievous kind. We have before us many, many months of struggle and suffering.

You ask, what is our policy? I say it is to wage war by land, sea, and air. War with all our might and with all the strength God has given us, and to wage war against a monstrous tyranny never surpassed in the dark and lamentable catalogue of human crime. That is our policy.

You ask, what is our aim? I can answer in one word. It is victory. Victory at all costs - Victory in spite of all terrors - Victory, however long and hard the road may be, for without victory there is no survival.

Let that be realized. No survival for the British Empire, no survival for all that the British Empire has stood for, no survival for the urge, the impulse of the ages, that mankind shall move forward toward his goal.

I take up my task in buoyancy and hope. I feel sure that our cause will not be suffered to fail among men. I feel entitled at this juncture, at this time, to claim the aid of all and to say, "Come then, let us go forward together with our united strength."
Appeasement at Munich Attacked
George F. Kennan

The traditional view in the debate over who was responsible for the outbreak of World War II is that Hitler was emboldened by the unnecessarily weak policy of appeasement pursued by the Western democracies during the 1930s. One element of this appeasement was the Munich Conference of 1938 at which England and France agreed to the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia in return for Hitler's promise to demand no further territories. In the following selection George F. Kennan, former U.S. ambassador to the Soviet Union and Pulitzer Prize winner for a two-volume work on Soviet-American relations, presents the traditional view of appeasement.

The Munich agreement was a tragically misconceived and desperate act of appeasement at the cost of the Czechoslovak state, performed by Chamberlain and the French premier, Daladier, in the vain hope that it would satisfy Hitler's stormy ambition, and thus secure for Europe a peaceful future. We know today that it was unnecessary-unnecessary because the Czech defenses were very strong, and had the Czechs decided to fight they could have put up considerable resistance; even more unnecessary because the German generals, conscious of Germany's relative weakness at that moment, were actually prepared to attempt the removal of Hitler then and there, had he persisted in driving things to the point of war. It was the fact that the Western powers and the Czechoslovak government did yield at the last moment, and that Hitler once again achieved a bloodless triumph, which deprived the generals of any excuse for such a move. One sees again, as so often in the record of history, that it sometimes pays to stand up manfully to one's problems, even when no certain victory is in sight.

The Origins of the Second World War: Appeasement Defended
A. J. P. Taylor

The traditional view attacking appeasement as unjustified and a major cause of World War II has been questioned from different perspectives. Perhaps the most controversial perspective comes from A. J. P. Taylor, a popular, outspoken British historian who has written extensively on modern European history. In the following selection from The Origins of the Second World War, Taylor argues that the appeasers have been unfairly faulted for their policies.

[Hitler] got as far as he did because others did not know what to do with him. Here again I want to understand the "appeasers," not to vindicate or to condemn them. Historians do a bad day's work when they write the appeasers off as stupid or as cowards. They were men confronted with real problems, doing their best in the circumstances of their time. They recognised that an independent and powerful Germany had somehow to be fitted into Europe. Later experience suggests that they were right. At any rate, we are still going round and round the German problem. Can any sane man suppose, for instance, that other countries could have intervened by armed force in 1933 to overthrow Hitler when he had come to power by constitutional means and was apparently supported by a large majority of the German people? Could anything have been designed to make him more popular in Germany, unless perhaps it was intervening to turn him out of the Rhineland in 1936? The Germans put Hitler into power; they were the only ones who could turn him out. Again the "appeasers" feared that the defeat of Germany would be followed by a Russian domination over much of Europe. Later experience suggests that they were right here also. Only those who wanted Soviet Russia to take the place of Germany are entitled to condemn the "appeasers"; and I cannot understand how most of those who condemn them are now equally indignant at the inevitable result of their failure.

Nor is it true that the "appeasers" were a narrow circle, widely opposed at the time. To judge by what is said now, one would suppose that practically all Conservatives were for strenuous resistance to Germany in alliance with Soviet Russia and that all the Labour party were clamouring for great armaments. On the contrary, few causes have been more popular. Every newspaper in the country applauded the Munich settlement with the exception of Reynolds' News. Yet so powerful are the legends that even when I write this sentence down I can hardly believe it. Of course the "appeasers" thought firstly of their own country, as most statesmen do and are usually praised for doing. But they thought of others also. They doubted whether the peoples of eastern Europe would be best served by war. The British stand in September 1939 was no doubt heroic; but it was heroism mainly at the expense of others. The British people suffered comparatively little during six years of war. The Poles suffered catastrophe during the war, and did not regain their independence after it. In 1938 Czechoslovakia was betrayed. In 1939 Poland was saved. Less than one hundred thousand Czechs died during the war. Six and a half million Poles were killed. Which was better—to be a betrayed Czech or a saved Pole? I am glad Germany was defeated and Hitler destroyed. I also appreciate that others paid the price for this and I recognize the honesty of those who thought the price too high.
A World at Arms
Gerhard L. Weinberg

The issues involved with appeasement, which have so often been a focus for analysis, lead to the broader questions of why war broke out in 1939 and whether it could have been prevented. To answer these questions, historians often look back to the whole era that began with the outbreak of World War I in 1914. In the following selection, Gerhard Weinberg of the University of Michigan compares the two wars and emphasizes the differences that separate them. He also leaves no doubt whom he holds responsible for World War II.

Although this book contains a chapter on the background of World War II, it defines that war as beginning in 1939 in Europe. While some have argued that the war was merely a continuation of World War I after a temporary interruption created by the armistice of 1918, and that the whole period from 1914 to 1945 should be seen as the age of a new European civil war, a Thirty-one Years War if you will. Such a perspective ignores not only the very different origins and nature of the prior conflict but obscures instead of illuminating the special character of the second one. If an important by-product of both wars was the weakening of Europe and its hold on the world, the intentions of the belligerents were fundamentally different. It is true that these changed somewhat in the course of each of these lengthy struggles, but a basic differentiation remains.

In World War I, the two sides were fighting over their relative roles in the world, roles defined by possible shifts in boundaries, colonial possessions, and military and naval power. It is true that the Austro-Hungarian empire anticipated the elimination of Serbia's independent status, and Germany very quickly came to the conclusion that Belgium would never regain its independence, but beyond this expected disappearance of two of the smaller states which had emerged from larger constructions during the nineteenth century, the other powers-and most especially the major ones-were all expected to survive, even if trimmed by the winners. In this sense, the war, however costly and destructive in its methods, was still quite traditional in its aims.

It is also true that the fighting itself, with its unprecedented casualties, its incredible costs, the appearance of such new weapons as poison gas, airplanes, tanks, and submarines, as well as vast shifts in world economic patterns, ended up completely transforming the pre-war world and doing so in ways that none of the belligerents had anticipated. The effects on winners and losers alike were colossal, and the pre-war world could not be revived even if some made valiant and sometimes counter-productive efforts to do so. But neither side had either intended or preferred the massive changes which resulted from the ability of the modern state to utilize the social and mechanical technologies developed in the preceding two centuries to draw vast human and material resources out of their respective societies and employ them-and thereby use them up-in the cauldron of battle.

In World War II, all this was very different indeed. The intent was different from the start. A total reordering of the globe was at stake from the very beginning, and the leadership on both sides recognized this. The German dictator Adolf Hitler had himself explicitly asserted on May 23, 1939, that the war he intended would be not for the Free City of Danzig, Poland but for living space in the East; his Foreign Minister similarly assured Italy's Foreign Minister that it was war, not Danzig, that Germany wanted. When Germany had conquered Poland and offered a temporary peace to Britain and France, those countries responded by making it clear, as British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain explained, that there could be no agreement with a German government led by Hitler, a man who had regularly broken his promises. If Chamberlain, who has often been derided for allegedly not grasping the true nature of the National Socialist challenge, saw the issues so clearly, the historian decades later ought not to close his or her eyes to the reality of a very different war. This was, in fact, a struggle not only for control of territory and resources but about who would live and control the resources of the globe and which peoples would vanish entirely because they were believed inferior or undesirable by the victors.

...Almost every nation eventually participated in the new war, some as victims of attack, some as eager attackers themselves, some at the last moment in order to participate in the post-war world organization. A flood of blood and disaster of unprecedented magnitude had been let loose on the world. If the details of military operations and the localities of combat were often vastly different from those of World War I, the fearful anticipation that a new war would be as horrendous or quite likely even worse than the last proved all too accurate. There would be, however, no agitated discussion this time, as there had been after the crisis of 1914, of the question of who was responsible for the outbreak of war. It was all too clear that Germany had taken the initiative and that others had tried, perhaps too much, but certainly very hard, to avert another great conflict. There would be no second "war guilt" debate.
The Road to War
Historical Perspectives on the Causes of World War II

Please answer the following questions on a separate sheet of paper.

*Appeasement at Munich Attacked*, George F. Kennan
1. What two factors, according to Kennan, made Nazi appeasement unnecessary?
2. What are the implications of Kennan’s argument about the causes of, or blame, for World War II?

3. Why do historians “do a bad day’s work” when they write the appeasers off stupid or as cowards?
4. What did appeasers believe about Germany’s place in Europe and why was the idea of Hitler’s ouster by the European powers absurd?
5. What fear motivated Nazi appeasement?
6. Explain Taylor’s argument about Czechoslovakia vs. Poland.
7. What are the implications of Taylor’s argument about the causes of, or blame, for World War II?

*A World at Arms*, Gerhard L. Weinberg
8. What is the problem with the Thirty-One Years War interpretation?
9. What was an important by-product of both wars?
10. Why was WWI “traditional in its aims”?
11. What massive changes had neither been intended nor preferred by the Great Powers during WWI?
12. How did the intent of WWII differ from WWI?
13. How did the question of “war guilt” differ from WWI to WWII?
14. How does Weinberg’s interpretation compare to those of Kennan and Taylor?