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Bakalářská práce

Britain's Foreign Policy in Relation to Central Europe during World War Two

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Anotace

Bakalářská práce se věnuje britské zahraniční politice ve vztahu ke střední Evropě v období druhé světové války. Nejprve představí přístup britské vlády k střeoevropským státům a hrozbě německé vojenské expanze před vypuknutím války a krátce po něm. Se zřetelem ke specifickým okolnostem na okupovaných územích i ve státech stojících na straně Německa popíše hlavní formy britských zahraničně-politických iniciativ, zahrnující podporu exilových vlád, začlenění vojáků z okupovaných zemí do královských vojsk či působení prostřednictvím tajných služeb a zvláštních operací. Zvláštní kapitola se bude věnovat roli V. Británie při jednáních o poválečném uspořádání Evropy se zaměřením na střeoevropský prostor.

Klíčová slova: Velká Británie, střední Evropa, zahraniční politika, 2. světová válka, exilová vláda

Abstract

The bachelor's thesis is dedicated to British foreign policy towards Central Europe in the period of the Second World War. First it introduces the attitude of the British government towards Central European states and the threat of German expansion before the beginning of the war and shortly after it. With regard to specific circumstances in the occupied areas including the states supporting Germany, the bachelor's thesis describes the main forms of Great Britain's foreign policies and initiatives, including the support of exiled governments, integration of soldiers from occupied countries into the royal military or their activity in secret services and special operations. The bachelor's thesis also includes a special chapter devoted to the role of Great Britain during the negotiations of the post-war arrangement of Europe focusing specially on the Central European space.

Key words: Great Britain, Central Europe, foreign policy, World War II, government in exile

Poděkování

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1 Introduction

This bachelor thesis focuses on the relations of Great Britain with Central Europe during the Second World War. Moreover, it highlights the initiatives of the British government towards Central Europe, such as humanitarian aid, support of the governments-in-exile and the home resistance movements, secret operations, the planning of the future European structure in post-war period, integration of soldiers into the British army and a closer look at the issues surrounding the policy of Appeasement. The Central-European space is defined as including the territories of Germany, Czechoslovakia, Austria, Poland and Hungary. I focused on these specific countries in the Central European space due to the Britain's negotiations with them shortly before the outbreak of the war. Moreover, I was curious how relations between the United Kingdom and Central Europe altered during WWII. The main aims of the thesis include pointing out possible failures of, or insufficiencies in the British foreign policy, highlighting British victories in negotiations, stressing Britain's help towards the specified countries or strategic methods initiated by the British leaders. The thesis seeks to fulfil its task by analysing the specialised literature on the subject.

The first chapter analyses the main causes of the war and gives a brief outline of the inter-war period. The next chapter focuses on the initiatives of Britain in the period shortly before the outbreak of the war, including British foreign policy, its involvement in Central Europe, humanitarian aid and the deepening crisis that escalated into the World War II. The third chapter consists of information about Neville Chamberlain's war cabinet in contrast with the shift of British policy with the new Prime Minister Winston Churchill. The fourth chapter describes the initiatives and efforts made by Great Britain during the war specializing on secret organization cooperating with national resistance movements. The penultimate chapter is dedicated to the Allied governments-in-exile and how they were supported and treated by the British government. The last chapter describes the British vision of post-war Europe and the possible establishment of a European federation.

2 Main causes

There is no doubt that after the First World War, the constant threat of breach of the peace agreement loomed over the whole Europe, mainly caused by the Germans, who were hungry for revenge and the redress of the Treaty of Versailles. Great Britain's foreign policy concentrated mainly on European co-operation and its main aim became to maintain peace at any cost. That meant yielding to the desires and aggression of Germany. However, these tactics later proved to be fatal. Some of the main causes of the war including economic downturns, the obvious rivalry of the great world powers, the failure of the League of Nation and British foreign policy appeasement were highly significant. Therefore, it can be said that most of the factors contributing to the Second World War were disputes left from the previous war. Disagreements that had been only stirred up but not resolved.

Even the new order of states in Europe established after the end of the First World War, did not help to maintain serenity in Europe. Austria-Hungary disintegrated into independent the states of Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Austria. Likewise, Poland, the Baltic states and Finland were newly formed due to the collapse of Imperial Russia (McDonough, 2002).

2.1 The German view of the Treaty of Versailles

The Treaty of Versailles was supposed to solve the 'German problem' forever and thus hopefully destroy any future attempt to violate it. The treaty was signed under a protest from the German delegation, who found its terms severe – and to be fair, the conditions were rather harsh. Even the British government showed willingness to revisit it in Germany's favour. Throughout Germany the treaty was at that time called 'slave treaty' and the leaders who signed it were labelled as 'the criminals of 1919' (McDonough, 2002, p. 7).

Germany had to reduce its army, which was one of the strongest in the world at that time, and they lost 13 per cent of its national territory as follows: Alsace-Lorraine was

returned to France, the Rhineland became a designated zone and was also demilitarised, the Saar region was under the newly formed League of Nations, the Baltic port of Danzig was appointed a free city (but under League of Nations jurisdiction) and Upper Silesia now belonged to Poland. It is no wonder that Germany disliked all of these changes to its borders. However, especially hated was the newly formed 'Polish Corridor' because it separated Germany from the historic birthplace of nationalism – East Prussia.

The treaty also stated that any formation of union between Austria and Germany was strictly forbidden to prevent any dissemination of nationalism. This was crucial for the Austrian economy, which would prosper better in a merger with Germany. Even every former German colony was confiscated and supervised by Great Britain, France or Italy after the signing of the treaty.

The German government was also obligated to accept full responsibility for the inception of the First World War and had to pay reparations to the victorious Allies for damages and deaths caused by the war. However, some nations viewed the reparations as moderate and legitimate demand due to the fact that most of the German territory and machinery remained undamaged, whereas that could not be said about the rest of Europe. The Treaty of Versailles was not a successful diplomatic agreement due to its reliance on German compliance, which nobody could guarantee. To many Germans, this agreement was only a piece of paper and the only impact for some of its citizens was only that the word 'Versailles' became the most hated word for them.

In a relation to the Treaty of Versailles, the Locarno Treaties were signed in October 1925 by Germany, Great Britain, Belgium and France. Under its terms Germany accepted the territorial agreements outlined in the Treaty of Versailles (McDonough, 2002).

2.2 Economic downturns

Economic downturns after the First World War led to political instability in many states of the world. In some countries – e.g. Germany and Japan – this political chaos even gave rise to dictatorial regimes.

The worst economic crisis in modern history, known as The Great Depression, began in October 1929 in the USA, when the Wall Street stock market crashed. Before this date, European economic stability was dependent on US economy, due to many loans to European business provided by the USA. However, after the Wall Street collapse, the USA could no longer conduct these loans.

This collapse had enormous impact on Britain, where in 1931 a financial crisis occurred, which resulted in the formation of a National government led by Ramsay MacDonald, who introduced protective tariffs on foreign foods, thus leaving the policy of free trade. The Wall Street crash affected the whole world, for example by increment in unemployment rate, trade collapse and the downfall of agricultural prices (McDonough, F. 2002).

The Great Depression had the biggest impact on Germany, due to the stagnation of the US loans and forced reparations from the First World War. Unemployment increased almost six times throughout the period from 1928 till 1932 and this led to the collapse of the democratic government in Germany. From 1930 till 1933, Paul von Hindenburg ruled Germany with nationalistic ideology and on 30 January 1933 Adolf Hitler took over Hindenburg's nationalistic leadership as chancellor.

After the Wall Street crash, an overwhelming majority of countries focused more on their internal social and economic problems than on international cooperation (McDonough, F. 2002).

2.3 Hitler's ideology

Foreign policy of Adolf Hitler was focused on some crucial points which can be also considered as triggers of the Second World War. Hitler demanded a revision of the Treaty of Versailles, which was the main interest of most Germans. Hitler's long term desire was furthermore to unite his homeland Austria with Germany; this union was known as the Anschluss (meaning "connection" or "joining" in German). In addition, he wanted to achieve the unification of German-speaking people from Austria, Czechoslovakia and

Poland to create a greater German Reich that would be on top of that racially pure. He intended to expand Germany's borders towards the east in order to create a more appropriate Lebensraum (living space) for Germans. Besides, Hitler knew that he had to act slowly and carefully to achieve this, because he wanted to avoid fighting the combination of France, Great Britain and Russia at the same time.

In order to gain more freedom in European affairs, Germany withdrew from the League of Nations in October 1933. This also meant that the German army had the opportunity to rearm, which Hitler pushed through after the assassination of Austrian chancellor Engelbert Dollfus, because it caused suspicion throughout the whole Europe and caused strengthening of the relations between Italy and France.

Under Hitler's leadership the relations between Soviet Union and Germany had strongly changed. Former good relations between the countries deteriorated due to Germany's anti-Russian stance and their strong communist believes. On the other hand, Hitler tried to maintain good relations with Great Britain, probably due to the fact that he could not afford to antagonize so many superpowers. In March 1936, Hitler sent Joachim von Ribbentrop to Britain so that he could arrange an Anglo-German alliance giving Germany free hand in Eastern Europe and promising not to invade Great Britain in return. However, it did not go as planned, due to the fact that the British government was not in favour of Nazism (McDonough, F. 2002).

In January 1934, to everybody's astonishment, Hitler signed a non-aggression pact with Poland and in doing so, he created the impression that he had only peaceful intentions with Eastern Europe. This was a diplomatic success on his part since it eased fears of the German threat and it weakened the influence of France over the Polish government.

Hitler became involved even in the Spanish Civil War where he offered considerable military aid to nationalists, who won the war in 1939. Hitler achieved what he wanted, even a bigger chaos in Europe.

By the end of 1936, Hitler's popularity in Germany was at all-time high, due to its prospering economy boosted by the rearmament and improvement in unemployment. In March 1936 Hitler reoccupies and remilitarizes Rhineland and thereby breaches the Treaty

of Versailles. However, this does not concern the British government at all. Moreover, the same year the Austro-German agreement was signed in which Austria agreed to be under the control of Germany. Mussolini and Hitler signed the Rome-Berlin Axis in October and the next month Germany signed the Anti-Comintern Pact with Japan, whose aim was to defeat the communists. And therefore, Hitler was ready for war with the most powerful army in Europe (McDonough, 2002).

3 Britain's foreign policy before the beginning of the war

The then Prime Minister Chamberlain focused mainly on appeasing the dictators, which clashed with the policy of Anthony Eden, the foreign secretary. Eden despised Chamberlain's policies and considered more valuable to focus on extending the number of allies. He wished to improve relations with France, the USA as well as the Soviet Union. Due to the clash of their politics and personalities, Eden resigned and shortly after that Hitler took control over Austria in March 1938 (McDonough, F. 2002).

Lord Halifax, a closer adviser of Chamberlain, was invited to Germany to attend a hunting exhibition in November 1937. He intended to discuss foreign affairs of the Nazi regime. However, this decision was doubted by several leading diplomats in the Foreign office and especially by Eden. In his opinion, the negotiations would leave nowhere and he thought it would be better to speed up the rearmament. Nevertheless, Halifax accepted the invitation due to Chamberlain's encouragement. Halifax then met with Hitler, Göring and Gobbles to discuss settlements of the Eastern Europe. Chamberlain considered the meeting a great success. Hitler, on the other hand, thought of it as an intrusion into his plans. He had already decided that he would have his war in order to gain power over the Europe (McDonough, F. 2002).

3.1 Appeasement

The Cambridge Dictionary defines the word appeasement as follows: "the act of giving the opposing side in an argument or war an advantage that they have demanded, in order to prevent further disagreement" (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d.). In this particular case, appeasement can be described as an effort of Great Britain and France to prevent WWII by making concessions towards Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany in the 1930s. It is a foreign policy of the British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain whose endeavours were to prevent war at every cost.

After WWI relationships between European countries were fragile. There was also a plenty of tension between the main leading powers of Europe. Some of them wanted to maintain peace, others wanted to take advantage of the chaos and bad arrangements of post-WWI Europe, e. g. by gaining more territories or power. This was a perfect time for appeasement to set its roots. In France and Great Britain the main policy became to preserve peace at any price for multiple reasons. Firstly, neither of the country was prepared for war militarily when WWI had just ended. Secondly, British politicians worried that Germany was genuinely dissatisfied with the results and penalties of the Versailles Treaty. However, in the 1930s Britain's policy saw communism as a greater danger than in fascism; besides many British politicians perceived Hitler and Mussolini as great leaders and not dangerous fascistic dictators (Sky History, n.d.).

The appeasement could be also perceived as an error of poor actions by the League of Nations, which was established to resolve international disagreements peacefully. Its ineffectiveness became very clear in the 1930s before the WWII begun.

This chapter focuses on different examples of appeasement and failures of the British government towards their future opponents in WWII. In March 1936 Hitler remilitarised the Rhineland by which he violated the Treaty of Versailles. The only party who wanted to impose sanctions was the USSR, but the British Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin ruled out the possibility. These actions were intended to maintain world peace, unfortunately Hitler and Mussolini later took advantage of Great Britain's unwillingness to confront them. Both leaders then continuously begun to test the limits of how far they can go (Sky History, n.d.). Hitler and Mussolini's efforts to provoke other countries continued with the Spanish Civil War: Germany and Italy were sending troops, equipment and planes to back the rebels, which contravened the Non-Intervention Agreement. In 1937, when Chamberlain became Prime Minister, the Appeasement policy had already been set. As another great example of inaction and impotence was the reaction of Great Britain to the Anschluss of Austria.

The Appeasement policy was not left without criticism. A big objector was for example the subsequent Prime Minister Winston Churchill, who believed in a firm stand

and opposed the appeasement of Hitler and Neville Chamberlain's policy to maintain peace at any cost. In his opinion, this policy made Great Britain look weak (Britannica, 2020).

One of the many flaws of the Appeasement policy was that it enabled Hitler to become more aggressive and (to be) more impudent and allowed Germany to become a bigger and stronger state, which could easily overpower other nation at that time. The doom of Appeasement was caused by Hitler's ambition and desire to expand the borders of Germany and to create his own Lebensraum (Britannica, 2020).

In the opinion of the British historian, R. A. C. Parker, there could have been different alternatives to Chamberlain's policy of Appeasement that could have perhaps even prevented the outbreak of the Second World War. However, Parker states in addition that Chamberlain's desires and policy to maintain peace were very ambitious (Parker, 1993).

3.1.1 Anschluss

Anschluss, or as McKercher (2017) aptly calls it, 'the first test of appeasement', had been the aspiration of Germans and many Austrians since the fall of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. With the rising of numbers of nationalistic-minded people in Austria, this dream did not seem far from the reality. However, it was overruled by the Paris Peace Settlement.

The newly selected Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain was thrown right into the moving action in Europe. Chamberlain had to submit to the new cooperation of Nazi Germany with Fascist Italy, which (by the way) shifted the developments in Europe in 1938. British politicians have been trying to maintain stability in Europe since time immemorial, so it is not surprising that Chamberlain tried to do the same, even at a very tense time (McKercher, 2017).

According to McKercher (2017), British politicians knew Anschluss could bring more territorial demands by Hitler, such as claiming the Sudetenland. However, Britain was not militarily prepared to face Germany. Thus, the United Kingdom was trying to eschew the

possible threat of a war. Furthermore, McKercher (2017) advocates that it was before general election so logically Chamberlain continued in his appeasing policy to not disturb the public. Moreover, Great Britain did not usually intervene into Central-European matters and Chamberlain thought of the Anschluss as an inevitable event, which happened on 12 March 1938.

Great Britain at the time had their own economic and political problems, such as the resignation of Anthony Eden, problems with rearmament and military shortcomings (McDonough, 2002). Therefore, Britain was primarily concerned with solving its internal matters.

3.1.2 Deepening of the Czech crisis

Hitler's schemes to invade Czechoslovakia were complete along with German rearmament by August 1938. German attempts to influence the British foreign policy and public tried to undermine the willingness of the British government to fight for Czechoslovakia and, according to Crowhurst (2013, p. 24), 'it was not merely Chamberlain's ignorance of Czechoslovak affairs and his desire to avoid war that made the crisis so severe'. The British Foreign Office knew of the Hungarian and Polish interests in Czechoslovakian territories.

Negotiations conducted by the British Foreign Office accelerated after the mobilisation of Czechoslovakia. Eden tried to find a solution to the Sudeten question, considering that Britain was militarily weakened and the USSR with France could not provide assistance either. Thus the settlement had to be non-military (Crowhurst, 2013).

An additional issue preceding the Munich Agreement exacerbated the territorial claims of Hungary and Poland. The Foreign Office told the Hungarian government that 'any concessions offered to Sudeten Germans should be automatically given to other minorities' (Crowhurst, 2013, p. 26). Hungary quickly exploited the situation and pressed its claims regarding the territory in Slovakia inhabited by the Hungarian minority. Likewise, Poland demanded the territory in north Moravia occupied by Poles.

The crisis had an unequivocal solution in Chamberlain's point of view. He could not give a plebiscite to the Sudeten Germans due to the fact that Poland and Hungary would demand the same for their minorities. Thus Chamberlain, despite the opposition of Jan Masaryk, the Czechoslovak Ambassador in London, proposed transferring the Sudetenland to Germany (Crowhurst, 2013).

3.1.3 Munich Agreement

Shortly before the signing of the Munich Agreement, Chamberlain met with Hitler due to the latter's speeches at the annual Nazi conference at Nuremberg, where Hitler indicated his wishes to take measure in solving the Sudeten crisis by military force. On 15 September 1938 they met at Berchtesgaden to negotiate the Czechoslovak Crisis. Chamberlain was grasping at straws by this meeting and hoped to settle a non-military solution with Hitler. In the following week Britain with France forced the Czechoslovak government to accept Hitler's terms (McDonough, 2002).

The Munich Agreement, signed to avoid confrontation with aggressive Germany and Italy, was one of the most significant examples of appeasement and failure of the British government. Before the signing of the agreement, Hitler had been encouraging leaders of Sudeten Nazis to start a rebellion to unite the borderlands with Germany. Czechoslovakia declared martial law as a reaction to the rebellion and Hitler's commands. As a response to the Czechoslovak government's actions, Hitler threatened to declare a war. From Chamberlain's point of view that was something unimaginable and therefore, the forthcoming actions of the British government were in favour of preventing another world war at any cost. Without consulting any Czech authorities, Chamberlain pledged to give Germany all the borderline areas with a German population of more than 50 percent on 15 September at Berchtesgaden. The head of France – the Prime Minister Édouard Daladier – had no other option than to agree with the terms (Sky History, n.d.). Not long after that Hitler altered his criteria, he demanded all the Sudetenland to be united with the Third Reich and the Czechoslovaks evacuated from the land by 28 September. Chamberlain then wanted to submit a new proposal in order to prevent any actions that could lead to a

war. However, Czechoslovaks, French and even his British cabinet rejected the proposal. On 23 September Czechoslovakia ordered general mobilization and the next day France ordered partial mobilization. Czechoslovakia was ready to fight with – at that time – one of the best equipped armies in the world. Czechoslovakian army could mobilize 49 divisions against Germany. And although Czechoslovakians were ready to fight for their land, they could not win alone. In a last-minute effort Chamberlain proposed a four-power conference to avoid the beginning of the war (Britannica, 2023).

On 29 September Hitler agreed to meet in Munich with the remaining heads of state – Neville Chamberlain representing Great Britain, Édouard Daladier representing France and Benito Mussolini representing Italy. Hitler was furious because he saw himself as a liberator of the Sudetenland and he did not want to yield to others' arbitration. Hitler then insisted that none of the Czech diplomats can be admitted to the conference (Britannica, 2023). Nonetheless, Mussolini suggested a plan that was at the end accepted by all sides as the Munich Agreement, thus Great Britain and France agreed to his terms and on 30 September 1938 they signed it (Sky History, n.d.). The Agreement stated that Czechoslovakia must surrender the Sudetenland – the western part of Czechoslovakia which was mainly inhabited by Germans. This meant about 3 million people of German origin living in the western and southern parts of Czechoslovakia.

The German army was supposed to complete the occupation of the Sudetenland by 10 October. Czechoslovakia was informed by Great Britain and France of its two choices – either to resist and fight Germany on its own or to submit to the annexations. Edvard Beneš, the president of Czechoslovakia, chose to submit. According to Smutny (1941, as cited in Mastny, 1979, p. 549), 'Beneš defended his decision to submit without resistance as a skilful manoeuvre calculated to preserve the nation's resources for a struggle to be waged later under the more propitious circumstances of an inevitable Europe.' However, Beneš's decision to surrender was perceived, according to Mastny (1979, p. 549), as 'a simple failure of nerve rather than a clever scheme'. Shortly after Munich, Beneš resigned as president.

As viewed by Chamberlain, this annexation of a part of Czechoslovakia to Germany was supposed to satisfy Hitler's hunger for gaining the territory that he had coveted for so

long. However, this attempt of preventing the next world war was later proven to be futile because of Adolf Hitler's greediness (Britannica, 2023).

Before Chamberlain left Munich, he and Hitler signed a paper that they would resolve any differences by consultation and that they both desire peace and not confrontation that could later lead to war. The reassured Chamberlain then returned to Great Britain where he was greeted by a cheering crowd, who was relieved that there was no threat of war. Moreover, Chamberlain stated that he accomplished a peace with honour. However, one of his biggest critics, Winston Churchill, contradicted him and he that Chamberlain had made a choice between dishonour and war, whereupon he would have both (Britannica, 2023).

Chamberlain's policy was later compromised by Hitler's following actions, such as annexing the remains of Czechoslovakia in March 1939 and then invading Poland in September. By these actions Hitler hastened World War II and, at the same time, breached the Munich Agreement. This term later became somewhat of a synonym for fruitlessness of appeasing policy towards usurpers. However, by appeasing to Hitler, Neville Chamberlain managed to gain something priceless – thanks to appeasement, Great Britain bought time and thereby could improve armament and overall preparations for the war (Britannica, 2023).

It was just a matter of time for Hitler and his generals to continue their expansion of the Third Reich. By May 1938 it was clear that Hitler would not stop by occupying just the western part of Czechoslovakia. The Czechoslovakian people were relying on military assistance from their allies, such as France and Soviet Union. But the Czechoslovakian cry for help was ignored (Britannica, 2023).

At that point relations in Europe were very tense and any small inconvenience could trigger a war. Especially as Hitler continued to make riotous speeches, in which he demanded that Germans in Czechoslovakia be reunited with Germany. And yet for many people that would mean a second world war in their lifetime. Neither France nor Great Britain was keen or ready to participate in yet another world war. However, the war started to look like an inevitable option after Hitler's expanding.

According to the Soviet historian Mertsalov (1988; as cited in Hughes, 2013, p.19), 'The Munich Agreement was perhaps the most shameful diplomatic deal ever. The agreement on the partition and eventual annexation of sovereign Czechoslovakia constituted a prologue to World War II that cost 50 million human lives.' Moreover, Mertsalov states that the Munich Agreement later became a symbol of 'appeasement', and by its critics, a symbol of cynicism and treachery.

According to Hughes (2013,) receptions of the Munich Agreement have been constantly evolving and have been also revised over time. In general, there are two main approaches in historiographic conceptualisations of Munich. The first one is the perception of Munich as betrayal. The second one is an apologetic attitude, which argues that appeasement was the only feasible option.

Neville Chamberlain and his government did not see the Nazi Germany occupation of Bohemia and Moravia in March 1939 as invalidation of the Agreement (Slovakia had meanwhile seceded due to the Slovak parliament vote to create a Slovak republic, a satellite of Nazi Germany, headed by Jozef Tiso). Nonetheless, Chamberlain was Prime Minister only until 1940 and the foreign policy of his follower Winston Churchill differed. The newly selected Prime Minister W. Churchill stated that the Munich Agreement was an embarrassment, and that Germany 'had destroyed the agreement' (Churchill, as cited in Hughes, 2013, p. 59). However, that is as far as he went.

According to McDonough (2002, p. 54), 'Munich can be viewed as a major defeat for democratic principles in the settlement of international disputes'. On the other hand, is necessary to consider the fact that Britain acted in the interest of global peace, even though it meant sacrificing Czechoslovakia. Hitler was displeased with the outcome of the Munich Agreement. Hitler coveted for crushing Czechoslovakia by force and not getting the Sudetenland for free.

On 30 September 1938, Chamberlain even convinced Hitler to sign a declaration, which stated that Germany and Britain would never go to a war with one another again. Chamberlain considered it a win and believed that Hitler would keep his word.

Nonetheless, for Hitler it was just a piece of paper with an empty promise (McDonough, 2002).

3.1.4 The aftermath of Munich

After signing the Munich Agreement, Chamberlain became even more popular by the public due to averting the possibility of another war in Europe and even secured and strengthened his position at the forefront of the government. However, he did not receive the same reaction from the Foreign Office together with Eden, who was concerned about Hitler's next step. The many letters and telegrams of support and acknowledgements that Chamberlain had received after the Munich had boosted his confidence in Appeasement and perhaps a little too much (Hucker, 2011).

After the Munich Agreement, the Polish government renewed its demands and pressed claims regarding the transfer of Teschen and Freistatt into its borders. Edvard Beneš, due to the lack of support provided by Britain, accepted the Polish ultimatum on 1 October 1938. The same goes for the territories with Hungarian minorities that were annexed to Hungary approximately a month later (Crowhurst, 2013).

According to Crowhurst (2013), Munich influenced Czechoslovakia not only territorially, but also economically. Immediately after the occupation, due to the flood of immigrants, the succession fatally weakened the economy. The massive wave of refugees, whether from the Sudetenland to inland Czechoslovakia or leaving the country entirely, was caused by arresting and oppressing the minorities or political opponents – mainly Jews and Communists (Crowhurst, 2013).

There were many other difficulties linked with the policy of Appeasement, e. g. it allowed Nazis to be more aggressive towards Jews. A relevant example of this behaviour is Kristallnacht. On 9 November 1938 Nazis destroyed Jewish-owned shops, synagogues were burnt down and Jews were killed, arrested or sent to concentration camps (McDonough, 2002).

After Kristallnacht, public opinion on Chamberlain's policy drastically changed. The public lost faith in Appeasement due to the Nazi aggression. The general opinion on the Munich Agreement shifted and it became considered a colossal fail. A more resolute foreign policy towards the dictatorship was needed, which occurred to the Foreign Office rather than the Prime Minister (Hucker, 2011).

3.2 Humanitarian aid

The increasing aggression towards any other race than the Aryan population in the Third Reich, especially after Kristallnacht, worried the British government. Therefore, not long after Kristallnacht, the British government, in spite of the appeasing policy, decided to join the humanitarian aid towards Central Europe by helping to move minor children and adolescents from German-occupied territories to the United Kingdom for a period of two years with education provided. This was known as Kindertransport, which refers to the transportation of children by train from occupied Czechoslovakia, Germany and Austria to ports from where they later sailed to Great Britain. The humanitarian aid provided by volunteers, organisations or institutions also promised the escort of the children to their mother country once the war ends. During the period from 1938 to 1939, around 10,000 children and youngsters were moved to safety. However, the overall aid effort also included the organisation of transport of the children who survived concentration camps or were hiding during the war and survived to the United Kingdom in the post-war period. (Caballero, 2019).

The first Kindertransport arrived in the United Kingdom in December 1938 carrying about 200 adolescents from a Jewish orphanage in Berlin and the last crossing was made on 14 May 1939 from Holland.

It is undoubtedly necessary to mention the initiative of Nicholas Winton, who organised the rescue of 669 children from Nazi-occupied Czechoslovakia, later known as the 'Winton children'. With the help of Trevor Chadwick and others, Winton helped to find sponsors via British press, assisted the aid organisations and located host families in Britain.

To coordinate the efforts, he created the British Committee for Refugee Children from Czechoslovakia. The contemporary material preserved by Winton serves as a valuable source of information in the matters (Caballero, 2019).

3.3 British involvement in Poland

One of the reasons why Great Britain became involved in Polish matters after World War I was because Great Britain was the guarantor of the independence of the territory of Danzig within the League of Nations. However, this was an exception as Britain did not get involved in Central and Eastern European affairs very often. The interest in Central European affairs by the British government increased after the dissolution of Czechoslovakia and the expansion of Hitler's power to the east (Prazmowska, 1984).

After the occupation of Czechoslovakia, Great Britain guaranteed Poland to defend it in case of Hitler's invasion. However, after Hitler demanded the return of Danzig with German soldiers marching on that territory, the guarantee from Britain proved to be more or less worthless. The guarantee included no mention of merely defending Poland's borders; Britain and France would only intervene in the event of a threat of Poland's independence (McDonough, 2002).

According to Prazmowska (n.d.), 'Britain had very limited understanding of the events in central Europe: the Czech crisis, then Germany taking control over Rumanian oil monopoly and the Danzig invasion. The reason behind the British and French declaration to Poland was to stop Hitler in his aggressive actions.'

According to Prazmowska (1984), the most important aspect of Britain's declaration to Poland, the creation of the eastern front, had been overlooked for a long time. Neither Britain nor France had been ready to defend Poland from Germany and honour their commitments. The declaration to Poland was supposed to act as a warning to Hitler. A warning that he deliberately ignored.

Even if Poland was at the time militarily ready, they still could not defend themselves against Germany and form an eastern front on their own. There were proposals by neither Britain nor France to even contribute to strengthening the possible eastern front. As said earlier, neither country intended to defend Poland itself. Moreover, they assumed that Poland would collapse in the early stages of fighting with its much stronger enemy.

Due to the Anglo-French guarantee, Colonel Joseph Beck - Polish Minister for Foreign Affairs – hoped for a tighter cooperation with Britain. Unfortunately, British Chiefs of Staff left all the communication to the French, due to their former experiences with Poles. Nevertheless, at Polish insistence, Britain sent a delegation of senior British officers to Warsaw. However, Britain attached little importance to the talks between the Poles and the delegation sent to Warsaw. Britain did not plan any effective utilization of the Eastern European alliances in a wider context.

The guarantee did not improve relations between Britain and Poland. One could even say that it had the opposite effect. Perhaps because the Poles pressured Britain to make plans for military co-operation against Germany, or the fact that Britain did not have any intentions of defending Poland whatsoever (Prazmowska, 1984).

3.4 The outbreak of the war

Before the outbreak of the Second World War, Great Britain tried to negotiate an alliance with the Soviet Union. Unfortunately, due to many obstacles created by Chamberlain, the agreement was never signed. Chamberlain did not want to create an alliance for many reasons. He did not trust Stalin, he was not in favour of communism and he also did not want to admit the failure of his policy and possibly annoy Hitler by this union. Chamberlain at that time did not realize that the Soviet Union was in a powerful diplomatic state and Stalin would sign the alliance only on its own terms. Moreover, Stalin refused to give Britain and France any reassurance about the independence of

Czechoslovakia and Poland. Therefore, the vision of Anglo-Soviet cooperation collapsed (McDonough, 2002).

Hitler exploited the situation and offered Stalin a non-aggression pact, which was signed on 23 August 1939. This was an enormous mistake on the part of Chamberlain, who did not comprehend that Hitler would sign any agreement that would allow him to proceed with his foreign-policy plans.

Thanks to the Nazi-Soviet also referred to as Ribbentrop-Molotov pact, Hitler thought he had won and Britain and France would succumb to any of his demands. Therefore, he was flabbergasted after Britain declared to fully honour its obligations towards Poland on 23 August. Two days later, Chamberlain even signed military alliance with Poland.

In evident attempt to create a 'second Munich' Hitler offered a guarantee of the British Empire in exchange for help to negotiate a settlement of the dispute over Danzig. However, the Polish government refused to negotiate with Hitler in any way. Poland would rather fight Hitler's much stronger army than to surrender without any struggle as Czechoslovakians had done.

On 1 September 1939, Hitler launched an attack on Poland. Chamberlain tried to persuade Mussolini to settle things with Hitler but to no avail. Two days later at 11 a. m., Chamberlain declared war on Germany on BBC radio. Shortly after that France followed with its declaration of war on Germany (McDonough, 2002).

According to McDonough (2002), the war began due to Chamberlain's continuous appeasing and not accepting the fact that the greediness of Hitler would not settle for nothing less than a domination of Europe by military force. Chamberlain could have deterred Hitler by signing military agreements (e. g. with the Soviet Union), but failed to do so.

4 British government

Chamberlain's nightmare became reality on 1 September 1939. Immediately on the day the fighting began the government met and in the morning decided to mobilize all military forces. The government also decided to evacuate women and children from major cities. However, there was no declaration of war. The British demanded the withdrawal of the Germans from Poland and hoped for negotiations with Hitler. After it became clear that Hitler had no intentions of stopping the occupation, Britain declared war on Germany on 3 September (McDonough, 2002).

Moreover, there was a slight shift in British foreign policy during the Second World War due to the changes of Prime Ministers. Chamberlain served as British Prime Minister from May 1937 till May 1940 (Ellinger, 2009), when he was replaced by Winston Churchill. The policies of those two men differentiated significantly. Chamberlain wanted to prevent war at any cost, hoping that appeasing the dictators would help. On the other hand, Churchill was one of the biggest critics of Appeasement. Differences between these leaders will be discussed in the next chapter, where the most important aspects of their divergent strategies and policies are summarised.

4.1 Chamberlain's war cabinet

Chamberlain was aware of his policy mistakes and therefore he wanted to negotiate a broad national political coalition and form a war cabinet. However, his efforts on creating a broad national coalition crashed because neither Labour Party nor Liberals wanted to join the coalition under Chamberlain's command. At least the War Cabinet, despite many setbacks, was created and all of the nine members met for the first time on 3 September 1939. Lord Halifax served as Foreign Minister, Sir J. Simon as Minister of Finance, Sir S. Hoare as Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal, Lord Chatfield as Minister for Defence Coordination, Sir K. Wood as Minister of Aviation, L. Hore-Belisha as Minister of War, Lord Hankey and even Winston Churchill as a Minister for the Navy. The chairman of the war cabinet was, of

course, Chamberlain. The main aim of the War Cabinet was to decide which war strategy and tactics Britain should choose (Ellinger, 2009).

At the end of October, a Military Coordination Committee was assembled. Chatfield was placed at the head of this organization. This was Chamberlain's way of saying that he rejected Churchill's claim to primacy in military affairs. Their political ideologies did not coincide, so Chamberlain preferred to be cautious when it came to Churchill. Nonetheless, their trust improved over time (Ellinger, 2009).

Chamberlain was sure that the war could not be won militarily, hence a naval blockade was used on 6 September 1939. He wanted to convince Germany that it could not win the war. The main aim of Chamberlain's policy was 'to not lose the war'. The reasoning behind this strategy is the fact that Britain was not as militarily ready as Germany. On the same day, Hitler successfully conquered Poland and came up with a peace treaty with Britain. Britain did not even consider signing this offer.

Part of Chamberlain's tactics was also to send a British Expeditionary Force into French territory. Another success for Britain was the signing of a mutual cooperation agreement with Turkey. It was now crucial for Britain to keep Turkey and Italy out of the war and on the Axis side. Thus in October 1939 Britain and France signed an alliance treaty with Turkey.

At the end of November 1939, the Soviet Union attacked Finland and thus drew northern Europe into the war, although Norway with Sweden had maintained their neutrality. Britain wanted to occupy Norway to prevent it from siding with the Axis, to stop the flow of iron ore to Germany, and to have better access to important strategic ports. Churchill also planned to mine the maritime areas between Scotland and Norway for protection. Unfortunately, the news about the occupation was received by the German intelligence and they occupied Norway three days earlier than the British invasion on 8 April 1940. For Britain, the invasion was not going smoothly at all and, in addition, an attack on Malta and Gibraltar was reportedly being prepared by Italy. So the War Cabinet decided to withdraw the troops from the occupied Norway on 28 April.

After the failed British invasion of Norway, Chamberlain's popularity began to plummet in the House of Commons and even with the Conservatives. This event highlighted Chamberlain's indecision and the overall ineffectiveness of the government. On 10 May 1940 Chamberlain resigned to the king George VI and recommended Winston Churchill to take his place.

The same day as the resignation of Neville Chamberlain, King George VI sent for Winston Churchill. He was appointed the Prime Minister and tasked with forming a new coalition government. Churchill created the coalition war cabinet with only 5 members. Prime Minister and now also Minister of Defence was of course Winston Churchill; Neville Chamberlain served as Lord President, Halifax remained Minister of Foreign Affairs, Clement Attlee became Lord Keeper of the Seal and, the last but not least, Arthur Greenwood was to serve as a Minister without a portfolio. On 22 December, Halifax was replaced as Foreign Secretary by Anthony Eden (Ellinger, 2009).

4.2 Comparison of Chamberlain's and Churchill's foreign policies

Churchill was not keen on Chamberlain's inter-war Appeasement policy. He claimed that it made Great Britain look weak, unreliable and as it later proved, this policy turned out to be unsuccessful. Churchill did not approve especially of some demonstrations of Appeasement, e.g. Anschluss or the outcome of the Munich Agreement. He worried that Germany would only strengthen after the annexation of Austria. In his opinion, the Munich Agreement was a great example of how Great Britain fell into the influence of Nazi Germany and how it sacrificed not just Czechoslovakia, but also its fundamental democratic values. However, he argued that Czechoslovak diplomats were able to negotiate better terms than they obtained (McDonough, 2002).

For Chamberlain, Churchill was rather extremist when it comes to military matters and often did not implement his ideas. In military matters, Chamberlain trusted Chatfield more and did not want to have Churchill in charge (Ellinger, 2009).

Churchill was aware of the fact that he had become Prime Minister primarily thanks to the Labour party. This fact and his Liberal past had deepened the distrust of the Conservative party in his abilities. It was therefore clear to Churchill that he had to work closely with Chamberlain, who was more popular with the Conservatives. Even though they had some dissimilar beliefs, they managed to work together and even help one another. Chamberlain, as a more recognised politician, supported Churchill in his newly gained position. After Chamberlain's death, the political situation in the United Kingdom changed. Because of the events of 1940, the Labour Party became an equal partner to the Conservatives in the new government, giving Britain a different governmental structure than in the First World War (Ellinger, 2009).

Chamberlain's policy of 'peace at all cost' therefore changed to Churchill's policy 'victory at all costs'. Churchill was ready to sacrifice nearly anything to crush Nazi Germany (Ellinger, 2009).

5 Great Britain's foreign policy initiatives during the war

This chapter will deal with the various initiatives that Great Britain provided to Central Europe during the war. Particular attention will be given to the Special Organisation Executive (SOE) and aid within each individual country.

5.1 Anglo-Polish relations

After the outbreak of the war, Lwow in Poland had been bombed and the Poles were anticipating counterstrike by the RAF. Instead, all they received from Britain was a drop-off of 5 million propagandist pamphlets. After this shocking 'bombing', General Carton reported from Warsaw to London that Poles were exasperated by the pamphlets, and that no action and the delayed declaration of war caused concern and distrust in Poland towards Brits. On 16 September Poles were forced into retreat, discouraged by the inaction of allied Britain. This episode was also responsible for the Polish hatred of the British leaflets against the Nazi regime that were sent in later years due to the ignition of the SOE riots (Harrison, 2000).

On 17 September 1939, Stalin invaded Poland from the east. Britain did not declare war on the Soviet Union, because the territories in Eastern Poland had a different status and the guarantee did not apply to the Soviet Union, only to Germany (Prazmowska, n.d.).

The Anglo-Polish relations had strengthened in June 1940 due to the French surrender. Poland became the only significant ally of Britain outside of the British Empire. Poles were even a great source of intelligence to the war office (Harrison, 2000).

Poland became confused by Britain again in 1942 when Churchill promised them the return of the Eastern territory. However, very shortly afterwards, he promised the same territory to the Soviet Union at a secret conference in Teheran in 1943. For Great Britain it was crucial to keep the Soviet Union on the side of the Allies. Churchill deeply appreciated the help of Poles and Sikorski's (Prime Minister of Poland and Commander-in-chief)

willingness to send troops to the Middle East Europe. Nonetheless the Soviet Union was simply more important and Britain depended on this alliance (Prazmowska, n.d.).

5.2 The Special Operations Executive

The SOE was established by the British government in July 1940. One of the main aims was to encourage resistance in countries occupied by Germany. However, some agencies and organisations in Whitehall (the centre of Britain's war effort) believed that SOE obstructed more than helped the British war effort (Harrison, 2000).

The SOE contributed militarily by training, equipping and mobilising European resistance movements against German domination within the structures of the individual occupied countries. An integral part of SOE were also 'covert operations', such as political subversion, disruption and regime-destabilisation (Wylie, 2006). According to Wylie, SOE's approach was constantly evolving, whether it was due to the changes in leadership or the importance of adapting to the political situation. He also states that the SOE failed to extract a seat in British diplomacy. Moreover, SOE was not able to persuade the political and military leadership of the benefits of the covert operations and irregular political activities. Consequently, the legacy of SOE is mixed. Some historians argue about its influence on the Allied victory, such as M. R. D. Foot, who believes that SOE played a significant role in the defeat of Hitler. On the other hand, historians, such as John Keegan, argues that SOE's part in WW2 is overestimated (Harrison, 2000).

The following chapters provide successful or not so successful examples of SOE missions throughout the Central Europe.

5.2.1 Britain's relations with Hungary

Even though Hungary was not at all anglophile before the outbreak of the war, many high-ranking politicians had solid relations with Britain. The Prime Minister of Hungary Pál Teleki, for example, had convenient connections in Britain and knew the 'Anglo-Saxon'

world very well. Likewise, Miklós Horthy, the regent of Hungary, had strong acquaintanceships in Britain and the USA. However, the connections between Hungary and Britain were weakened by fighting against each other in the WWI. Most of the public inclined to Germanic countries and their ideologies. Horthy also hated communism and tried to keep the control of the Soviet Union over Hungary away as long as possible (Tibor, 2015).

After the fall of Czechoslovakia, Britain began to take initiatives in Central and Eastern Europe by guaranteeing the independence of Poland as well as Romania. There had been tension between Romania and Hungary for some time due to the dispute over Transylvania. Great Britain did not want to interfere in this dispute, for the reason of not increasing its enemies in Western Europe or with the Middle East. Britain had stronger relations with Romania, which had been their ally in WWI and there were ties between their royal families. Hungary, on the other hand, had always been more inclined towards Germany and was also its satellite in the interwar period. Britain eventually supported Romania against Hungary. Moreover, Hungary feared the alliance of Germany and the Soviet Union, and was thus more inclined towards Germany and its supporters – the Axis. By this inclination, Hungary renounced the guarantee made by Britain and followed Germany's policy more closely. Moreover, Britain focused on Balkan retaining neutrality to prevent the strengthening of the Axis (Becker, 2016).

Hungary became one of the countries aimed at by the British Special Operations Executive. Basil Davidson, an intelligence officer, was sent to Hungary to set up a resistance and sabotage network. However, there were numerous difficulties, such as a lack of material, staff, local contacts and intelligence. He tried to persuade Hungarians to destroy their own assets by bribing them. Nevertheless, Hungarians were hesitant to cooperate, which was understandable due to the lack of information they were given. Britain with France could not sympathize with Hungary due to their mutual historical differences. Britain stopped these operations of sabotaging in Hungary due to the realization that Hungary would not bring any advantage in the war. Britain tried to fill the gaps in its foreign policy in Hungary with British propaganda and strengthen its own influence as well as

weaken the power of Germany. The propaganda consisted, for example, of setting up a talk service in Hungarian on BBC radio (Becker, 2016).

After the early confusion on the Eastern front, Teleki began to seek the return of Transylvania to Hungarian territory. These demands were no surprise to the rest of the world. Germany vetoed Hungarian invasion and Great Britain did not express their opinion until Berlin's intervention due to Hungary's threat of war on Romania. Britain, hoping Romania would switch sides and defect to the Allies as well as stirring up disputes between Berlin and Moscow, supported Romania. However, on 30 August 1940 Northern Transylvania was attached to Hungary in the Second Vienna Award elaborated by Germany and Italy. By cutting Transylvania in half between Romania and Hungary, Hitler gained control over this valuable territory, which he could use as a weapon against both of these countries (Becker, 2016).

In the autumn of 1940, Germany signed a Tripartite Pact with Japan and Italy, which was later joined by Hungary and Romania. After a long period of neutrality, Hungary joined the war on the side of the Axis on 20 November 1940. When Great Britain threatened to declare war on Hungary, Teleki committed suicide. His successor László Bárdossy remained on the side of the Axis because he feared that if he deflected, Hitler would give the whole Transylvania back to the new Axis member Romania. Moreover, Hungary wanted to regain the territory that it had lost due to the Treaty of Trianon in 1920. On 5 December 1941 Britain declared a war on Hungary due to its joining the Tripartite Pact (Romsics, 2019).

The main aim of Germany's policy in the south-east of Europe was to engage Yugoslavia in the Axis alliance. The Treaty of Eternal Friendship was signed between Hungary and Yugoslavia; another agreement in the same spirit was also signed between Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union. Hitler's hopes for the annexation of Yugoslavia to the Axis vanished. To prevent the Balkans from becoming a base for the Soviet Union, Hitler decided to destroy Yugoslavia and support the Hungarian revisionists. Hitler, in order to crush Yugoslavia, needed to come through Hungary, a Yugoslavian 'friend'. Under the pressure of what would happen if Hungary did not allow Hitler to cross through the country, Hungary joined the attack on Yugoslavia. After Hitler's successful destruction of Yugoslavia,

Hungary's importance towards the Reich declined and Hitler did not fulfil his promises such as the annexation of Banat to Hungary. Hitler even provoked hostile relations between Hungary and Croatia due to the territorial claims by both countries on Muraköz (Romsics, 2019).

The year 1943 in Hungary brought anti-German mood and the hope to deflect from the Nazis and join the Allied nations due to the evident reality that Germany would lose the war. In this short period several anti-German groups were actively lobbying for Hungary's independence. However, these inclinations did not last long and Hungary remained on the side of the Axis until the Red Army conquered Budapest in February 1945 and liberated the entire territory two months later (Tibor, 2015).

5.2.2 The Special Operations Executive in Austria

According to Steinacher (2002), Britain's foreign policy towards Austria had two main aims, namely to help the decay of the Third Reich by supporting a major uprising of separatists in Austria and to restore the independent nation of Austria as part of a central European federation. However, these intentions were hardly achievable and the organisation in Austria did not contribute significantly to the victory of the Allies.

Winston Churchill, contented with neither the Anschluss nor the Appeasement policy, saw an opportunity in Austria to use it as a war tool to weaken Germany from the inside. It was his initiative to create a new section of Secret Intelligence Service (SIS) and also Special Operations Executive (SOE).

The schemes to overthrow the Nazi regime in Austria began again in January 1941 by specifying the SOE mission for Austria. The SOE reached out primarily to Social Democrats, Catholics and Monarchs to prepare the ground for the separatist uprising by contacting and supporting their extensive networks in Yugoslavia and Hungary. A special group of saboteurs would be sent to Austria 24 hours before the uprising. Britain had rather high expectations for the organisation in Austria, due to the British perception of Anschluss as a result of the efficiency of the German military and politics (Steinacher, 2002).

The second plan of SOE lacked forethought and footing in solid foreign policy. Exiled Austrians would be put into key positions in the restored Austrian's state with its division into provinces. However, the borders nor the political system was thought through.

In January 1941, morale and faith in German victory began to decline. Austrians wanted nothing more than the end of the war. Sir George Franckenstein, the most important correspondent of SOE in Austria, thought that Britain should take the initiative in regard to Austria, due to his concern about Russia taking it over. In his opinion, the only way how to ignite Austrian resistance against the Nazi regime would be a declaration from the Allies regarding Austria's independence (Steinacher, 2002).

On 1 November 1943, a shift occurred in the foreign policy of the Allies towards Austria. The Allied states affirmed that Austria should regain its independence after the war ended in the Moscow Declaration. This act was supposed to ignite the defiance against Hitler. After this declaration, the BBC began to broadcast massive propaganda for Austria. The SOE also decided to increase its secret intelligence in order to gain more information about the conditions inside the country. Undoubtedly, the Moscow Declaration supported the Austrian patriots. Nonetheless, the Austrian Resistance Movement could not aspire to any military success against Germans. Their resistance was more or less passive, such as wearing national colours of Austria and using their traditional greetings instead of 'Heil Hitler'.

Within the SOE, Austrian affairs were dealt within the German division headed by Ronald Thornley. The staff of the SOE dealing with Austria was trained for Germany, which could be the main reason of the lack of understanding the Austrian situation. The main two centres of Austro-German affairs were in Monopoli in Italy and in Bern in Switzerland.

The SOE also organised smaller resistant activities in southern Carinthia, but the partisan movement was weak due to German raids. The newly appointed director of the Bern division, H. I. Matthey, concentrated more on Austria than Germany and altogether with the Austrian Monarchist resistance movement, or 'Patria', sent his first missions into western Austria. However, more promising were missions on the southern border with Italy, which were organised by Patria and Hans Ergarter alias Barbarossa. The Allied nations

supported these organisations by sending money and weapons to the saboteurs. The organisations infiltrated German police regiments and defended themselves against German raids. These actions were, however, stimulated by the annexation of the province of Bolzano from Italy to Austria while the Slovenian partisan groups in southern Austria wanted the annexation of their area to Yugoslavia (Steinacher, 2002).

5.2.3 SOE and Poland

In Poland, as in the other countries of Europe, Britain encouraged sabotage and subversion against the Nazis. Moreover, Britain had different plans for Poles. The SOE planned to launch a national uprising with the Polish resistance and Polish secret army, which was the most important asset of SOE at the time. British intelligence was encouraging the resistance by planning and working out the logistic requirements of a full-scale airborne invasion of Poland. Truth be told, British general staff knew the invasion could not take place and they purposely gave Poles false hopes. In reality, SOE could only send equipment for the Polish underground on a very moderate scale, let alone with reduction caused by delivery problems. Sikorski was so disappointed with the SOE cooperation that in April 1942 he proposed to Churchill to form an allied general staff and to abolish SOE altogether. Sir Alan Brooke, the chief of the imperial general staff, rejected the proposition of Sikorski (Harrison, 2000).

General Tabor, a former director of military operations of the Polish secret army, had been smuggled to London in July 1944 to meet with Gubbins, who oversaw SOE at that time. At the meeting, Tabor informed the SOE officers about General Bór's intention to launch a rising to liberate Warsaw in nearby future. Tabor also informed Gubbins about their demands, such as an increase of supplies from the Allies to Warsaw, bombing in the vicinity of the capital, sending the Polish parachute brigade to Poland, transferring Polish fighter squadrons to Warsaw, recognition of the Polish secret army as an allied fighting force, and an immediate dispatch of an allied military mission to General Bór. However, the British chiefs of staff rejected the idea of a Polish insurrection altogether and they did not change their minds as Tabor, by submitting his demands, probably hoped for.

The Polish SOE's section staff supported the sending of Polish parachutist troops and a military mission in a submission to the chiefs. Nonetheless, the sending of parachutists was impossible due to the shortage of planes and the fact that the drop-off zone over an urban area like Warsaw would be arduous. Thus, the Polish demands were not met and Poles did not receive any special help from Britain during the Warsaw Uprising – except for dropping supplies to Warsaw (Harrison, 2000).

5.2.4 Warsaw Uprising

Before the Warsaw Uprising escalation, it is necessary to mention the Katyn Massacre. After Germany's attack on the USSR on 22 June 1941, the Soviet Union automatically joined the Allies. Due to the new developments, an establishment of new diplomatic relations took place between the Polish Government in exile and the Soviet Union. Hundreds of thousands of civilians and prisoners of war were liberated and deported from occupied Polish territories to the USSR. In 1943, the German army occupying a significant part of the Soviet Union found a mass grave containing the Polish POW officers slaughtered by Soviets. Stalin claimed immediately after the discovery that the mass execution had been carried out by German troops, which led to sentencing about 100 German officers to death. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, almost 50 years after the Katyn massacre, a document ordering to kill Poles signed by Stalin and members of Soviet Communist Party was published (Kieżun, 2006).

The Polish Government in exile turned to the Red Cross in Geneva for help to investigate the Katyn massacre. Stalin considered this as a collaboration of Poland with Germany and subsequently broke off relations with the Polish government in exile. After the victory over Hitler, Stalin brought Poland under his full control. He also established the Polish Army with former prisoners of war and deported Poles who had fought against the underground Home Army loyal to the Polish Government in exile. Moreover, he founded a communist underground People's Army to work against the underground Home Army forces. In July 1944 the Soviet Union occupied a lion's share of Poland. Thus, it was obvious, that in case of Poland, the threat of supremacy of the totalitarian Soviet rule after the war

became inevitable, as goes for the other countries that were liberated by the Red Army (Kieżun, 2006).

In the late July 1944, the vision of the approaching Red Army released hatred towards the Nazi oppressor and eagerness for revenge. On 1 August 1944 at 5 a. m. the Warsaw Uprising began with the aim to liberate Warsaw before the Red Army does. The Polish Home Force wanted to prevent the imposition of a totalitarian regime over Poland by the liberation of Warsaw from Nazi occupation without the help of the USSR. According to E. D. R. Harrison (2000, p. 1090): 'The uprising was essentially a re-run of the events of 1939, when Nazi military power and Soviet treachery destroyed Polish forces naively expecting help from impotent Western allies.'

The failure of the Uprising can be attributed to Stalin and his decision to slow the Red Army's progress and prevent British and American planes with humanitarian aid for Warsaw from landing in Soviet airports. The Warsaw Uprising later ignited rebellions against the Nazi regime in other countries such as Slovakia, Romania, Bulgaria and the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia. Moreover, the Warsaw Uprising defended Europe against the spreading of totalitarianism deeper into the west of Europe by putting an end to the Red Army's infiltration (Kieżun, 2006).

Churchill's attitude was in many ways compassionate towards Poles during the Warsaw Uprising. However, he refused to send Polish troops from Italy to Poland. Churchill knew that the war was not yet won and that Polish soldiers would be needed later. He even mistrusted Stalin with the Katyn massacre. Nevertheless, he did not investigate in such matters as he knew the consequences if the truth came up to the surface and the Soviet army was crucial for Hitler's defeat. And even though Churchill was very appreciative of Poles, he was also aware of the fact that Poland was a very small player in a very big game (Prazmowska, n.d.).

5.2.5 Involvement in Czechoslovakia

Czechoslovakia differed from the other German-occupied countries and so did the cooperation between the SOE and the intelligence inside the country. Firstly, it had been fully under the reign of Germany from early 1939 and secondly, the territory was interlaced by Germanic enclaves. Czechoslovakia was divided into Slovakia, who voluntarily placed itself under the Third Reich influence, and the Protectorate Bohemia and Moravia in March 1939. Due to the strong influence of the Nazi regime that limited the opportunities of subversive actions, SOE did not pay much attention to this territory in the early years of the war (Keary, Auster, Klauber, 2022).

SOE wanted to organize subversive actions that would damage the German war effort and economic resources. The Czech heavy and steel industries exceeded 10% of the Reich's output, and the same could be said about the coal and armaments sectors. In later years of the war, the underground organisation sabotaged German communication.

Czechs did not contribute only militarily. In 1940, a Czech scientist, Dr. Malachta, cooperated with SOE and improved their home-made explosives, long-delay fuses and heat chemistry (Keary, Auster, Klauber, 2022).

Despite the Nazi dictatorship, Czechs resisted and created an underground organisation initiated by Edvard Beneš. The first attempts for the resistance and SOE to get in touch were made in April 1941 in order to establish communications between Czechia and the Czech Government in exile. Moreover, SOE longed for a further expansion of the resistance movement. There were not many successful operations before the year 1942, when Operation Anthropoid successfully resulted in the death of Reinhard Heydrich. Nevertheless, the aftermath of the assassination brought a huge wave of violent retaliations against civilians and thus inhibited the SOE activities.

During the summer, SOE together with RAF could not attempt any flights due to the distance and the short duration of summer nights. This limited SOE's chances on infiltrating and supplying the Protectorate. Fortunately, this changed with the possibility to conduct these flights from Italy in 1943 when Italy surrendered to the Allies. By 1944 the number of

operations in the Protectorate increased and more than 300 Czechs were trained by SOE and, together with the resistance movement, carried out sabotage and covert missions (Keary, Auster, Klauber, 2022).

5.2.6 SOE and Operation Anthropoid

Preparations for the assassination of Reinhard Heydrich, coded as Operation Anthropoid, began after Heydrich's accession as Acting Reich Protector and the subsequent mass murders of members of resistance and former Czechoslovakian army. The idea for the assassination was conceived around 1 October 1941 in exile in London, where friends or colleagues of the executed worked. One of them was Colonel František Moravec, who closely cooperated with SOE and the resistance movement. On 3 October 1941 Moravec assigned the task to Company Sergeant Major Josef Gabčík and Staff Sergeant Karel Svoboda, who both underwent special SOE training in Scotland. After the parachutists accepted the assignment, the idea was presented to Deputy Commander of SOE, General Gibbins, who responded affirmatively. On the same day, paratroopers were escorted for training to perfect their parachute jumps (Stehlík, 2012).

All preparations and armaments were supposed to be ready by 8 October. It was crucial that the mission would take place by 10 October due to the convenient lunar period for flights over Central Europe. Unfortunately, during the training Svoboda got injured and could not carry out the mission. Therefore, Moravec entrusted the mission to Company Sergeant Major Jan Kubiš. The much-needed attention was paid to the prolonged training and armament thanks to the delay of the operation.

The importance of this mission to Brits may also be indicated by the quality of the parachutists' training led by one of the best specialists SOE had to offer. Gabčík and Kubiš then went through extensive training with explosives, shooting various types of weapons, hand grenades, topography, Morse code, self-defence so called 'silent killing', etc.

The parachutists waited for the mission until the night of 28 December 1941 due to the lack of aeroplanes. Finally, they were dropped off by one of the RAF aeroplanes

altogether with secret service group Silver A and Silver B with Capt. Jaroslav Šustr. The aeroplane managed to endure artillery bombardments and an attack of a night fighter pilot. The parachutists were dropped near the village of Nehvizdy east of Prague. Gabčík with Kubiš were then supposed to gather as much information as possible before the execution of the plan. The assassination was to be made at the corner of the Kirchmayerova třída and V Holešovičkách streets on his commute from home to the headquarters. In a possible failure of the mission there were other alternatives of executing the mission, such as food poisoning or infiltrating Heydrich's office. The Operation Anthropoid was executed at 10:35 am on 27 May 1942 with a bomb constructed by a SOE explosive specialist, not quite successfully. Fortunately, Heydrich died 8 days later due to the blood poisoning caused by the bomb thrown by Kubiš.

In retrospect, the Operation Anthropoid could not have been executed without the help of SOE. British aid was in this case crucial due to the transport, armament and thorough training of the assassins. Britain sympathized with the Czech lust for revenge. Eventually it played into SOE hands, because the Operation Anthropoid was one of the most successful subversive missions and thus their popularity increased (Stehlík, 2012).

6 Support of the Allied governments-in-exile

During the WWII Great Britain provided the base and aid towards the establishment of governments-in-exile for their Allied partners. Britain started to cooperate with Poland already in September 1939. For Czechoslovakia, cooperation with Britain had a thornier path. However, despite many setbacks, Czechoslovakia also managed to win a place for its provisional government. The United Kingdom provided the base of intelligence service, close cooperation with Whitehall, armament for the resistance movements in their homeland, broadcasting, organising sabotaging operations against the Nazi regime etc. (Brandes, 2003).

The cooperation between the Allied exiled governments and Whitehall was valuable, and contributed extensively to the course of the war. The Czechoslovak intelligence network lead by Moravec or the double agent Paul Thümmel assisted in the Allied victory as well as the Polish secret service, which provided the German encrypting machine Enigma to the United Kingdom (Brandes, 2003).

6.1 British stance towards the Czechoslovak government-in-exile

Britain took a negative stance towards the formation of the Czechoslovak Government in exile until mid-1940 owing to the existence of the protectorate government and the emergence of the independent Slovak state (Brandes, 2003). Due to these events, Czechoslovakia ceased to exist not only physically, but also practically, territorially, and legally. Another reasons for a refusal to recognize the Czechoslovak government could be credited to Chamberlain and his appeasing policy. Before the outbreak of the war, Chamberlain did not allow the existence of the Czech Government-in-exile in hope that he could still negotiate with Hitler. Another factor that influenced the progress of establishing the Czechoslovak government-in-exile was the overall unpopularity of Czechoslovak politicians and their lesser importance according to Brits. Furthermore, Chamberlain did not welcome the disputes between Beneš and the Slovak representatives. Meanwhile in France, the Czechoslovak National Committee was established on 17 October 1939, but it

was not recognised by Great Britain until 20 December and it was still not perceived as a government-in-exile (Brandes, 2003).

The events took a turn after the fall of France in June 1940 altogether with the newly elected Prime Minister of Britain, Winston Churchill. Great Britain lacked its only bigger ally, and thus welcomed any form of alliance. The new stance of Churchill also assisted with gaining the recognition of the Czechoslovak government-in-exile due to his 'victory at all cost' policy and criticism of the Munich Agreement. On 21 July 1940 the Czechoslovak interim government-in-exile, led by Beneš as President and Jan Šrámek as the Prime Minister, was recognised by Great Britain, albeit with certain reservations. The establishment of the government-in-exile was no commonplace and therefore, the recognition of its emergence goes especially to Beneš and his diplomatic work and negotiations, primarily considering his unpopularity among British politicians. It is necessary to mention also the merits of the Czechoslovak soldiers – especially the fighter pilots in the Battle of Britain (Brandes, 2003).

According to Mastny (1979), establishing a Czechoslovak government in London began under the most untoward circumstances due to the extinction of Czechoslovakia before the war. As Czechoslovakia had been a precarious state entity even before the war, 'its re-emergence in 1945 may therefore qualify as a strikingly successful achievement of its government-in-exile' (Taborsky, 1973, as cited in Mastny 1979, p. 548). On the other hand, Chamberlain commenced the negotiations about establishing the interim government of Poland immediately after its downfall (Brandes, 2003). The United Kingdom took serious interests in maintaining the existence of the Polish Republic and encouraging relations between Czechoslovakia and Poland. This was mainly due to the elaborate British plan to create a Polish-Czechoslovak federation, an area made stronger by unification in respect to its location between Germany and Russia in post-war Europe (Smetana, 2017).

6.2 Relations with the Polish government-in-exile

The German, and later also Russian, army forced the Polish government into exile after the invasion of September 1939. The Polish government then fled to France and after the fall of France, the government moved to London.

The interim Allied government led by its President-in-exile, Władysław Raczkiewicz, consisted of himself, the government and the national council with a democratic agenda. Raczkiewicz was appointed president after the German and Soviet invasion on 30 September 1939 and Władysław Sikorski became the Prime Minister (Brandes, 2003).

The problem with the Polish government-in-exile was not about its recognition as in the Czechoslovak case (the Polish government-in-exile was recognized immediately after the invasion of Poland), but about its political orientation. As Brandes (2003) states, 'Britain forced a change of government from the pre-wartime Sanacja movement to a broad coalition of the former opposition parties that would include some politicians from the old regime'. Britain relied extensively on Sikorski due to his popularity in Poland, as well as his willingness to cooperate with the USSR and his abilities in political affairs (Brandes, 2003).

Throughout WWII, the Polish government was involved in the expansion, armament and overall upkeep of the Polish Armed Forces. It closely cooperated with other governments-in-exile as well as formed the resistance movement in occupied Poland (Brandes, 2003).

6.3 Resistance movements

The previous chapter on SOE and the covert actions contains a brief summary of the cooperation and support from Britain towards their Allied German-occupied countries. Britain supplied Poland and the Protectorate with armament, humanitarian aid and provided the intelligence service. Czechia was a more difficult country to get in touch with, due to its geographical coordinates and more extensive German influence over the territory. Both Poland and Czechia in exile fortunately managed to form independent radio

links with their homeland, which provided both to them and to Britain a better information flow (Brandes, 2003).

According to Brandes (as cited in Smetana, 2017, p. 15), 'only Poland succeeded in forming an 'underground state' with a governmental delegation, a political representation and an underground army.' This is also the reason of their extensive contribution to the course of war. The close cooperation with SOE brought the delivery of transmitters, money, weapons and transport of parachutists to the resistance inside the German-occupied Poland. Moreover, the Polish resistance was supported by the Political Warfare Executive, which provided propaganda over the radio.

The Czech resistance provided also a great deal of assistance, as mentioned in the Chapter 5.2. The underground movements were firstly initiated by Edvard Beneš in exile. The Czechoslovak resistance included the Central Leadership of the Domestic Resistance (ÚVOD) and the Defence of the Nation (ON) (Keary, Auster, Klauber, 2022).

6.4 Cooperation between German and Czechoslovak exiles

In Britain, the Czechoslovak government-in-exile wished for the same outcome of the war as the German exile representatives. According to Berglund (2000, p. 226), 'Czech and German exiles shared a hatred of Nazism and a desire for the restoration of the Czechoslovak Republic.' Albeit Germans in exile pleaded guilty for the sins of Germans in the Protectorate, they did not agree with the removal of Germans from the Sudetenland after the war.

The British government demanded cooperation of the two exiles, and Beneš was forced by the Foreign Office to include Germans in his government. Thus despite angry Czechs, Beneš nominated one German to the State Council. The British propaganda and their casting German people as the dreadful monster also did not help strengthen their relations.

Even though Beneš did not wish for Germans in his own government, he fully understood that the cooperation with Germany was crucial. Beneš started to cooperate with Wenzel Jaksch, the head of the Sudeten German exile, at the beginning of the war in order to get German representatives into the Czechoslovak organised movements. Jaksch hoped for autonomy for minorities in Sudetenland. However, this did not go well with Beneš's plans for Sudetenland Germans and declined Jaksch's proposal.

The relations between Czechs and Germans in exile drastically deteriorated after Heydrich's accession to power. During his administration, Czech people suffered in the Protectorate and the conditions after Heydrich's assassination did not improve. The consequences of his death were horrifying. The terror in the Protectorate rapidly increased and anyone who was even remotely connected to the assassination or was just suspected by the Nazis was sent to concentration camps, killed or tortured. One of the reminders of the Nazi aggression is the total extermination of Lidice and its 340 victims. These acts outraged the Czechs in exile and they refused to longer cooperate with Germans (Berglund, 2000).

6.5 Integration of soldiers into the British army

With the accession of Churchill as Prime Minister, the opening of the western front and the fall of France, the attitude towards governments-in-exile slightly altered. Britain became the only refuge for the victims of Nazi Germany. The United Kingdom gladly accepted the much needed military help from German-occupied countries as well as welcomed the creation of the armies in exile. These armies were politically subordinate to the exile leaders and, at least at the beginning, militarily subordinate to the French command, where they were initially assembled. They contributed valuably to the military strength of the Allies, especially the air forces (Brandes, 2003).

According to Britain, the governments-in-exile had two main assignments militarily speaking. Firstly, the United Kingdom counted on the German-occupied countries to recruit soldiers into the British army and secondly, to operate the resistance movements. Britain

could rely on Poland due to their significant help, such as managing and assisting the other governments-in-exile, providing Polish workers to France and mobilizing the POW from the Soviet Union (Brandes, as cited in Smetana, 2017).

Czechoslovakia contributed with a much smaller army-in-exile than the Polish one and, in addition, some of the troops previously fighting in the Spanish Civil War refused to take action in the war due to switching sides until 1941. From 1942 Britain did not influence the Czechoslovak soldiers in the Soviet Union and the same goes for the Polish division in the late 1942. The allied armies-in-exile were involved together with the British in Africa, Italy and Western Europe (Brandes, as cited in Smetana, 2017).

6.5.1 Battle of Britain

The Czechoslovakian and Polish fighter pilots were a significant contribution to the Royal Air Forces, especially during the Battle of Britain, which took place from July 10 to October 31 in 1940, according to British records.

The Royal Navy surpassed the German one. However, Germany dominated in the air. Thus Hitler wanted to gain the upper hand by destroying the Royal Air Force (Binar, 2021).

Initially, the British were not interested in the integration of Central European units into the British army due to the language barrier as well as cultural differences, feelings of superiority, and the impact of unfavourable times interwoven with and excessive caution towards spies (Kudrna, 2014).

The Czechoslovak and Polish armed forces were evacuated from fallen France, which enabled the formation of Czechoslovak units in Britain, including air force squadrons. In October 1940, Czechoslovakia signed a military agreement with Great Britain that stated that 'Czechoslovak Armed Forces and air units had been assigned as an integral component of Royal Air Force' (Binar, 2021, p. 73).

On the other hand, Polish pilots managed to build their own units within the French Air Forces. The Polish units were after the fall of France moved to the United Kingdom, and the same way as the Czechoslovak force units, were integrated into the RAF in August 1940. The Polish units surpassed both the Czechoslovak number of pilots and number of kills during the war. However, as Binar (2021, p. 84) states in his analysis, 'Czechoslovak and Poles held the same ratio pertaining to kill vs. own losses, which means that their success was equal and exceeded the RAF average'.

Thanks to the merits of the Czechoslovak pilots under the RAF, the British stance towards the Czechoslovak-in-exile question altered. They did contribute not only militarily, but also in political matters. The pilots helped to win recognition for the Czechoslovak government-in-exile as well as they helped to intensify the punishment towards Nazi Germany – their expulsion from post-war Czechoslovakia and Poland (Kudrna, 2014).

6.6 Czechoslovak broadcasting

The Czechoslovak government broadcasted in Czech and Slovak via the BBC European Service to the compatriots at home in the Protectorate about their relations with their allies as well as the position of the future Czechoslovakia. These radio broadcasts were crucial in order to maintain the government-in-exile's authority and also to inform the listeners of the government's plans and certainly about the progress of the war. Moreover, the broadcasts contained commentaries on Czech history and national identity. These programmes were dominated by Czech questions due to the cooperation of the Slovak state with Nazi Germany. The cooperation between the BBC and the Czechoslovakian government-in-exile proved to be successful, despite the tension between them due to the Czechoslovakian desire to broadcast their own political agenda. The patriots in the Protectorate and other German-occupied territories were at risk of being arrested or even killed by listening to the broadcasting from London (Harrison, 2015).

7 Britain's vision of post-war Europe

In the inter-war period France had the influence on the Central European countries. After the German invasion of France, this power over the countries fell upon the United Kingdom and so did the base of the governments-in-exile (Chernysev, 2009). Britain's initiatives and negotiations concerning the future of the European geopolitical organization considered mainly the non-irritation of the other great powers – the USSR and the USA.

7.1 Federal Europe

Britain found the most ideal organisation of the post-war Europe in the unification of Central and Eastern Europe. The countries which would be included in the European federation differed from plan to plan, some intended even to include Germany with Austria in the federation. Federalization would bring more economical and political benefits (Haapala & Häkkinen, 2017).

The idea of federalization started before the outbreak of the war, although it gained popularity later in 1940 thanks to the Federal Union and its activities. One of their attempts was to also unify France with Britain, which ended unsuccessfully despite a promising prelude. The Federal Union consisted of members of Labour and Conservative Party and was even supported by Churchill. On the other hand, federalism gained popularity in neither the House of Commons nor the House of Lords, who wanted to set off on a more democratic journey in post-war Europe. However, they agreed on the fact that Europe will need 'some form of international authority' (Haapala & Häkkinen, 2017, p. 805).

With the vision of endless war, doubts about the federalization of Europe started to appear. Despite these misgivings most of the members of the parliament thought of it as necessity for preservation of peace. Nonetheless, according to Haapala & Häkkinen (2017, p. 806) Britain sought rather for an 'empire than supranational organization' and that the federation would act as a 'third bloc between the United States and the Soviet Union' (Haapala & Häkkinen, 2017, 808).

Sikorski was not opposed to the confederal union of Central and Eastern Europe. In fact, his ideas made a contribution to the later formation of the European Union. He visualized a federal Europe stretching from the Baltic Sea all the way to the Black Sea. With this vision, Warsaw would be in an equal position as Paris or London. Sikorski wanted to open up a second front in Europe against Germany. In his opinion, this would later help the creation of federal Europe consisting of Poland, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and Greece. This unification would benefit greatly in military, economic and political matters (Chernysev, 2009).

The British Foreign Office together with Anthony Eden had inclined rather to the Polish-Czechoslovak federation in the inter-war period. In January 1942, a Polish-Czechoslovak declaration was signed with the leaders of both countries believing this could be the base of future federal unification. However, the Polish-Soviet relations worsened and the Czechs lost the interest in the confederation. Later Poland accepted the conditions of the Anglo-Soviet pact regarding the territories that the Soviet Union gained thanks to the Ribbentrop-Molotov agreement in 1939 (Chernysev, 2009).

The plans on forming a federation did not contradict British intentions. Nevertheless, the British Foreign Office worried that it would provoke the Soviet Union. The same goes for the USA, which could dislike the cooperation of the governments-in-exile of the German-occupied nations. Just as Britain started to worry about a governments-in-exile move from London to Washington, if they received the support of the USA. Naturally, the Foreign Office as well as the rest of the Big Three (the USSR and the USA) opposed Sikorski's plans on integration of the governments-in-exile. Thus, Sikorski's plans for the European federation were destroyed by the Big Three.

In 1943, Eden and Lord Halifax were planning to support the creation of two federations – one consisting the Balkan states and the other one including Austria, Poland and Czechoslovakia in Central-Eastern Europe. However, Churchill was constantly revising his plans on the federation due to his concerns over a possible irritation of the Soviet Union. He suggested the creation of the Scandinavian, Danubian and Balkan federations, respectively. It was clear that due to the tension in Europe, no shifts in the geopolitical

organisation of Europe would be possible without the Big Three and it was also obvious that the preservation of peace in post-war Europe could not be dealt on European level only. Therefore, plans had begun to emerge for the establishing the United Nations and the Council of Europe. These supranational organizations would deal with international disputes.

In May 1943 Churchill and Roosevelt came to the conclusion that post-war Europe would consist of 12 confederations altogether forming a European regional council with tolerance from the USSR, and that the federalization process would be controlled by Britain and the USA. However, European federalization ultimately foundered in October 1943 at the conference in Moscow, where Molotov did not accept the principles on which the federation ought to be created (Chernysev, 2009).

After the end of the war, peace and international cooperation were essential and 'federalization was above all a peace-oriented approach to world politics' (Haapala & Häkkinen, 2017, 807). It was clear that the United Kingdom was not as politically damaged as the rest of the Europe. Thus Britain was in a more convenient position to run the formation of a federate organization consisting of the smaller states of Central and Eastern Europe. In Churchill's plans, Britain, Italy and France would remain independent countries, and the unification would only apply to Balkan states and Central Europe with an overseeing supranational organization (Chernysev, 2009). Unfortunately, sufficient initiatives, whether from Britain or from the rest of the Europe, lacked. In addition, the Western European federation was not seen as a clear solution. Britain then waited for the formation of the United Nations before taking further steps (Haapala & Häkkinen, 2017).

Churchill's Zurich speech in 1946 boosted the popularity and the process of federalism in Western Europe once again. Churchill talked about regional organisation rather than a union. However, things proceeded very slowly in his disfavour (Haapala & Häkkinen, 2017).

The initiatives were fuelled by the economical aspect as well as the fear of the communist expansion and further German aggression. However, from the British point of view, there were many setbacks. One of the issues was the role of the Commonwealth. The

United Kingdom's main concern was the Commonwealth's prosperity, and thus it focused less on the establishment of a federal Europe. The doom of the Central-Western European federation could be also attributed to a 'capitalist approach to European cooperation' (Haapala & Häkkinen, 2017, p. 809).

7.2 Plans for the transfer of Germans

During the Battle of Britain, the overall opinion in Britain changed and radically increased the desire for more severe punishments towards Germany. Britain started planning that involved the expulsion of Germans from Czechoslovakia, Poland and also from eastern Germany. In December 1941 Eden discussed the topic with Stalin, who demanded the return of Sudetenland to Czechoslovakia and East Prussia to Poland. Moreover, Stalin negotiated a new border for Poland at the Oder and the Western Neisse despite Britain's former refusal. Britain started working on the German-Polish and German-Czechoslovak question in the Foreign Office Research and Press Service. The Service proposed the return of Sudetenland, East Prussia and Upper Silesia to their pre-war countries due to the fact that the smaller states would still have to face the possible threat of post-war Germany.

The transfer of Germans from Central-East was thus the final decision. The next question was 'to what extent?'. Unfortunately, the Foreign Office did not manage to persuade Beneš to reach a compromise with Jaksch who later accepted the proposal of Beneš to expel part of the German population with promised cooperation with the occupiers. With the idea of a homogenous state, Germans were not the only minority that suffered by expulsion – also Ukrainians, Hungarians and Italians were expelled (Smetana, 2017).

In the post-war period from 1945 until 1947, approximately 3 million Germans were resettled from Czechoslovakia to Germany and Austria, voluntarily or forced. The overall number of Germans immigrated from Central and Eastern Europe added up to over 12 million. This expulsion could be viewed as an unregulated revenge for the crimes Nazi

committed in German-occupied countries. With these expulsions from the Central-east Europe, Britain worried that the flood of Germans into their respective areas would destabilise these zones. Thus Britain requested to temporarily stop the expulsion and continue in well-ordered and humanitarian manner (Berglund, 2000).

8 Conclusion

To conclude this thesis, I would like to briefly summarize the goals and the outcomes accomplished by my analysis. The aims of the thesis were defined in the introduction. The analysis focused on British foreign policy towards specific countries in Central Europe during the Second World War, including the prelude to the Second World War with British negotiations, humanitarian and military aid, support of Allied governments-in-exile, comparison of Chamberlain's and Churchill's policy, integration of soldiers from German-occupied countries into the British army and organising the post-war Europe.

Despite the failed attempt of Chamberlain's appeasing policy to prevent war at any cost, he managed to gain the most precious thing thanks to it, and that was time. Chamberlain was fully aware of the fact that Great Britain was not ready for yet another war in the same half-century as the World War I. He bought much needed time to boost the economy and prepare the nation for rearmament. By slowing things down, Chamberlain wished to obtain as many alliances as possible, even though due to his own hesitation, he lost the opportunity to fight against the Nazi Germany side to side with the Soviet Union right from the outbreak of the war. According to Parker (1993), Chamberlain could take advantage of Italian and Soviet's concerns about imminent German expansion and establish a centre with strong alliances that could have prevented Hitler's crusade.

Great Britain provided humanitarian aid to children from Central Europe and granted them asylum. Moreover, Britain supported the governments-in-exile of Allied nations and its reciprocal cooperation, supplied their resistance movements with armament in the German-occupied territories and provided the base of intelligence service and broadcasting on BBC radio. Britain also welcomed soldiers from German-occupied countries and integrated them into the British army. The Allied troops contributed valuably, especially in the RAF and during the Battle of Britain. The United Kingdom was also involved in the negotiations and planning of post-war Europe, with British politicians promoting a federalized Europe.

Without the help of SOE, there would not have been the successful assassination of SS-Obergruppenführer Reinhard Heydrich. SOE educated, trained and rearmed the Heydrich's assassins Gabčík and Kubiš. The consequences of Heydrich's death led to even more Nazi aggression and to the complete extermination of Lidice. In response, Britain organised a fund for the renewal of Lidice during the war.

Despite some questionable forms of policies towards Central Europe, such as the secret conference in Teheran, where Churchill promised Polish eastern territories to the Soviet Union, British intentions were supranational and aimed to end the war with crushing the German expansion. Churchill in this scenario acted in order to keep the Soviet Union on the Allied side. He was fully aware that the USSR was crucial to crush Hitler. The same goes for the Munich Agreement, where Chamberlain had acted on the supranational scale with the intention to preserve peace in Europe.

Overall, Great Britain was considerably invested in Central Europe during the war, despite the fact that Britain had no former experience with cooperation or negotiating with this area before the Second World War. This is the probable reason of the lack of knowledge of this territory and Great Britain's initial hesitations to negotiate with this area and leaving the primary negotiations to France, who was more familiar with the Central European space.

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