And it was justified. This world had betrayed the Czechs. Let them turn their faces from it. Let them abandon all hope of the virtue of the human race and seek their solace in a just, unbending, and stern God.

Noon in a downtown café. The tobacco smoke floated in the air. Fat Jews sat gloomily over their coffee cups and German papers.

October 9
Ate a sandwich sitting on a wall with a tree-lined, cobble-stoned road stretching out before me, and very pleased to be back in Europe. Beyond Černošice, up into the woods & hills. Ate more sandwiches, to the accompaniment of a glass of beer, at a country tavern. There was a stout old woman who served the beer, wooden benches around the wall, a young man with a pigeon in a little cloth bag, an old man with an enormously long pipe. Rode back from Karlstein on a train packed to overflowing with demobilized soldiers, who joked grimly about politics.

October 13
Higgins, as courier, & young Kennedy showed up in the morning, much to our amusement, both having started for Prague from Paris by train, thinking that the trains ran through. They had been kicked off at Eger & had made their way here in various ways. I undertook to get them out again, and at 2 o'clock, armed with papers from the German Legation, we left Prague in the Minister's Lincoln, for the occupied territory. Sudeten-Germany seemed a little drab and poor—gone the magic of Bohemia and central Europe, not yet come the general cleanliness and well-kept appearance of Germany proper.

October 17
Called on Mrs. C. in the afternoon. Why must the wives of American men in positions of authority be so terrifically on the defensive? Having so much power, I suppose they feel responsibility. They fear that their men, who are easy marks for them, might be easy marks for other people as well.

1939

With the German occupation of all of Czechoslovakia, the State Department transferred Kennan to Berlin, where he assumed the heavy burdens of administrative officer of the U.S. embassy. The diary for 1939 ends in June, before the signing of the Nazi-Soviet Pact in August and the onset of World War II in September.

Berlin, June 7
Left Prague by train in the early morning. . . . We hung around the border for an hour or so and all sorts of officials asked us for our papers. Grace said: "We don't ask the other people for their passports; why do they ask us for ours?" . . . Berlin was reached in early afternoon. At the station, there was an altercation. Solveig had left the briefcase with Joany's pot in the toilet. When she went back to get it, the charwoman had taken it away. We found the charwoman, but she wouldn't give it up. It was her duty, she said, to turn it over to the Zugführer [conductor], who would give it to the lost-and-found. If she gave it to me and someone else claimed it, she would get in trouble. I got furious. Ours were the only children in the car. Grown ups didn't travel with pots. We were in a hurry. We had only a half-hour to get across the city. I finally took it away from her and walked off. It worked beautifully. There were no recriminations, and I reflected smugly as I walked off with the pot that if, like the Germans themselves, I had relied on further conferences and negotiations to recover what I felt I had lost, I might have been talking, as Mr. Hitler says, for twenty years longer.

June 8
Saw the children and Solveig off at the station first thing in the morning. The two little faces beamed out of the train window at us, and Grace waved delightedly as the train pulled away. I was too harried and tired to appreciate the full significance of this last separation; it was twelve hours later, and the sunset was fading across an impressive North Sea, when it hit me . . .

[George and Annelise vacationed briefly in London.]
international significance. Louis won.

5. Fifteenth-century philosopher and priest Jan Hus inspired Czech resistance against the Catholic Church.


7. “Mrs. C.” was possibly the wife of the U.S. minister in Prague, Wilbur J. Carr.

8. Solveig was an au pair.

9. Anna Freud, the daughter of Sigmund, was a psychoanalytic theorist in her own right.

10. Based on the 1934 novel by James Hilton, *Goodbye, Mr. Chips* portrays the long career of a beloved Latin teacher.

11. Kennan copied into his diary a letter to his sister Jeanette Kennan Hotchkiss.

12. This was a major Nazi newspaper.

13. Kennan and his driver.

14. Kennan, who had edited this typed entry with pen, may have inadvertently left out a crucial “the.” He probably intended the phrase to read: “it was the resistance that had produced the ruins of Rotterdam.”


16. Valentin Patzak was the German SS captain in charge of Bad Nauheim.

17. On his seven long transatlantic flights in 1942–44, Kennan read much of Edward Gibbon’s *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1776–89). It reinforced his belief in the difficulty of any nation succeeding in maintaining long-term control over another.

18. Kennan wrote, “Suppose we just take (a) and (b).”


20. Entry ends.

21. Carmel Offie, William Bullitt’s former adviser, worked for State Department political adviser Robert Murphy.

22. Samuel Reber was a member of the Allied Control Commission in Italy.

23. Kennan would later recall that he had learned much from Alexander Kirk, an eccentric, old-school diplomat.

24. Stanisław Mikołajczyk was premier of the Polish government-in-exile in London.

25. *P.M.* was a left-liberal magazine.

26. Wincenty Witos was a former Polish premier.