

# Review: Now on Netflix, WWII spy drama 'Munich – The Edge of War' is a mixed bag



CHENNAI: After innumerable World War II-focused movies, Christian Schwochow's "Munich – The Edge of War" is somewhat of a welcome relief worth savoring. The work, based on Robert Harris's novel "Munich," begins in a delightfully happy atmospheric mood in 1932 with Oxford students celebrating graduation with music and mirth. As the camera zooms in on three close friends – Hugh Legat (George MacKay), Paul Von Hartman (Janis Niewohner) and Lenya (Liv Lisa Fries) – we sense a whiff of what is come, the dark days of Adolf Hitler's (played here by a nasty looking Ulrich Matthes) expansionist plans to take over all of Europe.



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The movie follows three close friends – Hugh Legat (George MacKay), Paul Von Hartman (Janis Niewohner) and Lenya (Liv Lisa Fries). Supplied

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After taking the audience to a dread-filled London six years later, Schwochow's film then veers into the thriller genre, focusing on how Paul and Hugh, now working in government offices in Germany and England respectively, try their best to stop a war that eventually led, as we all know, to catastrophic consequences. Mainly about the 1938 Munich conference and its thwarted peace agreement between the two countries, Munich – The Edge of War beyond this is a fictional account of how the two friends turn spies. Once a passionate advocate of Hitler and his Nazi party with Paul arguing at Oxford how the Germans badly needed an identity that the Fuhrer promised, the young man is later disillusioned by and angry at the way things are turning out. At his brief meeting with Chamberlain, Paul says that it will be a mistake to sign a peace treaty with Hitler, who is nothing but a monster.



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The work is based on Robert Harris's novel "Munich." Supplied

A handsome spy story, it is set in plush offices and pretty gardens (with gorgeous production design by Tim Pannen) where the friends have their rendezvous, often exchanging information and highly classified documents.

The movie has some tense moments, particularly when Hugh tries to pass off vital information to his prime minister, but on the flip side, "Munich – The Edge of War" can be a little too academic, a trifle too contrived. There is not much to talk about the two lead players — MacKay and Niewohner — who seem more caricatured than real, although Fries is sparkling in the initial sequences conveying a carefree mood that permeated Britain's campuses in the early 1930s.