

Hitler on peace

From Adolf Hitler, *The Speeches of Adolf Hitler, April 1922-August 1939*.
London: Oxford University Press, 1942.

2 February 1933: Any one like myself who knows what war is is aware of what a squandering of effort, or rather consumption of strength, is involved. (p. 1003)

23 March 1933: The German nation wishes to live in peace with the rest of the world.
(pp. 1016-17)

17 May 1933: It is, however, in the interests of all that present-day problems should be solved in a reasonable and final manner. No new European war could improve the unsatisfactory conditions of the present day.

On the contrary, the application of violence of any kind in Europe could have no favourable effect upon the political or economic position which exists to-day. Even the ultimate effect would be to increase the disturbance of European equilibrium and thus, in one manner or another, to sow the seed of further conflicts and complications.

The result would be fresh wars, fresh uncertainty, and fresh economic distress. The outbreak of such infinite madness, however, would necessarily cause the collapse of the present social and political order. A Europe sinking into Communistic chaos would bring about a crisis, the extent and duration of which could not be foreseen.

It is the earnest desire of the National Government of the German Reich to prevent such a disturbing development by means of its honest and active co-operation. (p. 1046)

17 May 1933: We therefore have no use for the idea of Germanization. The mentality of the past century which made people believe that they could make Germans out of Poles and Frenchmen is completely foreign to us; (p. 1047)

17 May 1933: Germany is at all times prepared to renounce offensive weapons if the rest of the world does the same, Germany is prepared to agree to any solemn pact of non-aggression because she does not think of attacking but only of acquiring security.
(p. 1056)

17 May 1933: The German Government wishes to come to a peaceful agreement with other nations on all difficult questions. They know that in any military action in Europe, even if completely successful, the sacrifice would be out of all proportion to any possible gains.
(pp. 1056-1057)

27 May 1933: We want no war waged only with the object of bringing over perhaps some millions of folk to Germany who have no wish whatever to be Germans and who cannot be Germans. We shall never attempt to subject folk who in their hearts only hate us at the price of sacrificing on the field of battle millions of those who are dear to us and whom we love.
(p. 1061)

May 1933: We desire peace perhaps more than all others, since we need it in order to create bread for the millions of our unemployed fellow-countrymen. (p. 1079)

28 August 1933: We have declared a hundred times that we wish for peace. None of us wishes to incorporate an alien people into our State, but what God has made into a people belongs to that people, and if treaties are to be sacred, then they must be sacred not only for us but for our opponents. (p. 1085)

14 October 1933: The German Government and the German people are unanimous in their will to pursue a policy of peace, of conciliation and understanding, as a basis of all decisions and of every action.

The German Government and the German people therefore reject force as an unserviceable means for the removal of existing differences within the community of European States.

The German Government and the German people renew their profession that they will gladly concur in every actual disarmament of the world together with the assurance of their willingness to destroy the last German machine-gun and to discharge the last man from the army in so far as the other peoples decide to do the same. (pp. 1090-91)

14 October 1933: As a National Socialist, together with all my supporters and at the same time on the ground of our national principles, I refuse to gain men of an alien people, who will after all not love us, at the cost of the blood and the lives of those who to us are near and dear. It would be an event of immense significance for humanity as a whole if the two peoples once and for all were willing to banish force from their common life. For this the German people is ready. (p. 1099)

18 October 1933: Nobody here desires a repetition of war. Almost all we leaders of the National Socialist Movement were actual combatants. I have yet to meet the combatant who desires a renewal of the horrors of those four and a half years. (p. 1105)

5 November 1933: I know well what war means: I have seen it with my own eyes: and many a statesman has not done that! It is not as a traitor to my country that I repudiate war: I repudiate war as a decent German, who, even as a soldier, remained decent, and who is determined to be decent in the future. (p. 1135)

30 January, 1934: France fears for her security. No one in Germany wants to threaten it, and we are ready to do everything to prove that. Germany demands her equality of rights. No one in the world has the right to refuse this to a great nation, and no one will have the strength to withhold it indefinitely.

But for us who were living witnesses of the horrors of the Great War nothing is further than the thought of bringing these feelings and demands, intelligible on both sides, into any sort of connexion with any wish for a fresh trial of strength on the battle-field between the two peoples, which would inevitably lead to an international catastrophe. (p. 1168)

16 May 1934: All of us who have come to know war know that the waging of war cannot be the aim of policy. Our aim will always be to create a happy life for our people. We know, therefore, no other policy than that of peaceful construction. But for that reason we can never permit our people to be humiliated and treated as a slave. We shall never break the peace, but the new Germany for its part will never surrender, never give up its rights, never make any sacrifice of its soil. Fanatically it will defend in this world its vital rights, these it will champion to the last. We will never break the peace, but let no one imagine that he can subdue us peacefully and that we shall not resist. (p. 1177)

17 June 1934: If anyone asks us: 'What are you ready to contribute towards the pacification of the world?' then we answer: We are a people which loves peace and wishes for peace—a people which does not concern itself with the affairs of other peoples. (p. 1178)

5 August 1934: If it rests with Germany war will not come again. This country has a more profound impression than any other of the evil that war causes. Ninety-five per cent of the members of the National Administration have had personal experience of its horrors.

They know that it is not a romantic adventure but a ghastly catastrophe. It is the disciplined conviction of the Nazi Movement that war can benefit no one, but only bring general ruin in its train.

To us war would offer no prizes; 1918 was for us a lesson and a warning.

In our belief Germany's present-day problems cannot be settled by war. Her claims from the rest of Europe involve no risk of such a disaster, for they are limited to what other nations regard as their most elementary rights.

We only ask that our present frontiers shall be maintained. Believe me, we shall never fight again except in self-defence. (p. 1181)

17 August 1934: The German Government, like the German people, is filled with the unqualified wish to make its greatest possible contribution towards the maintenance of world-peace. The German army does not need to rehabilitate its glory in the eyes of any; the German Government has no need to seek military successes, for its regime is so securely founded that none can shake it, it is supported by the confidence of the whole people. The Government of the German Reich needs no such successes in the sphere of foreign policy to strengthen its domestic position. (pp. 1184-85)

5 September 1934: In the sphere of foreign policy we have in the most solemn form declared before the entire world the principles on which the German nation, without hatred or desire for vengeance against others, seeks peace and friendship with those who fifteen years ago still faced us as foes. In the profound recognition of the unavoidable consequences of a new war in Europe which could but lead to Communistic chaos we have done everything in our power to improve and to free from venom our relations with these nations which formerly faced us in enmity. (p. 1186)

12 September 1934: The unalterable aim of my policy is to make of Germany a sure safeguard of peace. (p. 1187)

1 January 1935: No country can feel the need for peace more profoundly than Germany which after difficult years full of distress and suffering has concentrated all her forces on her internal reconstruction. (p. 1193)

17 January 1935: Do you think it possible to preach peace to a people for ten years on end, and then suddenly to launch them into war?

When I talk of peace I am doing nothing but giving expression to the profoundest and most sincere wish of the German people.

I know the horrors of war too well. No possible profits could justify the sacrifices and sufferings that war entails. And the results of another general bout of European slaughter would be even more catastrophic in the future than in the past.

The only gainers would be the Communists, and I have not fought them for fifteen years, only at the end, by this roundabout means, to set up their mad rule.

My aim is the well-being of my people. I saw no well-being in the war; on the contrary, I saw only bitter suffering. I will say two things quite plainly:

(1) Germany for her part will never break the peace.

(2) If anyone should attack us, they will fall on a hornets' nest—for we love freedom just as much as we love peace.

Without being under any compulsion, I have given France the assurance, in the name of the whole German people, that we have no more territorial demands to make, and that of our own accord we have abandoned all notions of revenge. (p. 1198)

17 Jan 1935: As I have told you, we have not the slightest intention of making war for our own ends, so that you may well believe that we shall be even more determined not to do so on behalf of alien interests which do not affect Germany at all. (p. 1199)

24 February 1935: To-day I would wish only to repeat what I first proclaimed here fifteen years ago. We are determined to know only one 'Yes' and one 'No'. For peace, always 'Yes', for the denial of German honour, always 'No'. (p. 1205)

16 March 1935: But the Government of the German Reich of to-day desires only a single moral and material power—that is the power to be able to safeguard peace for the Reich and thereby for the whole of Europe. (p. 1208)

17 March 1935: The German people wants no war. It wants to be peaceful and happy. It wants, above all, to be able to respect itself. (p. 1211)

17 March 1935: One thing you must know: The German people does not want war. It simply wants equal rights for all—and that is all. (p. 1212)

1 May 1935: What we want lies clear before us: not war and not strife (Unfrieden). Just as we have established peace within our own people, so we want nothing else than peace with the world. For we all know that our great work can succeed only in a time of peace. (p. 1213)

May 1935: Nobody in this Germany, nobody in this unified and disciplined State wants war. Moreover, nobody here will take any step to cause war. (p. 1214)

May 1935: We have, of course, a deep and constant sympathy with those of our own blood beyond our boundaries, but we cannot make war on their account.

Europe is not big enough for a war under modern conditions.

War has been speeded up too much, and made too overwhelmingly destructive for our geographical limitations. Within an hour—in some instances within 40 minutes of the outbreak of hostilities—swift bombing machines would wreak ruin upon European capitals. (pp. 1214-15)

May 1935: Mankind to-day has one great task—to safeguard the peace of the world. (p. 1215).

May 1935: Wars of revenge are out of date. In the old days a deliberate maker of war may have been a patriot; to-day he is a traitor, leading his people in the valley of the shadow of death.

We are, by conviction and basic tenet, not only non-Imperialistic, but anti-Imperialistic. Just as we wish not to be assimilated, so we do not wish to assimilate others. We have quite enough to do to build up an orderly, just and happy life for our own people. (p. 1216)

21 May 1935: For National Socialism regards the forcible amalgamation of one people with another alien people not only as a worthless political aim, but in the long run as a danger to the internal unity and hence the strength of a nation. National Socialism therefore dogmatically rejects the idea of national assimilation. (p. 1218)

21 May 1935: Our racial theory therefore regards every war for the subjection and domination of an alien people as a proceeding which sooner or later changes and weakens the victor internally, and eventually brings about his defeat. (p. 1218)

21 May 1935: In no future war will the European national States be able to achieve—apart from the temporary weakening of their opponents—more than petty adjustments of national frontiers, of no consequence in comparison with the sacrifices made. (p. 1219)

21 May 1935: The blood shed on the European continent in the course of the last 300 years bears no proportion to the national result of the events....If these States had applied merely a fraction of their sacrifices to wiser purposes the success would certainly have been greater and more permanent.

When I, as a National Socialist, advocate this view perfectly frankly, I am also influenced by the following realization. The principal effect of every war is to destroy the flower of the nation. But as there is no longer any unoccupied space in Europe, every victory—without making any difference to the fundamental distress in Europe—can at best result in a quantitative increase in the number of the inhabitants of a country. But if the nations attach so much value to that, they

can achieve it without tears in a simpler and more natural way. A sound social policy, by increasing the readiness of a nation to have children, can give its own people more children in a few years than the number of aliens that could be conquered and made subject to that nation by war.

No! National Socialist Germany wants peace because of its fundamental convictions. And it wants peace also owing to the realization of the simple primitive fact that no war would be likely essentially to alter the distress in Europe. It would probably increase it. (pp. 1219-20)

21 May 1935: Germany needs peace and desires peace. (p. 1220)

21 May 1935: Our love of peace is perhaps greater than that of the other nations, for we suffered most from this unhappy war. No one of us means to threaten anybody. (p. 1229)

21 May 1935: [T]he World War should serve as a terrible warning. I do not believe that Europe can survive such a catastrophe for a second time without the most frightful upheaval. (p. 1231)

21 May 1935: We National Socialists believe that in the long run man can be happy only in his own nation. We live in the belief that the happiness and the achievements of Europe are indissolubly connected with the existence of a system of free, independent national States. Bolshevism preaches the constitution of a world empire and only recognizes sections of a central International. (p. 1234)

21 May 1935: Germany has nothing to gain by a European war of any kind. (p. 1235)

21 May 1935: Whoever lights the torch of war in Europe can wish for nothing but chaos. We, however, live in the firm conviction that in our time will be fulfilled not the decline but the renaissance of the West. That Germany may make an imperishable contribution to this great work is our proud hope and our unshakable belief. (p. 1247)

11 August 1935: We wish for peace, we want to build up on every side, we have work to do, work and again work. (p. 1251)

6 October 1935: Let us turn our gaze outward from here to the world at large. Unrest and insecurity are rife, war stands once more at its gates, revolutions convulse the domestic life of peoples. Like some calm island in the midst of all this lies Germany, our beloved German fatherland and Reich. Profound peace reigns amongst us, whereas in other countries the peoples no longer understand one another; men strive one against another, status against status, class against class, while we here are united in peace. A few days ago we were told by someone in another Reich 'Dictatorships can lead only too easily to wars arising from internal difficulties'. Our answer to this is that most wars arise from the very nature of democracies! We have no need to wage a war abroad, in order to be united at home. Here we are, here we stand, one people, one army, and one Reich! (p. 1254)

1 January 1936: To remain such a bulwark of national European discipline and civilization against the Bolshevik enemy of mankind will in the coming year, too, be our fervent endeavour. The Bolshevik attempt, through continual revolutions, bloody uprisings, and disturbances, to undermine the order of the world and to incite peoples one against the other we in Germany, in the future as in the past, shall successfully counter. But our highest endeavour, in the coming year also, must be to preserve for our rediscovered national life of honour and freedom peace in our foreign relations. (p. 1257)

10 January 1936: The German people, filled with the ardent desire to live in peace with the other peoples of the earth and to co-operate with them in all spheres of life in mutual understanding for the welfare and progress of humanity, wishes with all its heart to see also in all other peoples the same effort towards trustful co-operation and mutual respect. (p. 1258)

January 1936: There is not a single German who desires war. The last war cost us two million dead and seven and a half million wounded. Even if we had been victorious, no victory would have been worth the payment of such a price. What European statesman could to-day gain through a war any corresponding territorial conquest? Are two million men to be killed to conquer a territory with two million inhabitants? Besides for us that would mean to sacrifice two millions of the best Germans, men in the flower of their strength, the elite of the nation, in order to win a mixed population which is not to the full extent German and which does not feel itself to be German. Human logic is against a territorial war. (p. 1260)

30 January 1936: Just as we have always preached peace in the domestic life of our people, so we wish also to be a peace-loving element amongst the other peoples. We cannot repeat that too often. (p. 1263)

14 March 1936: One year of a good birth-rate does more for us than any war. (p. 1749)

15 March 1936: My aim is Peace, Peace founded on an equality of rights amongst the peoples. (p. 1307)

15 March 1936: The German people do not wish to continue waging war to readjust frontiers. Each of them is bought by sacrifices out of proportion to what is to be gained. The German people know a quicker and more natural way of making up for loss of population--that is the surplus of births over deaths, which makes greater progress than many a war can gain or regain. (pp. 1307-8)

16 March 1936: German people, do you wish that now at last the hatchet should be buried as between us and France and peace and understanding take the place of war? [Loud shouts of "yes".] I will accept your decision as the people's voice which is the voice of God. (pp. 1310-11)

22 March 1936: We want no gestures but twenty-five years of peace for Europe! And the peoples? They, too, do not want their statesmen to demand from each other gestures: they want them to make peace and keep the peace. (p. 1314)

27 March 1936: Just as I championed the cause of peace in the domestic sphere without any cowardly submission to anyone, so in the same way I would champion the cause of peace abroad. There too I have no intention of playing the coward or of capitulating before threats. (p. 1317)

May 1, 1936: Because we have mighty plans, because we have set before us great tasks, we wish to preserve peace. (p. 1321)

May 1, 1936: It is not necessary for me to win esteem and respect with my people through any famous triumph which carries in its train millions of dead. Esteem and respect I have without that! (p. 1321)

9 September 1936: The German people has no other wish than to live in peace and friendship with all those who desire peace and who leave us undisturbed in our own country. (p. 1328)

30 Jan 1937: Peace is our dearest treasure. Whatever contributions Germany can make towards preserving it, these she will make. (p. 1347)

17 February 1937: Front-line soldiers knew that war was a great, but a ghastly experience—they all had but one wish: that such a war might never recur. (p. 1348)

17 February 1937: We could not have another war. It would be too great a disaster. It would be better in the interests of world peace if more ex-service men and fewer politicians were at the head of governments. (p. 1348)

6 June 1937: The German in his whole character is not only peaceable and peace-loving but before everything else conciliatory. (p. 1351)

20 February 1938: The German people in its whole character is not warlike, but rather soldierly, that is while they do not want war, they are not frightened by the thoughts of it. They love peace, but they love honour and their freedom just as much. (p. 1409)

1 May 1938: The motto “Never again war!” is not enough. The watchword must be “Never again Civil war! Never again Class war! Never again domestic strife and discord!” (p. 1459)

17 September 1938: [N]o one in Germany dreams of attacking France. We harbour no resentment against France; on the contrary there is a strong feeling of sympathy in Germany towards her. Nor does any German want war with Britain either. (p. 1502)

17 September 1938: [W]ith a population of eighty millions I shall have so much to do to organize them and provide them with decent living conditions, that it would be madness to try to add other peoples to Germany. (p. 1744)

17 September 1938: That idea that we want to inoculate the whole world with our principles is simply absurd. National Socialist principles have done so much for Germany that we have not the slightest desire to export them. They are a fundamental advantage to our national strength. It is not Germany's political influence, but her economic influence that I want to extend. I can't get goods by exercising political pressure. (p. 1744)

17 September 1938: As for your expectation of our collapse, I may say that the greatest economists in Germany have been foretelling it for the last six years, but they have given that up now because even experts cannot afford to go on being wrong for ever. (p. 1745)

26 September 1938: In contradistinction to the many democratic States German foreign policy is fixed and conditioned by a *Weltanschauung*. The *Weltanschauung* of this new Reich is directed to maintaining and to securing the existence of our German people. We have no interest in oppressing other peoples. We wish to seek our blessedness after our own fashion: the others can do so in their own way. This view, which in our *Weltanschauung* is racially conditioned, leads to a limitation of our foreign policy: that is to say the aims of our foreign policy are not unlimited, they are not determined by chance, but they are grounded on the determination to serve the German people alone, to maintain it in our world and to safeguard its existence. (pp. 1509-10)

26 September 1938: We had hardly begun the restoration of Germany to equality of rights when, as the clearest sign of our renunciation of a policy of 'Revanche' upon the rest of the world, I proposed a series of agreements which were intended to lead to a limitation of armaments. My first proposal was: Germany in any event demands equality of rights, but she is prepared to renounce any further use of defensive forces or arms if the other peoples will follow suit: that is to say, general disarmament, if necessary, down to the last machine-gun! This proposal was not even taken as a basis for discussion.

I made a second proposal: Germany is ready to limit her army to 200,000 men on condition the other States also disarm to the same level. That proposal, too, was rejected.

I made yet another proposal: Germany is ready, if the others wish it, to renounce the use of all heavy arms, the so-called 'weapons of aggression', tanks, bombing aeroplanes—even if necessary to renounce the use of aeroplanes all together—heavy and the heaviest artillery. Once more the proposal was rejected. I went further and now proposed an international regulation binding all European States with the maintenance in each State of an army of a strength of 300,000 men. This proposal also was rejected.

I brought forward still further proposals: limitation of air-fleets, abolition of bombing, absolute abolition of poisoned gas-warfare, protection of districts not lying in the fighting-line, abolition of the heaviest tanks. That too was rejected. It was all in vain! (p. 1511)

26 September 1938: I am myself a front-line soldier and I know how grave a thing war is. I wanted to spare the German people such an evil. Problem after problem I have tackled with the set purpose to make every effort to render possible a peaceful solution. (p. 1513)

26 September 1938: We have given guarantees for the States in the West, and to all those States bordering on our frontiers we have given assurances of the inviolability of their territory so far as

Germany is concerned. These are no mere words. That is our sacred determination. We have no interest in breaking the peace. (p. 1513-14)

26 September 1938: I am grateful to Mr. Chamberlain for all his efforts. I have assured him that the German people desires nothing else than peace, but I have also told him that I cannot go back behind the limits set to our patience....I have no further interest in the Czech State. And that is guaranteed to him! We want no Czechs! (p. 1526)

9 October 1938: The statesmen who are opposed to us wish for peace—that we must believe of them. But they govern in countries whose domestic organization makes it possible that at any moment they may lose their position to make place for others who are not very anxious for peace. And those others are in fact there. It only needs that in England instead of Chamberlain Mr. Duff Cooper or Mr. Eden or Mr. Churchill should come to power, and then we know quite well that it would be the aim of these men immediately to begin a new World War. They make no secret of the fact: they admit it openly. We know further that now, as in the past, there lurks in the background the menacing figure of that Jewish international foe who has found a basis and a form for himself in a State turned Bolshevist. And we know further the power of a certain international Press which lives only on lies and slanders. That obliges us to be watchful and to remember the protection of the Reich. At any time ready for peace, but at every hour also ready to defend ourselves! (p. 1535)

9 October 1938: As a powerful State we are at any time ready for a policy of understanding with our neighbours. We have no demands to make of them. We want nothing but peace. (p. 1536)

6 November 1938: As one who is a lover of peace I have endeavored to create for the German people such an army and such munitions as are calculated to convince others, too, to seek peace.

There are, it is true, people who abuse the hedgehog because it has spines. But they have only got to leave the animal in peace. No hedgehog has ever attacked anyone unless he was first threatened. That should be our position, too. Folk must not come too near us. We want nothing else than to be left in peace; we want the possibility of going on with our work, we claim for our people the right to live, the same right which others claim for themselves. (p. 1545)

6 November 1938: It is very fine to talk of international peace and international disarmament, but I am mistrustful of a disarmament in weapons of war so long as there has been no disarmament of the spirit.

There has been formed in the world the curious custom of dividing peoples into so-called 'authoritarian' States, that is disciplined States, and democratic States. In the authoritarian, that is, the disciplined States, it goes without saying that one does not abuse foreign peoples, does not lie about them, does not incite to war. But the democratic States are precisely 'democratic', that is, that all this can happen there. In the authoritarian States a war-agitation is of course impossible, for their Governments are under an obligation to see to it that there is no such thing. In the democracies, on the other hand, the Governments have only one duty: to maintain democracy, and that means the liberty, if necessary, even to incite to war. (p. 1546)

8 November 1938: We are very thankful when in France and England the leading men will have nothing to do with such ideas and wish to live in good relations with Germany. We have more than once stated that we want nothing from these countries save the return of our former colonies—unjustly taken from us. But I have always affirmed that that is, of course, no occasion for war. It is, let us say, a question of justice and of a real desire to make it possible for nations to live together. Otherwise we have no demands to make of these countries and we ask nothing from them. We wish only to carry on business with them, that is to say, we wish to trade with them. So when people talk of ‘understandings’, we do not know on what we should come to an understanding.

But there is one thing I must keep in view. In France and England there are certainly men at the helm who wish for peace, but there are others who make no secret of the fact that they want war with Germany. (p. 1555)

1 January 1939: [W]e have always only one wish, that in the coming year, too, we may succeed in contributing to the general pacification of the world. (p. 1561)

30 January 1939: Germany has no territorial demands against England and France, apart from that for the return of our colonies. While the solution of this question would contribute greatly to the pacification of the world, it is in no sense a problem which could cause a war. (p. 1575)

16 March 1939: For a millennium the territories of Bohemia and Moravia belonged to the living-space (Lebensraum) of the German people....Year by year the danger grew ever greater that from this area, as had already happened once in the past, there might arise a new, vast menace to the peace of Europe....The Czechoslovak State has thus proved its inability to live its own internal life and in consequence has now in fact fallen into dissolution.

But the German Reich cannot tolerate permanent disturbances in these territories which are of such decisive importance, alike for its own calm and security, as well as for the general welfare and the general peace....Filled with an earnest desire to serve the true interests of the peoples dwelling in this living-space, to secure alike to the German and to the Czech people its own national life and to promote the peace and the social welfare of all, in the name of the German Reich as foundation for the future common life (Zusammenleben) of the inhabitants of these territories I order as follows: (pp. 1586-87)

1 April 1939: ...the Czech people will have more freedom than the down-trodden peoples of the virtuous nations!

I have thus, I believe, done a great service to the cause of peace, for I have betimes made worthless an instrument which was destined to be effective in war against Germany. When folk now say that this is the signal proving that Germany now wished to attack the whole world I do not believe that anyone seriously means this: that could be only the expression of an extremely far-reaching plan, or is it perhaps that thereby it is hoped to create the tactical condition necessary for the new encirclement policy? However that may be, I am convinced that in acting thus I have done a great service to the cause of peace. (pp. 1597-98)

1 April 1939: For Germany has no thought of attacking other peoples. (p. 1598)

1 April 1939: We have no thought of going to war with other peoples, always under the condition that they leave us in peace. (p. 1598)

1 April 1939: [W]e have given to Central Europe a great blessing—peace—the peace which is protected by the might of Germany. And this might no force in the world shall ever break: let that be our pledge! And thus we realize that it was not in vain that two million of our fellow-countrymen fell in the Great War. Their sacrifices have helped to bring to birth the new Great German Reich. Their sacrifices have helped to call into being this strong, young Reich of the German people and have helped to maintain its life. And as we think of these sacrifices we, too, if it ever became necessary, would shrink from no sacrifice. (p. 1602)

28 April 1939: I have heard the statement of the British Prime Minister to the effect that he is not able to put any trust in German assurances....Thus a war against Germany is taken for granted in that country. I most profoundly regret such a development, for the only claim I have ever made, and shall continue to make, on England is that for a return of colonies. But I always made it very clear that this would never become the cause of a military conflict. (p. 1625)

28 April 1939: Mr. Roosevelt believes, further, that in case of war victorious, vanquished, and neutral nations will all suffer. He also declares that I have repeatedly asserted that I and the German people have no desire for war and that if this is true there need be no war.

Answer: I wish to point out firstly that I have not conducted any war, secondly that for years past I have expressed my abhorrence of war and, it is true, also my abhorrence of war-mongers, and thirdly that I am not aware for what purpose I should wage a war at all. (pp. 1638-40)

May 1, 1939: That we love peace I do not need to stress. (p. 1660)

May 1, 1939: That I love peace appears perhaps most clearly from my work: in that lies the difference between me and these war-mongers....And how many of these works will need ten or twenty years before they are completed! I have then good reason enough to wish for peace. But these agitators have no use for peace; since they create nothing for peace, they are not working for peace. (p. 1661)

4 June 1939: No people and no Government will wage war for war's own sake. Only in the brain of perverse Jewish litterateurs can the idea be entertained that anyone can make war from sheer joy in killing or bloodshed. (p. 1667)

4 June 1939: I see, on the contrary, in the memory of the four years of the War, which I myself thanks to the favour of Providence had the good fortune to share, only a ground for the proudest confidence in my German people and, as a soldier, in my own person. These years make me in the depths of my being wishful for peace, since I recognize the frightful horrors of war, but also at the same time resolute in my conviction of the value of the German soldier in the defence of our rights. (p. 1669)

27 August 1939: As an old soldier of the front line I know, as you do, the horrors of war. It is from this outlook and knowledge that I, too, have honestly striven to remove all grounds for conflict between our two peoples. (p. 1693)

27 August 1939: That on this question our two peoples should have to enter on a fresh, bloody war of annihilation is not only for you, Monsieur Daladier, but also for me very painful. But, as I said before, I see no way in which we can influence Poland so that she should see reason and be prepared to rectify a situation which for the German people and the German Reich is intolerable. (pp. 1697-98)

Compiled by John Mueller