

# Judgements on Appeasement

All the following statements about appeasement have been taken from the internet. They are not arranged in any kind of order. They include statements from many different people – one was said by Winston Churchill in the House of Commons in 1938; one was written by ‘Mosquito’ on a children’s web-forum. As you read them, make your mind up about what YOU – on balance – think about the policy of appeasement.

Appeasement gave Hitler the advantage. He grew stronger and stronger. When war came it was against a strong Germany, in Poland – a country we could never hope to send help to.

**Traditionally, appeasement was regarded as a naive policy that gave the democracies the appearance of weakness and encouraged the Fascist powers in their attempts to construct empires. Its failure in preventing World War II coloured the diplomacy of the immediate post-war period and the decline into Cold War, and continues to impact upon the foreign policies of western nations today.**

Hitler was evil, and Chamberlain SHOULD have opposed him – end of argument.

**It must be understood that [appeasement] was extremely popular both with politicians and the general public.**

At a more sophisticated level, Appeasement was a sensible "middle ground" that would be a highly sensible foreign policy in the light of Britain's economic problems. If not for Hitler's wanton aggression which induced such moral outrage among the hysterical electorate that force Chamberlain's hand in 1939, Appeasement might just work. Thus, the Appeasement was portrayed as more complex issue than a simple failure to heed ominous warnings.

It showed that Chamberlain had no experience of international politics. Hitler made a fool of him.

Appeasement was an indulgence in wishful thinking at the price of principle

**The policy of Appeasement was a system of yields, compromises, and sacrificial offerings to Hitler's Germany that allowed him time to rebuild the German military into an amazing whirlwind machine...**

Appeasement was not the only policy choice possible. Chamberlain and his colleagues made choices among alternative possibilities, and gave persuasion priority over coercion. In 1938 they could have secured support at home for an anti-German alliance and worked to build a barrier to Hitler's expansion. They chose not to do so. Thus Chamberlain's "powerful, obstinate personality and his skill in debate probably stifled serious chances of preventing the Second World War"

**Matters at the time were not as clear-cut as we see them nowadays. German propaganda claimed that Germans in the Sudetenland and Poland were being mistreated.**

Appeasement was moral cowardice.

The best selling book perpetuating the guilt of various incompetent British statesmen, *Guilty Men*, was reprinted twenty-two times before October 1940. Its central message was that the appeasers were a bunch of stupid and pathetic men who offered concessions at someone else's expense. These men, led by Chamberlain, should have realized that by 1935 that they were dealing with someone with a insatiable territorial appetite. Churchill commented that, "There was never a war more easier to stop."

Appeasement did mean, however, that the war took place on a much larger scale than it would have if something had been done sooner as Hitler may have not drawn his entire population of native Germans home from other countries such as Poland and would not have had the scale of army that he had by the time war had commenced.

Appeasement is always wrong

It abandoned millions of Austrians and Czechs to the brutal Nazi terror.

**At first, appeasement was simply giving Germany justice. The Treaty of Versailles was unfair and Hitler's actions all seemed reasonable.**

Any man who thought 'a piece of paper' would hold Hitler was a fool.

The Conservative Party was rotten at the core. The only thing they cared about was their property and their cash. The only thing they feared was that one day those nasty Communists would come and take it... They made violent, pacifist speeches; and voted steadily against the miserable Defence Estimates for the years 1935-1938.

Appeasement was a mistake, pure and simple. Chamberlain utterly misjudged Hitler.

Appeasement is not always wrong. All concessions among enemies cannot be mistaken, or else politics would consist of little more than fighting.

As it became evident that the policy of appeasement had failed in 1939 and that Britain would in fact go to war, the Liberal Leader Sir Archibald Sinclair expressed his feelings on the achievements of appeasement " We have eaten dirt in vain" This statement is clearly expressing the fact that Britain had tolerated the deceitful acts of Germany to no avail or successes, that the policy of appeasement was deemed to fail from the onset, and concluding that the policy was pointless as it only prolonged the inevitable.

Appeasement was useless to stop a man like Hitler, who would never be satisfied in his demands.

A firm stand by France and Britain, under the authority of the League of Nations, would have been followed by the immediate evacuation of the Rhineland without the shedding of a drop of blood; and the effects of that might have enabled the more prudent elements of the German Army to gain their proper position, and would not have given to Hitler the enormous ascendancy which has enabled him to move forward.

If Britain had stopped Hitler in 1936, before the Luftwaffe grew in strength, there would never have been a Blitz in 1940.

Chamberlain was undeniably right when he said that 'war is a fearful thing, and before you embark on it you must make sure that it is the great issues that are involved'. Appeasement was simply the time during which the British people made up their minds about war. And in waiting for that process to take its due course, Chamberlain was absolutely correct. You only have to look at the response in Britain to the 2003 Iraq war to see that it is better to go to war too late, than too early. Appeasement was merely a process of making sure.

I believe that in 1938 and 1939 [Chamberlain] genuinely felt that God had sent him into this world to obtain peace. [He] went the wrong way about it. He decided in the early stages of his discussions to treat Hitler as a normal human being and an important human being at that.

It was obvious by 1938 that the League of Nations was dead and that only force would stop Japan, Italy and Germany. If Chamberlain had been a statesman of any ability whatsoever he would have realised it.

The true function of appeasement was to give Hitler a free hand to oppose the spread of Communism, and that the "Allies" -- especially Britain and France -- encouraged Hitler's rise and takeover of the Rhineland, Austria, and Czechoslovakia in the hopes that the Nazis would attack and overthrow the communist Soviet Union.

**The Labour Party wanted to spend money on housing and social care, not re-armament – and they were right; there was desperate poverty in Britain, and it needed dealing with. It was right that they should put the needs of British people first.**

Appeasement played into Hitler's grand scheme for a greater Germany in a dominant position in Europe.

It encouraged Hitler to think he could do anything he wanted. In this way it actually helped to cause World War Two.

In May 1939 A number of Conservative politicians formed 'The Right Club' to 'oppose the activities of organised Jewry' - in other words, they formed a fascist group. The fact that Chamberlain knew about this and did nothing shows that he was very right-wing and pro-Hitler in his own views.