

Wilhelm II War Speeches: Outbreak of War *July 31 & August 1, 1914*

Speech from the Balcony of the Royal Palace, Berlin, July 31, 1914

A momentous hour has struck for Germany. Envious rivals everywhere force us to legitimate defense. The sword has been forced into our hands. I hope that in the event that my efforts to the very last moment do not succeed in bringing our opponents to reason and in preserving peace, we may use the sword, with the help of God, so that we may sheathe it again with honor. War will demand enormous sacrifices by the German people, but we shall show the enemy what it means to attack Germany. And so I commend you to God. Go forth into the churches, kneel down before God, and implore his help for our brave army.

Speech from the Balcony of the Royal Palace, Berlin, August 1, 1914

I thank you from the bottom of my heart for the expression of your loyalty and your esteem. When it comes to war, all parties cease and we are all brothers. One or another party has attacked me in peacetime, but now I forgive them wholeheartedly. If our neighbors do not give us peace, then we hope and wish that our good German sword will come victorious out of this war !