The Kaiser Speaks from the Balcony of the Royal Palace (August 1, 1914)

Abstract

War has often served as an integrative force in society. Here, Kaiser Wilhelm II (1859–1941) seeks to overcome all social conflicts in German society by appealing to national unity in a time of war. The Kaiser declared all Germans his brothers, regardless of social station, at the outbreak of the war.

Source

Berlin, August 1, 1914

I thank all of you for the love and loyalty that you have shown me these past days. These were serious days like none before them. Should there be battle, all political parties will cease to exist! I, too, have been attacked by one party or another. That was in times of peace. It is now forgiven with all my heart. I no longer think in terms of parties or confessions; today we are all German brothers and only German brothers. If our neighbors want it no other way, if our neighbors do not grant us peace, then I hope to God that our good German sword will emerge victorious from this hard battle.

Source: *Kriegs-Rundschau* I, p. 43; reprinted in Wolfdieter Bihl, ed. *Deutsche Quellen zur Geschichte des Ersten Weltkrieges*. Darmstadt, 1991, p. 49.

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