

Old Austria was a "State of nationalities." I, as citizen of the German Empire, at that time at least, could hardly understand the bearing of this fact upon the daily life of the individual in such a State. After the amazingly victorious campaign of the heroic German armies during the Franco-Prussian War, one had become more and more estranged from the Germans abroad, partly because one no longer knew how to appreciate them or perhaps because one was unable to do so. As far as the Austro-German was concerned, it was easy to confuse the decadent dynasty with a people who were sound at heart.

It was hard to understand that, were the German in Austria not actually of the best stock, he never would have been able to impress his mark upon a State of fifty-two million people in such a manner as to create even in Germany the erroneous impression that Austria was a German State. This was nonsensical, with the gravest of consequences, but brilliant testimony for the ten million Germans in the Ostmark. Only a very few Germans in the empire had any idea of the continuous and inexorable struggle waged for the German language, the German schools, and the German mode of existence. Only today, when this misery has been forced upon millions of our people outside of the Reich proper, who, under foreign domination, dream of a common fatherland and in their longing for it strive to preserve their most sacred claim their mother tongue only today wider circles understand what it means to fight for one's nationality. It is now perhaps that the one or the other will be able to realize the greatness of the Germans abroad in the old East of the Reich who at first, dependent upon themselves, for centuries protected the Reich in the East, and at last guarded the German language frontier in a war of attrition at a time when the Reich was greatly interested in colonies but not in its own flesh and blood outside its very doors. As everywhere and always, as in every struggle, there were also in the language struggle of the old Austria three groups: the fighters, the lukewarm, and the traitors.

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