Johann Gottlieb Fichte,
Address to the German Nation (1806)

Source: http://www.historyman.co.uk/unification/index.html

"The first, original, and truly natural boundaries of states are beyond doubt their internal boundaries. Those who speak the same language are joined to each other by a multitude of invisible bonds by nature herself, long before any human art begins; they understand each other and have the power of continuing to make themselves understood more and more clearly; they belong together and are by nature one and an inseparable whole. Such a whole, if it wishes to absorb and mingle with itself any other people of different descent and language, cannot do so without itself becoming confused, in the beginning at any rate, and violently disturbing the even progress of its culture. From this internal boundary, which is drawn by the spiritual nature of man himself, the marking of the external boundary by dwelling place results as a consequence; and in the natural view of things it is not because men dwell between certain mountains and rivers that they are a people, but, on the contrary, men dwell together-and, if their luck has so arranged it, are protected by rivers and mountains-because they were a people already by a law of nature which is much higher.

Thus was the German nation placed-sufficiently united within itself by a common language and a common way of thinking, and sharply enough severed from the other peoples-in the middle of Europe, as a wall to divide races not akin ....

That things should remain thus did not suit the selfishness of foreign countries, whose calculations did not look more than one moment ahead. They found German bravery useful in waging their wars and German hands useful to snatch the booty from their rivals. A means had to be found to attain this end, and foreign cunning won an easy victory over German ingenuousness and lack of suspicion. It was foreign countries which first made use of the division of mind produced by religious disputes in Germany - Germany, which presented on a small scale the features of Christian Europe as a whole-foreign countries, I say, made use of these disputes to break up the close inner unity of Germany into separate and disconnected parts....

. . . They knew how to present each of these separate states that had thus arisen in the lap of the one nation-which had no enemy except those foreign countries themselves, and no concern except the common one of setting itself with united strength against their seductive craft a state must be perpetually on its guard. On the other hand, they knew how to make themselves appear to the German states as natural allies against the danger threatening them from their own countrymen-as allies with whom alone they would themselves stand or fall, and whose enterprises they must in turn support with all their might. It was only because of this artificial bond that all the disputes which might arise about any matter whatever in the Old World or the New became disputes of the German races in their relation to each other. Every war, no matter what its cause, had to be fought out on German soil and with German blood; every disturbance of the balance had to be adjusted in that nation to which the whole fountainhead of such relationships was unknown; and the German states, whose separate existence was in itself contrary to all nature and reason, were compelled, in order that they might count for something, to act as makeweights to the chief forces in the scale of the European equilibrium, whose movement they followed blindly and without any will of their own. Just as in many states abroad the citizens are designated as belonging to this or that foreign party, or voting for this or that foreign alliance, but no name is found for those who belong to the party of their own country, so it was with the Germans; for long enough they belonged only to some foreign party or other, and one seldom came across a man who supported the party of the Germans and was of the opinion that this country ought to make an alliance with itself.