

# Anti-Jesuit Law (July 4, 1872)

## Abstract

---

The term *Kulturkampf*, or cultural struggle, was coined by the German professor, pathologist, and liberal politician Rudolf Virchow (1821–1902) to describe the struggle between the Catholic Church and the Prussian state. Shortly after unification in 1871, Bismarck and his minister of culture, Adalbert Falk (1827–1900), inaugurated a series of legislative initiatives designed to undermine the Catholic Church's autonomy in Germany. In July 1872 the Anti-Jesuit Law, reproduced below, banned the Jesuit Order. As a peace offering to the German Center Party, which represented Catholic interests, paragraph 2 of this law was rescinded on March 8, 1904, but the other paragraphs remained in force until April 19, 1917.

## Source

---

### Law Concerning the Order of the Society of Jesus of July 4, 1872

#### § 1

The Order of the Society of Jesus and other orders related to it, as well as the similar order-like congregations, are debarred hereby from the territory of the German Reich.

The formation of establishments shall be dissolved within a period of time set by the Bundesrat, which shall not be longer than six months.

#### § 2

The members of the Order of the Society of Jesus or orders related to it or the similar order-like Congregations can be banished, if they are foreigners, from the territory of the Confederation; if they are natives, their residence in certain districts or places can be denied, or they can be banished.

#### § 3

The necessary regulations for the implementation and execution of this law shall be proclaimed by the Bundesrat.

Given at Bad Ems, July 4, 1872.

Wilhelm

Prince von Bismarck

Source of English translation: Louis L. Snyder, ed., *Documents of German History*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1958, p. 232. Republished with permission.

Source of original German text: *Reichsgesetzblatt*, 1872, p. 253; reprinted in Ernst Rudolf Huber, ed., *Dokumente zur Deutschen Verfassungsgeschichte*, 3rd rev. ed., vol. 2, 1851–1900. Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1986, vol. 2, p. 461.

---

Recommended Citation: Anti-Jesuit Law (July 4, 1872), published in: German History in Documents and Images,  
<<https://germanhistorydocs.org/en/forging-an-empire-bismarckian-germany-1866-1890/ghdi:document-1837>> [May 17, 2024].