

“Between Berlin and Rome” (1875)

Abstract

In 1875 relations between Prussia and the Catholic Church reached an all-time low. In February of that year, the Pope had issued an encyclical declaring that the *Kulturkampf* laws issued by Prussian Minister of Culture Adalbert Falk were invalid and non-binding on Catholic priests. In response, the Prussian government began a campaign to deprive all priests of government subsidies unless they provided a written declaration that they would observe the law of the land. In the caricature “Between Berlin and Rome” (1875), published in the satirical journal *Kladderadatsch*, this high-stakes conflict between church and state is depicted as a chess game. The players are Bismarck and Pope Pius IX (1792–1878, elected 1846). The caption reads: [Pius IX]: “The last move was certainly unpleasant for me; but the game is not up yet. I still have a very nice move *in petto*!” [Bismarck]: “That will be your last one, and then in a few moves you will have lost—at least for *Germany*.” Next to Bismarck’s right hand are papal chess pieces that have been “interned,” representing Church possessions confiscated by the Prussian state. Bismarck’s queen is Germania; another of his pieces is labeled “press,” and his pawns bear the insignia of other legal paragraphs (§§) designed to diminish clerical influence. The Pope’s resources include papal encyclicals, syllabi (e.g. the Syllabus of Errors, 1864), and excommunication. One of his pieces is marked “W” for the Center Party leader Ludwig Windthorst (1812–1891).

Source



Source: “Zwischen Berlin und Rome” [“Between Berlin and Rome”]. Bismarck and Pope Pius IX playing chess. Caricature from *Kladderadatsch*.

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Recommended Citation: “Between Berlin and Rome” (1875), published in: German History in Documents and Images,
<<https://germanhistorydocs.org/en/forging-an-empire-bismarckian-germany-1866-1890/ghdi:image-1341>> [April 09, 2024].