

Bismarck Introduces Ludwig Windthorst to His Wife Johanna (May 3, 1879)

Abstract

In the winter and spring of 1879, Otto von Bismarck (1815–1898), the Catholic Center Party leader Ludwig Windthorst (1812–1891), and the Vatican were feeling each other out regarding a possible settlement of the *Kulturkampf* conflict. At this time Bismarck was preparing to turn away from the National Liberals and base his future parliamentary support in the Reichstag on the protectionist industrial and agricultural tariffs favored by the Conservative parties and the Center. On March 31, 1879, Bismarck held an hour-long private conversation with Windthorst. Soon thereafter, on the evening of May 3 Windthorst created a sensation by appearing at Bismarck's [parliamentary] soirée for the first time since 1869, where he was warmly received by Bismarck. The Baroness Hildegard von Spitzemberg noted in her diary that Windthorst had been treated "as if there had never been a *Kulturkampf*" ("als sei nie Kulturkampf gewesen.") The artist intentionally put Windthorst, not Bismarck, in the center of the frame and increased his stature relative to Bismarck's to illustrate the power he held in that moment.

Source



Source: At a soirée on May 3, 1879, Chancellor Bismarck introduces Ludwig von Windthorst, a member of the Reichstag, to his wife. Wood engraving (19th century) from *Daheim-Beilage*, 1879, no. 34. bpk-Bildagentur, image number 30013060. For rights inquiries, please contact Art Resource at requests@artres.com (North America) or bpk-Bildagentur at kontakt@bpk-bildagentur.de (for all other countries).

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