

Hitler and Hindenburg on the “The Day of Potsdam” (March 21, 1933)

Abstract

The Nazis used the opening of the newly elected Reichstag (the elections having been held on March 5, 1933) to stage what historian Ian Kershaw has aptly described as a carefully orchestrated propaganda play. On the “Day of Potsdam,” they wanted to demonstrate not only the alleged unity of the nation but also the historical continuity between the Third Reich, Prussia, and the German Empire [*Kaiserreich*]. The opening of the Reichstag had originally been scheduled for the first week in April, but the date was moved up to March 21, the first day of spring and the anniversary of the opening of the first Reichstag in the German Empire (March 21, 1871). Additionally, the main festivities were moved from Berlin to the Potsdam Garrison Church, where Frederick II (“the Great”) and his father, Frederick William I, were buried. Former crown prince William was present as a guest of honor and representative of the Hohenzollern dynasty, and his brothers Eitel Friedrich and Oskar (both members of the Steel Helmet [*Stahlhelm*] veterans’ organization) also took part in the “Day of Potsdam” celebrations together with a third brother, August William (an *Oberführer* in the SA). On that same day, members of the Nazi Party, the military, and the police held parades like those in Potsdam in other German cities. The population followed the main events in Potsdam on the radio and over public loudspeakers. The celebrations ended with torchlight processions in the evening and a performance of Richard Wagner’s opera *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* at the Berlin State Opera on Unter den Linden. Hitler was in attendance.

The photo shows Hitler bowing deferentially as he shakes hands with Reich President Paul von Hindenburg (right), who is dressed his imperial field marshal uniform. Photo by Theodor Eisenhart.

Source



Source: Day of Potsdam—Celebrations in Potsdam on March 21, 1933, for the opening of the Reichstag after the Reichstag election of March 5, 1933. After the act of state in the Garrison Church, Reich Chancellor Adolf Hitler bows before Reich President Paul von Hindenburg. Photo: Theodor Eisenhart, New York Times. Bundesarchiv: Bundesarchiv Bild 183-S38324. Available online at Wikimedia Commons, https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tag_von_Potsdam#/media/Datei:Bundesarchiv_Bild_183-S38324,_Tag_von_Potsdam,_Adolf_Hitler,_Paul_v._Hindenburg.jpg

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Recommended Citation: Hitler and Hindenburg on the “The Day of Potsdam” (March 21, 1933), published in: German History in Documents and Images, <<https://germanhistorydocs.org/en/nazi-germany-1933-1945/ghdi:image-3771>> [December 07, 2024].