

Hitler Greets Reich Bishop Ludwig Müller and Abbot Albanus Schachleitner at the “Reich Party Congress for Unity and Strength” (September 1934)

Abstract

State suppression of the Christian churches was institutionalized with the founding of the Ministry of Church Affairs in July 1935. Before that, National Socialist policy towards the churches had fluctuated between toleration and intimidation. Since the majority of Germans belonged to either the Protestant or the Catholic Church, Hitler initially sought to contain the churches' social influence without alienating their members from the regime. From the beginning, both churches had representatives who subscribed to Nazi ideology, and who were thus useful for propaganda purposes, as can be seen in this photograph taken at the Reich Party Rally of 1934. The heavily orchestrated Reich party rallies [*Reichsparteitage*] were supposed to offer up a reflection of the national community [*Volksgemeinschaft*], and in this respect the presence of church officials such as Ludwig Müller and Albanus Schachleitner as honorary guests sent an important message to the people. Müller had been a member of the NSDAP since 1931; he was a founder of the German Christian movement and was appointed Reich Bishop by Hitler himself. Schachleitner, who had been a National Socialist since 1926, was suspended for publishing a euphoric article on Hitler's rise to power in *Völkischer Beobachter* in February 1933. After Hitler had him reinstated, Schachleitner served the regime as Nazi Germany's model Catholic until his death in 1937.

Source



Source: At the 1934 “Reich Party Congress for Unity and Strength” in Nuremberg, Adolf Hitler welcomes protestant Reich Bishop Ludwig Müller (right) and Catholic Abbot Albanus Schachleitner (center) as honorary guests. Photo: Heinrich Hoffmann.

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Recommended Citation: Hitler Greets Reich Bishop Ludwig Müller and Abbot Albanus Schachleitner at the “Reich Party Congress for Unity and Strength” (September 1934), published in: German History in Documents and Images,

<<https://germanhistorydocs.org/en/nazi-germany-1933-1945/ghdi:image-2061>> [July 10, 2025].