

Josef Joos Criticizes “Anti-Catholic Rhetoric” in the Reichstag (February 6, 1931)

Abstract

In this recording of a Reichstag debate on February 6, 1931, the Catholic Center Party representative Josef Joos accused the DNVP representative Bruno Doehring, a high-profile Lutheran pastor and staunch conservative, of fomenting the “persecution of Catholics.” Joos enjoyed a reputation for giving eloquent and passionate speeches, and here he reminded his parliamentary colleagues of the similarities between Doehring’s rhetoric and that of the *Kulturkampf*, when Chancellor Otto von Bismarck targeted German Catholics in the 1870s, a period that Joos called “the darkest years of our national development.” Joos and Doehring represented not only opposite sides of Germany’s Christian divide, but opposite sides of its republican divide, as well, with Joos a committed democrat and Doehring an unapologetic monarchist. The two politicians shared, however, a deep hostility toward National Socialism, with Joos regularly using his oratory to criticize the NSDAP in the early 1930s, and Doehring publishing a 1932 broadside against Hitler and the Nazi movement, in which he accused them of attempting to supplant Christianity with a new religion. The Nazis later imprisoned Joos in Dachau, but Doehring managed to preach publicly throughout the duration of the regime, albeit under strict Gestapo surveillance.

Source

Yes, there is a difference between rescue and rescue. And now I have to deal with Mr. Döring for a moment on this point. I don't like it. I don't like it at all. I'll tell you why. Mr. Döring suffers from an incurable disease. We call it anti-Roman sentiment. In Mr. Döring's mind, a Catholic is a bad German simply because he is a Catholic. On this point, you are being historically accurate, but your accuracy belongs to the darkest years of our national development. Mr. Döring has viewed the Chancellor in the light of these intellectual attitudes. And he has used this to reproach him, portraying him as impossible or incompetent simply because he belongs to the Center Party.

And he has taken a liberty that I must now consider for a moment. Yesterday he said, we fully understand that you, Chancellor, are in a very difficult position in that you are a member of the Center Party. That is to say, a party that is notoriously known for claiming to be on the Right today and on the Left tomorrow. Not true, not true. [He further said] If the Reich Minister of Labor, Mr. Brauns, can utter these two statements in a very short period of time: first, that the Center is no longer a right-wing or center organization, but a left-wing organization, and second, that the Democratic People's Party and the Center belong to the Right, then one really does not know which of the two is his true opinion.

So then Dr. Brauns asked Mr. Döring, “Tell me, what are you basing this on?” And Dr. Döring replied. Mr. Döring replied: “In response to your question yesterday, I would like to humbly reply that in a speech by Excellency Wallraff, which he gave on October 28, 1922 at the German National Party Congress in Görlitz, the following passage can be found: On January 9, 1919, the current Reich Minister of Labor, Brauns, said that the Center Party is no longer a centrist party, but has become a left-wing party. In an essay in Germania on July 18 of that year, Brauns categorizes the Center Party as democratic and the People's Party as right-wing. These are the documents that Dr. Döring presented. [Heckling] These are the comments made recently, although I must point out that Dr. Brauns never made such comments in 1919.

Never. You see, Dr. Döring, you call it foolish for the Chancellor to believe that the Right, center and Left can be brought together, at least to support national necessities. Why should we not be able to do it, we Germans? The French can do it, the English can do it.

[Reichstag President Löbe]: Mr. ... I am expelling you from the hall on the basis of paragraph 90 for constant... I am expelling you from the hall for constant disruption.

Ladies and gentlemen, I am expelling you for three days for continuously disobeying my orders...

Gentlemen, the stenographic protocol will show that I asked you 15 to 20 times not to interrupt the speaker. [loud heckling]

Source: SWR 2 Archivradio,

<https://www.swr.de/swrkultur/wissen/archivradio/tumulte-und-streit-um-katholikenhetze-1931-reichstag-vor-hitler-100.html>

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