



Volume 3. From Vormärz to Prussian Dominance, 1815-1866
Resolution of the *Katholikentag* in Aachen (1862)

The declaration of the *Katholikentag* (General Assembly of Catholics) from September 10, 1862, addresses concerns that the exclusion of Catholic Austria from a German nation-state would leave Catholics as a minority in a nation-state dominated by Prussian Protestants. Founded in 1848 in Mainz, the *Katholikentag* provided a forum for the public discussion of issues affecting all German Catholics.

- 1) The Catholic Church obliges no one to any political partisan standpoint; it is compatible with any form of government and any political system that is not inconsistent with God's commandments and the principles of justice;
- 2) the Catholic Church is no supporter of despotism and no enemy of political freedom and independence. As in all centuries [past], today it also rejects every kind of despotism, whether practiced by princes, parliaments, or parties;
- 3) Catholics are not opponents of political progress; they welcome all political reforms that serve the welfare of the peoples; but they conscientiously reject any breach of law and abhor every revolution, whether it is based on universal suffrage or on the principle of nationality or on the so-called principle of *faits accomplis*;
- 4) the Catholic Assembly reiterates the protest raised against the dispossession of the Holy See. It demands that the Holy Father be returned to full possession of his worldly rule, as divine Providence has given it to him and as is his due by the power of international law and sacred treaties, and stands by the principles that were expressed by the bishops assembled in Rome in their address to Pius IX.
- 5) the Assembly sees in the so-called Kingdom of Italy a revolutionary victory threatening the entire European order; it therefore deploras most profoundly the recognition that the very same has partly obtained, and thanks all the princes and men who have opposed this recognition.
- 6) filled by the most ardent love for the German fatherland, the Catholics assembled here protest against the slander that they, cast under the suspicion captured by the catchword "Ultramontane," are not good patriots. They summon the great German past of Karl the Great

[Charlemagne] as a witness to how devotion to the Holy See has at no time impaired the greatness and grandeur of the fatherland;

7) although unity of faith is the most secure foundation of political unity, Catholics do not see the schism in belief as an insuperable obstacle to German unity, just as long as the principles of justice and genuine toleration have their proper effect in all states and in the fatherland as a whole;

8) the Catholics assembled in Aachen, the old German imperial city on the borders of the fatherland, declare that every attempt at dismembering Germany, whether it is to the advantage of a German or of a foreign prince, is a sacrilege. They protest against the exclusion of the Catholic imperial house from Germany and abhor any indulgence of foreign ambition;

9) the Catholic General Assembly, in light of the continuing distress of the Holy Father Pius IX and the need to maintain his dignity, freedom, and independence, which increases daily, declares the payment of the *Peterspfennig* [Peter's pence] to be an exquisitely good work under the current circumstances, in which a Catholic not only practices the duty of Christian charity but also reveals his zeal for holy belief and his love of church and of freedom; it therefore calls upon all members of Catholic associations not only to continue payment of the Peter's pence themselves, but also to work for this among others as much as possible.

Source: H. Schultheß, *Europäischer Geschichtskalender* [*Almanac of European History*], vol. 3, 1862, p. 89 ff.

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