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Fürstbischof Adolf Kardinal Bertram. Kirchenpolitik in Kaiserreich und
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Adolf Cardinal Bertram ranks among the most controversial German bishops of the 20th century. Because of the defensive course Bertram steered as Chairman of the Fulda Bishops' Conference during the Nazi period, his opponents criticize him as vigorously as his proponents defend him. This book is the first scholarly study based on a wide range of sources that examines Bertram's thought and actions in the realm of church-state relations during the Wilhelmine Empire and the Weimar Republic. This broadened perspective is significantly important for understanding Bertram's conduct after 1933.

Bertram's formative experiences in respect to his views on church-state relations occurred in the Catholic diaspora of the diocese of Hildesheim and during Bismarck's *Kulturkampf*. His most important political and spiritual mentors included the Bishop of Hildesheim, Wilhelm Sommerwerck (known as Jacobi) and the eventual Prince-Bishop of Breslau, Georg Cardinal Kopp. Inspired by Pope Leo XIII's political teachings, Bertram developed a model of mutual coexistence between the Church, on the one hand, and the state authority installed by God, on the other. This approach to church-state relations proved successful during Bertram's tenure as Bishop of Hildesheim.

Thanks to the strong influence of the Prussian administration, Bertram took charge of the important prince-bishopric of Breslau concurrent with the outbreak of World War I. Bertram viewed Wilhelm II as an "emperor of peace" (Friedenskaiser) who had been forced into a defensive war. During the revolutionary period following the war's end in 1918, Bertram served as a steadying political influence: his paradigm of church-state relations enabled him to respond pragmatically to the new, republican situation. Bertram endeavored to separate pastoral work and politics, and proscribed political activity from the pulpit. This prohibition, however, did not absolve clerics of the duty to educate Catholics about the dangers posed by ideological opponents such as socialists or nationalistic militias.

Bertram considered the Center Party Catholics' natural political home. He supported the party for his entire life and left it to handle day-to-day politics. He saw no alternative to the political course of the Center Party and was outspoken in defending its controversial coalition with the Social Democratic Party (SPD). In Bertram's eyes, the ideological rivalry between Catholicism and Socialism did not preclude limited cooperation between the two parties on some political issues. As a "republican of reason" (Vernunftrepublikaner), the Breslau cardinal adopted a reserved stance toward the Center Party's political partnership with the German National People's Party (DNVP), since the latter rejected the republican constitution and its upholders, and therefore, in Bertram's view, the political authorities willed by God.

In the German-Polish conflict that erupted over the political and ecclesiastical status of Upper Silesia following World War I, Bertram vigorously supported keeping that region in Germany – and in his diocese. He thereby provoked the resistance of the Polish "Theological Section," which demanded both separation of Upper Silesia from Germany and an independent Upper Silesian diocese within Poland. The consequences included far-reaching conflicts between Bertram and the papal nuncio in Poland, Achille Ratti, the later Pope Pius XI, who backed the Polish position.

In the course of the restructuring of relations between the German Reich and the Holy See in the early 1920s, the Munich-based nuncio Eugenio Pacelli, the later Pope Pius XII, and Bertram, by then chairman of the Bishops' Conference at Fulda (Fuldaer Bischofskonferenz), managed to work together. But their differing tactical orientations soon became apparent. Whereas the cardinal from Breslau looked for efficient solutions to individual problems and was prepared to compromise in some areas, the nuncio preferred to keep issues open indefinitely in order to secure himself the most favorable negotiating position. The tensions between Bertram and Pacelli sprung from their different interpretations of the nuncio's role. Pacelli considered himself the direct representative of the Holy Father and, in some ways, a superior authority over the diocesan bishop. Bertram, on the other hand, acknowledged the nuncio – whether Pacelli or Ratti – as the Pope's envoy but not as an immediate superior of the bishops in a diocese.

In the early 1930s, Bertram took a clear stand against the rising anti-Christian movements. He condemned National Socialism, as well as Socialism, Communism, and Bolshevism, for their "erroneous teachings." Bertram's critical stance remained fundamentally unchanged in the weeks after Hitler's "seizure of power" ("Machtergreifung") and his episcopal admonitions against the Nazis persisted. Only after Hitler's apparent offer of a modus vivendi did Bertram rescind his previous warnings, in a controversial proclamation of 28 March 1933, which he coordinated only partially with the other German bishops and not at all with the Vatican. In continuing a course based on his paradigm of church-state relations, Bertram hoped to preserve the Church's remaining political influence.