

## Dibelius, Otto

(1880--1967), German Protestant bishop and theologian who participated in the German church's anti-Nazi resistance.

Dibelius was a proud German nationalist, and after the Nazis rose to national power in January 1933, he gave the sermon at the opening service for the 1933 Reichstag. He spoke in a cautiously generous manner about the Nazis, but he also stressed the fact that dictatorship was not the will of God. As a result, he was fired from his position as general superintendent of the Lutheran church in a Prussian district. He soon joined the Confessing Church, which was anti-Nazi in orientation.

During World War II Dibelius struggled for the freedom of religious expression and criticized the Nazis' church policy. This led to arrest on several occasions; he was also forbidden to preach. In addition, he was in contact with some of the people who took part in the failed bid to assassinate Hitler in 1944 (but did not himself take part in the plot). However, despite the fact that he knew about the mass murder of Jews in Poland, Dibelius never spoke out against the killings, preferring to stay within the perimeters of what was considered appropriate by the church.

After the war, Dibelius became bishop of Berlin-Brandenburg.