

“Election Agitators” (1884)

Abstract

This sketch is based on an oil painting by Munich genre painter Heinrich Schaumann. It appeared in the popular family journal *Die Gartenlaube* in 1884. One of relatively few oil paintings that took election campaigns as their subject, it shows liberal election agitators (as the accompanying text explains). They are trying to win the votes of rural workers, who are identifiable as such through their clothing and tools. Because the *Gartenlaube* was a moderately conservative journal, the sketch implies criticism of the democratic suffrage and the advantages liberals derive from it, fairly or not. At the back of the wagon, partly obscured by the speaker, we see a man who is filling glasses from his large jug—a hint of electoral manipulation through the distribution of free alcohol. In fact, “treating” and other forms of electoral chicanery were much less widespread in Germany than in Britain and America in the last third of the nineteenth century and declined further after 1900.

Source



Source: “Wahlagitatoren” [“Election Agitators”], sketch after an oil painting by Heinrich Schaumann. *Die Gartenlaube* (Leipzig), Jg. 32, Nr. 39 (1884), p. 641. Available online at Wikisource, [https://de.wikisource.org/wiki/Die_Gartenlaube_\(1884\)/Heft_39](https://de.wikisource.org/wiki/Die_Gartenlaube_(1884)/Heft_39)

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