

“For the Committee Debating the Anti-Socialist Law” (1884)

Abstract

Liberals' scruples about the Anti-Socialist Law led them to insist that the law be renewed periodically. Each time it was, Bismarck had to ensure that any qualms about the fairness and efficacy of the original legislation were stifled. To do so, he allowed liberals to consider their prospects if the house were to be dissolved and a general election called on the issue. Entitled “For the Committee Debating the Anti-Socialist Law,” this 1884 caricature illustrates Bismarck's tactic on the occasion of one such extension. From baskets marked “Either” and “Or?” [Entweder and Oder?], the chancellor has selected two eggs that he shows to the Center Party leader Ludwig Windthorst (1812–1891) and leaders of the left-liberal and National Liberal caucuses: one egg is labeled “dissolution” [Auflösung] and the other “Anti-Socialist Law” [Socialisten Gesetz]. The caption reads: “Here, Gentlemen, this time the selection is not large! You must opt for one of the two!” From *Kladderadatsch* (1884).

Source



Source: For the Committee Debating the Anti-Socialist Law. Chancellor Bismarck with two eggs, “Dissolution” and “Anti-Socialist Law,” before the chairman of the Center Party, Ludwig Windthorst, and the national liberal politician Heinrich von Treitschke. Caricature from *Kladderadatsch* (1884). bpk-Bildagentur, image number 30013231. For rights inquiries, please contact Art Resource at requests@artres.com (North America) or bpk-Bildagentur at kontakt@bpk-bildagentur.de (for all other countries).

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