

Ludwig Knaus, *The Malcontent* (1877)

Abstract

This painting by Ludwig Knaus (1829–1910) was originally titled *The Social Democrat* [*Der Sozialdemokrat*]. With his back against the wall, a seemingly disgruntled worker sits alone in his local tavern. The figure's posture and expression, particularly the manner in which his hand is raised to his temple, suggests active contemplation, even a wracking of the brain. The implication is that he is thinking about how to overcome the discrimination and hardship he faces even before the beginning of the national campaign against Social Democracy (the painting was completed before passage of the Socialist Law in October 1878). All of the newspapers included in the painting represent the SPD: on both the wall and the table, we see the *Berliner freie Presse*, which had only been founded in 1876 and which, along with *Vorwärts* (Leipzig) and the *Hamburg-Altonaer Volksblatt*, was one of the three most popular Social Democratic newspapers of the day. Also seen are the satirical journal *Kladderadatsch* and a flyer from the Reichstag election campaign of 1877 with the call to arms: "Bürger, Handwerker, Arbeiter, auf zur Wahl!" ["Burghers, Artisans, Workers, to the Polls!"].

Source



Source: Ludwig Knaus, *Der Unzufriedene* [*The Malcontent*]. Oil on wood (1877). Deutsches Historisches Museum, Berlin, Inventar-Nr. 1988/810.

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