

SPD Members Arrested and Sent to Concentration Camps (May 16, 1933)

Abstract

Among the first targets of the new regime were the perceived political enemies of the NSDAP. On coming to power, the Nazi regime and its party organs began rounding up Socialists and Communists, especially political leaders of the SPD and KPD. Activists on the Left were held in “wild” detention centers, where they were beaten, tortured, and in some cases killed. While some were released to their families, often with signs of severe abuse, others were moved to the newly emerging concentration camps, where political prisoners initially constituted the vast majority of inmates. These were not extermination camps, though some prisoners died during their incarceration.

One such prisoner was Ludwig Marum, a prominent SPD member who had joined the party in 1914 and eventually served in the Reichstag during the Weimar Republic. An outspoken opponent of the Nazi regime, Marum was arrested in Karlsruhe on May 10, 1933. Within two months he was transported with other SPD members to the concentration camp at Kislau, where he was murdered in 1934. Sitting at the rear of a truck flanked by SS men, Marum appears in this picture by an unknown photographer. The regime turned Marum’s arrest and transfer into public spectacles, using both events to display their ability to follow through on promises to restore “public order” by targeting those elements whom they charged with leading Germany into chaos. In this photo, Marum is placed at the back of the truck, facing the rear. The deliberate staging put him on display and served to humiliate him and other Socialists; it also sought to instill fear in others who might consider speaking out as he had done.

Source



Source: Leo Baeck Institute, Elisabeth Lunau Collection, AR 6461.

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