

“Demnächst nicht in diesem Theater”: CDU Election Campaign Ad (1961)

Abstract

This CDU election commercial was broadcast before the 1961 Bundestag elections, in which the mayor of Berlin, Willy Brandt, ran for chancellor for the SPD for the first time. The rhymed text consists of a satire on the SPD's Godesberg Program, which it had adopted in 1959 and in which the party finally turned away from Marxism. The messaging to voters is that the changes to the SPD party platform, which eventually expanded the SPD's electoral support, were merely window dressing, and Brandt is caricatured as a heartthrob and polished orator whose words were allegedly whispered to him by Herbert Wehner, the former KPD member and "chief ideologist" of the SPD. The CDU lost its absolute majority in the 1961 election, but Adenauer was able to form a coalition government with the FDP and thus remain in office for a fourth term.

Source

The stage has been redecorated,
what was bad has apparently been sorted out.
The mimes stand in front of the backdrop
and practise their compromises.
The spotlight is turned on,
and in front, right at the front, is the hero.
The stage hero delivers his lines,
while constantly growing and growing.
He sings with the help of all his limbs
the most beautiful election promise songs,
and some people applaud the song,
because they can only see the hero.
But hidden from sight and hearing
sits Wehner, the prompter.
From the most important seat
he gives cues and whole sentences to the hero.
But, acting like a real star,
he acts as though it were his own performance.
And at the back, the staff push
dummies through the auditorium.
The corps of functionaries in the ramp
with dimmed red lights
determines both this stage play
as well as the big politics.
Through slogans and contradictions
Trust is shattered.
Not only people of intellect notice this,
even the naive one notices it.
Moral: the singer is fundamentally
only important because of the gold in his mouth.

But for the whole production
the party is in charge.
And whoever supports the star
also votes for all his comrades.

Source: "Demnächst nicht in diesem Theater": CDU Election Campaign Ad, 1961. Courtesy of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation. ACDP, 10-100-0072
<https://www.konrad-adenauer.de/quellen/videos/>

Recommended Citation: "Demnächst nicht in diesem Theater": CDU Election Campaign Ad (1961), published in: German History in Documents and Images,
<<https://germanhistorydocs.org/en/occupation-and-the-emergence-of-two-states-1945-1961/ghdi:video-5061>> [July 05, 2025].