

## ***Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, “The Left-Wing Block has Failed” (December 8, 1924)**

### **Abstract**

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The Reichstag election of December 7, 1924, the second election that year after the Reichstag election of May 1924, took place during a phase of economic upswing. This was boosted by the foreign loans made possible by the Dawes Plan. Hyperinflation had been overcome and unemployment had fallen significantly by the end of 1924. The SPD and the right-wing conservative DNVP emerged from the election as the strongest parties, while the radical parties on the left and right lost votes. The distribution of seats after the election meant that there were only two possible options for a government coalition: a grand coalition with the participation of the SPD or a coalition of bourgeois and right-wing conservative parties. This article appeared the day after the election in the conservative *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, which at the time was owned by the influential industrialist Hugo Stinnes. The article interprets the election result as a clear defeat for the “Left-wing Bloc,” to which the author, identified only by his initials “B.R.,” counts the SPD, the KPD, the USPD, which had shrunk to a splinter party, and apparently the DDP. The author refers to the political opponents of the DNVP, whose interests the *DAZ* quite openly represents here, as the “Reichsbanner.” The organization “Reichsbanner Schwarz-Rot-Gold” was founded in February 1924 on the initiative of the parties of the Weimar Coalition (SPD, DDP and Zentrum) as a paramilitary association to protect the Republic. The vast majority of its members belonged to the SPD. The founding of the Reichsbanner was primarily a reaction to the violent intimidation of right-wing extremist and nationalist combat units such as the SA or the “Stahlhelm” and Hitler’s attempted coup in 1923. Newly appointed Reich Chancellor Hans Luther (who had no party affiliation) finally formed a bourgeois coalition government consisting of the DNVP, Zentrum, DVP, DDP and BVP, which was to last barely a year.

### **Source**

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**The left-wing block has failed.**

**The people demand a government of the moderate mainstream parties.**

[...]

**The Reichsbanner Fiasco.**

The election campaign just past was conducted with a vehemence scarcely ever seen before. In the name of the “people’s community,” the Left engaged in a politics of defamation and fragmentation, using all manner of parliamentary intrigues to prevent the German National Party from entering the national government, despite its claims deriving from the results of the May elections and the importance of the forces behind the party. The Left’s obvious objective was to reestablish the Wirth coalition, which essentially was, and would be in future, nothing but an instrument of a socialist politics of class struggle.

The left-wing elections, it was hoped, would be “made” by the Reichsbanner, which enjoys abundant funding from obscure sources. This socialist-democratic bodyguard of the Wirth coalition, which boasted of having rubber truncheons at the ready to fight the national movement, has also exercised unprecedented election terror under the slogan “The Enemy is on the Right.” And yet the politics of the Reichsbanner has suffered an utter defeat. In the struggle between black-white-red and black-red-gold, which dominated the election campaign just behind us, the old, glorious German colors experienced

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total victory. It is finally time for the Reichsbanner, whose only success was turning black-red-gold into a mere party flag, a symbol of internal discord and indignity and weakness to the outside world, to disappear from the political life of our people. The internal squabbling that is destroying our people must cease. If the German people expended just half the energy it deploys in internal strife to protect its rights and dignity towards the outside world, we would be better off. Once again, the German people threatens to disintegrate into two camps, for which there is only a Them and an Us. We saw how the brutal politics of class struggle brought us to the brink of civil war at the time of the Wirth coalition. This must not happen again. Even if this unfortunate party constellation finally belongs to the past, it would still be highly damaging to refuse positive cooperation with the German National Party, which they deserve even more after these elections than they did after May 4th.

The Left opened the election campaign with grand illusions. The miniscule successes they enjoyed in Hamburg and Anhalt, under very specific conditions that do not apply in the rest of the country, led them to claim victory prematurely, while they cannot view the actual election results as anything but a humiliating defeat. The [German] Democratic [Party] election numbers appear quite pitiful especially in comparison to the noise in the [German] Democratic press, which acted as if there was scarcely anything else in the world but Democrats, before whose trumpet blasts the walls of Jericho must tumble. The [German] Democrats remain one of the most insignificant parties in the new Reichstag, they can be shut out completely from the formation of a government and under the glorious leadership of Erkelenz [and] Koch can look forward all the more thoroughly to spiritual communion with the Socialists in the opposition.

The German people's healthy instincts, in contrast, have ignored the temptations of a party that calls itself democratic, but whose politics violated both the essence of liberalism and the spirit of true democracy. The necessary result of the December 7 elections is government by the national mainstream parties, which we have long called for. To call what is also known as the bourgeois bloc a coalition of the propertied against the propertyless is a barefaced lie. The propertyless are at least as well represented in the right-wing parties as the propertied are in the Reichsbanner parties, and, as simple election statistics demonstrate, the greater part of the working class is not represented in the parties that call themselves workers' parties but rather in the mainstream parties.

The Social Democrats hope to attain the number of seats they had before merging with the Independents, since the latter had 70, and the Social Democrats 110, together 180 seats. In light of these expectations, the Social Democrats' slightly greater electoral success compared to the heavy defeat of May 4 merely confirms that the decline of this party is irreversible, and if it nevertheless cries victory, it merely proves how modest its ambitions have become.

The majority of the working class has simply come to the realization that Social Democracy, which after joining forces with the Independents has slipped completely into the radical waters of class struggle, thereby losing more and more of its intelligentsia, is utterly unsuited to leading the state, doubly so at a time when we need nothing more urgently than a government with the will to and capacity for national self-assertion and the preservation of German honor.

The people have spoken, and with a clarity that must not be ignored, lest their outrage erupt with elemental force against those who, in the name of democracy, cynically disregard their will.

B.R.

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