

Election for the Prussian State Parliament [*Landtag*] in Berlin (April 24, 1932)

Abstract

The fact that in 1932 the Social Democrats were still part of the government in Prussia, the largest and most populous German state, was anathema to the conservative forces that were still hoping for the restoration of the monarchy in Germany. The election posters seen in this picture were taken in Berlin (which belonged to Prussia) and clearly express anti-Social Democratic sentiment. By making reference to Prussian history in the form of a portrait of Frederick II, the opponents of Social Democracy and the Republic hoped to defeat “red power.” In a climate dominated by economic crisis, mass unemployment, and poverty, this message seems to have struck a chord with voters, albeit not to the benefit of the national-conservative parties: for the main winner of the elections held on April 24, 1932, was the NSDAP, which emerged as the strongest party. The SPD, on the other hand, suffered a devastating loss of votes. Since a government coalition was impossible due to the distribution of mandates among ideologically opposed parties, the previous government led by Minister President Otto Braun (SPD) initially remained in office in an acting capacity until President Hindenburg deposed Braun by means of an emergency decree on July 20, 1932. In a coup d'état referred to as the “Preußenschlag” [“Prussian Coup”], Hindenburg appointed Reich Chancellor Franz von Papen as Reich Commissar of Prussia and also replaced Prussia’s Minister of the Interior. Neither the SPD nor the labor unions felt able to oppose the coup, which was also supported by the military. For the National Socialists who would soon take over the government, having jurisdiction over Prussia – and especially the Prussian police – was an important step towards establishing their dictatorship.

Source



Source: Election to the Prussian state parliament in Berlin, April 24, 1932 Photographer: Unknown.

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