

“Housewives to the Ballot Boxes” (December 5, 1924)

Abstract

Reichstag elections were held again on December 7, 1924, the second elections that year. The first elections had taken place in May 1924, but after political disagreements within the minority government under Chancellor Wilhelm Marx threatened to topple the government, the Reich President dissolved the Reichstag in October 1924 and new elections were scheduled for December. This article, published in the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* on December 5, 1924, two days before the election, appeals to housewives and mothers to take part in the election and use their vote to shape Germany's future. Since the introduction of the new electoral law by the Council of People's Representatives on November 30, 1918, women over the age of 20 had the right to vote and stand for election for the first time. However, contemporary vote counts by gender showed that voter participation among women was lower than among men. Overall, women tended to vote for moderate and Christian parties such as the Catholic Center Party and the DNVP, but also for the SPD, which had campaigned most strongly for women's suffrage.

The *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, which had been published in Berlin since 1861, had served as an unofficial government newspaper during the Bismarck era and continued to have a conservative bias in the years that followed. In 1920, the newspaper was bought by Hugo Stinnes, one of the most influential German industrialists and a member of parliament for the national-liberal DVP. The tenor of this article, whose author is not named, is evidence of the newspapers increasingly conservative policy at the time.

Source

Housewives, do you know that the majority of German voters are women?

Do you know that it is you who ultimately decide the outcome of the election campaign?

You long for an improvement in economic conditions, an end to the housing shortage, a reduction in food prices. You hope that your children will receive regular schooling, that they will be brought up in order and morality. You wish for your men to be spared from the cuts, for no new tax burdens to be imposed on you.

This can only be realized if the national bourgeois parties emerge newly strengthened from the election campaign, if the representatives of internationalism and the class struggle are overcome.

Each of you must contribute to this.

No duty is more important on December 7 than going to the ballot box.

Do not think that you are indispensable in your household on election Sunday! Don't think that you have to stand at your own stove and cook your soup while the ballot box remains empty because the housewives' ballot papers are missing!

Do not think that you have to look after your children while the fatherland perishes, because you do not lift a hand to save it!

You can prepare the Sunday soup on Saturday and heat it up on Sunday. You can ask a friend or relative to replace you with the children for an hour.

If you are serious about it, each of you can free yourselves.

You can do even more. You can persuade your support, your tenant, your friends and relatives to fulfill their duty to vote. You can convince your adult children that they should not shy away from going to the polling station.

German housewives and mothers! Do you know how great your influence is?

Do you know that you will be responsible if the voting citizenry shirks its duty to vote on December 7?

Housewives, go to the ballot box and take those close to you with you. The outcome of the election campaign depends on you!

Source: "Hausfrauen an die Wahlurne", in *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, December 5, 1924 . Available online at: <http://zefys.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/list/title/zdb/2807323X/>

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