

Kurt Eisner on his Way to the Bavarian State Parliament (Early 1919)

Abstract

Kurt Eisner (1867–1919) was a journalist and cofounder of the USPD in Bavaria who in November 1918 emerged as a leader of the Bavarian revolution, becoming the first premier there. His government, however, was unable to improve provisioning for the distressed population or reestablish public order. On top of that, Eisner's policies made enemies among both national-conservatives and radical left-wing extremists, rendering him a target of death threats and anti-Semitic smears. In Bavaria's January 1919 *Landtag* elections, the USPD suffered a major defeat, whereupon Eisner decided to resign. Before he could make his decision public, however, he was shot on his way to the Landtag by a monarchist-nationalist law student from the nobility. Eisner's murder caused a fierce uproar in the Landtag, and the revolution in Bavaria took a violent turn. This photograph shows Kurt Eisner (middle), his wife Else Eisner, his son-in-law, and the minister for social welfare, Hans Unterleitner (1890–1971) on their way to the Bavarian Landtag. After the Nazi seizure of power, Else Eisner fled with her children to France. Facing a hopeless situation there in 1940 after Germany's invasion, she took her own life. Hans Unterleitner was held for two years in the Dachau concentration camp. He fled Germany in 1936 and finally emigrated to the United States.

Source



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