

## Red Front Election Rally in Potsdam (May 1928)

### Abstract

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This 1928 film sequence shows a Communist Party (KPD) rally and demonstration shortly before the May 20 national elections to the Reichstag, and it reveals some of the key issues that animated party members and voters. Members of the "Red Women's and Girls' League," the women's section of the KPD, for instance, marched in support of stronger protections for women and in favor of repealing the paragraph in the criminal code (§ 218) that criminalized abortion. Another large contingent protested against the construction of an expensive new light battleship, the "Panzerkreuzer A," insisting that the government should spend that money on important social programs instead, such as subsidies for school meals. This issue, in particular, seemed to animate voters in the 1928 campaign, as both the KPD and the SPD rallied behind the slogan "Food for Children Instead of Battleships" [*Kinderspeisung statt Panzerkreuzer*]. Both parties did, in fact, gain seats in the May 20 elections, at least partly on the strength of that call to prioritize social spending over military. The SPD, however, which now had to hold together a tenuous five-party coalition that included strong supporters of the new warship construction, wound up first reneging on its central campaign pledge and then backtracking again, to the great frustration of many of its erstwhile supporters. The KPD's opposition to the navy's new ship, on the other hand, never wavered, and it sought to block the expenditure by popular referendum later that year, a maneuver that kept the issue of both "*Kinderspeisung*" and "*Panzerkreuzer*" in voters' minds throughout 1928.

Two of this film's intertitles appear in Russian, possibly indicating the involvement of a Russian production company or an intended audience of Russian speakers. The first intertitle translates as "Wage war on war;" and the second one as "80,000 Red Front soldiers gathered in Berlin for a demonstration."

### Source

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Source: Demonstration by Red Front during election, May 1928. USHMM: RG-60.3781. Accessed at United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of Bundesarchiv

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