Inauguration of the Reichstag (December 5, 1894)

Abstract

When Germany was unified in 1871, the Berlin Reichstag became the federal parliament. Following two design competitions and a heated debate over the location of the building that would eventually house the parliament, architect Paul Wallot (1841-1912) was chosen to build a structure on Königsplatz (later Platz der Republik) near the Brandenburg Gate. In June of 1884, thirteen years after unification, ground was broken. Parliamentarians met in a building on Leipzigerstraße until the new parliament building was officially opened on December 5, 1894.

The photograph below was taken during the inauguration of the new building. The event was largely a military affair, and many parliamentarians, including Reichstag President Albert von Levetzow, appeared in uniform. Wilhelm reportedly disapproved of the building's design and criticized Wallot during his first tour of it. The dedication above the entryway – "To the German People" [*Dem Deutschen Volke*] – is one of the few portions of the original building that remains today. The inscription, which was designed by architect and designer Peter Behrens and cast at the foundry of SA Loevy in Berlin, was added in 1916 to placate the Reichstag during the First World War.

Source

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