

June 15, 2011

## fragment from net debates about PR

Someone posted an explanation of why PR was not a factor in Hitler's rise. But I don't see it anywhere.

The quick answer to this is, why have a century of proportional representation governments in Europe produced only one Hitler? For most of that time you have had democracies.

But it is important to challenge this idea that Hitler was voted into office. No. He murdered and terrorized his way into office, with the support of the old aristocrats and industrialists who would not tolerate democracy. It is not hard to win elections when you can send your thugs to kill or scare off any opposition. He even had his brown shirts posting guard over the ballot boxes.

I once knew some old kraut who lived through the Nazi times in Germany. She had a succinct explanation for Hitler's rise. "The rich business people thought they would put him into office to get rid of the communists and anarchists, then they would get rid of him. He did this very well but when he was done they discovered it was not so easy to get rid of him."

As for this deadlock in Germany before the rise of Hitler, This was a lesson in the futility of "consensus politics" with fanatics. You had a fanatical right wing who wanted the Kaiser or some sort of "strong government" back, then you had this mess of anarchists, Trotskyists, and Stalinists on the left. Then you had a gutless middle which would could have simply governed, but had the idea that they had to get universal consensus for everything. They were terrified to do anything that somebody might not like. When the Nazis started pushing them, they collapsed totally.

The "winner take all" system is of course the ideal way for petty tyrants to take control and history is full of examples. However, most of them were local tyrants and none were as calamitous as Hitler.

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