

SPD: DEATH THROUGH BOREDOM

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A comment by Florian Kirner.

Now it goes into the determining round. Nearly 430 000 SPD members will vote on their future party chairmen in the run-off election. How incredibly exciting! Germany is electrified by this crazy spectacle.

No, seriously: The search for a new tandem at the head of the SPD is the most boring casting show of all times. For more than half a year it has been rippling listlessly. Half a year, in which the SPD cut off catastrophically in three more state elections and in the polls nationwide has now slipped to 15%.

Nevertheless, at no time did the search for a new leadership succeed in adding any tension. In the first round, only 47% of SPD members took part in the primary election. In a situation in which it is quite obviously a matter of the sheer existence of the party, 53% of SPD members, in other words, were not even able to get their act together to take part in the vote at all.

That alone shows, how demoralisiert the party is in the meantime. No miracle. The SPD has been slowly dying for at least twenty years. The Hartz IV laws of the Schröder government weigh like a gravestone on the party. And we continue to wait in vain for a significant rebellion.

At the level of the local associations, at the bottom of the base, the decline is the saddest. Here, amidst office hunters and hardly disguised supporters of neoliberalism, there are still genuine social democrats, good, honest people. But they have long since given up their party. They are still members out of habit, out of nostalgia or because the local association is at the same time the circle of friends. The spirit of times gone by has gone out.

Now, then, the run-off vote, the vote, the decision of the decisions: Olaf Scholz and Klara Geywitz stand in the ring against Norbert Walter-Borjans and Saskia Esken. The duel of the giants.

Now there is no doubt that the duo Walter-Borjans / Esken is much less unappealing than part of the duo consisting of finance minister and vice-chancellor Olaf Scholz.

Norbert Walter-Borjans was once Finance Minister in North Rhine-Westphalia from 2010 to 2017. During

this time he caused a furore by buying CDs with the data of German tax evaders and actually proved his backbone in the fight against the tax evasion of the rich and super-rich. There is much to suggest that Walter-Borjans is a decent person. But will he be able to lead the SPD out of the crisis? Will he be able to inspire people again for the old aunt SPD?

There's a lot to be said against it. For example his tandem partner Saskia Esken. She has been a member of the German Bundestag for the SPD since 2013. In an interview with Tilo Jung, Saskia Esken was asked what she had done during this time to change the SPD's course - after all, she is now presenting herself as a critic of the grand coalition. She had to clear her throat twice like a bad liar in order to avoid a direct answer.

That doesn't come as a surprise. Let's take a look at the voting behaviour of the woman who already did youth work at a young age together with today's LINKE Chairman Bernd Riexinger and who has approximately the same charisma.

Saskia Esken has agreed to the extension of the Bundeswehr mission in Lebanon. Saskia Esken has agreed to the extension of the Bundeswehr mission in Kosovo. However, Saskia Esken ... also approved the extension of the Bundeswehr mission in Mali, as well as the extension of the Bundeswehr mission in Somalia, the continuation of the [Bundeswehr mission in Darfur](#) and the extension of the missions in Afghanistan and the Mediterranean.

With all due respect. A real peace activist, this Saskia Esken. At least she demands the abolition of sanctions for HartzIV and social welfare. But she did not want to agree to a corresponding request of the LINKE. Coercion by the faction and so on. She did not abstain either. She voted against it. As well as against the motion to introduce corporate transparency against tax evasion. Of course, she agrees with the content. But wait: parliamentary group pressure.

Esken also voted for a further tightening of the deportation policy, but for targeted immigration into the German labour market. Human rights, certainly. But the requirements of the market have priority - and those of the fraction part of the grand coalition, whose opponent Esken wants to be, but unfortunately cannot be.

While she is very concerned about environmental protection and climate rescue, as interviews have shown, she also voted against ending the operation of coal-fired power stations to generate electricity or declaring a climate emergency. Esken was also unable to support the Green party motion to introduce a speed limit on German highways, against her declared conviction. Yes, that's right: parliamentary group discipline.

On the other hand, she was able to agree to the extension of piglet castration without anaesthesia.

So this is the best new start offered in this SPD election? A supposed grand coalition opponent who raises her paw for every grand coalition crap and constantly votes against her conviction because she is too cowardly to break faction discipline?

In fact, the SPD's emaciation of personnel is the most striking evidence of what is presumably a fatal infirmity. Who would still be there, who would have stature and backbone and is still alive?

Nothing illustrates the decline in the quality of social democratic personnel as much as the beautiful page "Größen der Sozialdemokratie" on the homepage of the SPD. Then, next to August Bebel, Ferdinand Lassalle, Marie Juchacz, Lily Braun, Kurt Schumacher, Willy Brandt and Helmut Schmidt, we find names like Heide Simonis, Gerhard Schröder, or, yes, really: Andrea Nahles.

Wikipedia correctly writes that the SPD is the "oldest still existing party in Germany". The SPD still exists, indeed. And that would actually be quite funny, this spectacle of a dying party in its collected embarrassment. But somehow it is very sad. Because the SPD, despite everything it has already violated and screwed up in distant decades, has accommodated many good and proud traditions of the labour movement.

Everything now indicates that the German Social Democracy will follow the path of the Greek PASOK, which hardly exists any more, or the heavily indebted French Socialist Party, which has had to sell its party headquarters.

I would have granted the old aunt SPD, but also the political landscape in our country, a liberation strike from below, a grassroots rebellion, a start on the Jeremy Corbyn mark, instead of such an inglorious end

from the bottom of my heart.

But, as it looks, this is not going to happen.

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