

## **A Man Sees Red**

By Alice Schwarzer

translated by *gender forum*

1        Something is wrong. Something is not as usual. But nobody wants to notice. Everybody beats about the bush. Just as in the case of the so-called "family drama," which is supposed to be fateful, higher powers seem to direct this fateful election. There is but one tiny difference: In a private family drama (in Turkish: honor's murder) he kills her, because she wants to exit. In this political family drama, he wants to kill her because she enters the stage.

2        The ex-husband who cannot live without his wife (rather, who does not want her to live without him) follows the same rule as the ex-chancellor who does not want to concede. In the first case, the motive is "conjugal love," in the latter it is "patriotic love." For now the country needs to be saved not only from a system change, but from something decidedly worse: a sex change.

3        We recognize the typical tyrant as male. He does whatever he wants to do; and it can be lethal to contradict him. In his universe, his law rules, be it in the home or in the chancellery. Our political tyrant poses as the winner of the election, although he has lost it. In 2005, his female challenger received 450,000 votes more than he did - in 2002, just the trifle of 6000 votes were enough for him to feel confirmed as chancellor. And no one disputed his victory then.

4        But a tyrant sees things differently. He transformed the numerical defeat into a felt victory and behaved so drunk with power on election night as if he had won the absolute majority. After seven years in power, it seems inconceivable for the Cohiba-chancellor to cede his position for someone else. Because "no one but me is able to guarantee a stable government! No one but me!" Days later, his paladin Müntefering still declares "Gerhard Schröder remains chancellor!" And his entire political clan applauds. For this is the logic of such closed systems: the tyrant makes the law. The system has only one weakness: No one dares to obstruct his way. Not even if it is the wrong way. Thus the whole party of the SPD plays a part in the surreal scenarios of the tyrant.

5        Plan Number One: My impertinence will succeed because a) it always used to do, and b) shows are more important than realities in a media democracy. Plan Number Two: I will find an agreement with the real men of the FDP. Plan Number Three: Okay, I will make way for the big coalition and a CDU-chancellor, because I myself feel that my position is

untenable - but then I will take her with me. If I fall, then she has to fall as well. Because, after all, it is out of question, hahaha, that a man like me could be replaced by a woman.

6 So, the tyrant bullies the winner and bawls: Surrender her! I will floor her! At first, the tyrant achieves the opposite effect. His brute attack provokes the vacillating team to back up their own woman candidate. The men of the CDU gather behind the lonely woman at the forefront. Now they do. But how much longer will they?

7 Will the macho men of the SPD, who so far have prevented any female social democrat to become a candidate for chancellor, even hinder the Christian democratic candidate? Will they dare to approve the big coalition - including a CDU-chancellor - but not a chancellress? Which reasons will they give for their preference for the Wulffs or Kochs? And what would the silent SPD women say to all this? Nothing, as usual?

8 Not only the surprisingly narrow victory, but also Schröder's coarse attacks have affected Angela Merkel, and exposed her. Because it is part of the logics of the tyrant system that the weaker ones are fascinated by him. All of a sudden, also the media no longer speak of a loser and a winner but of the "two candidates" who must "slug it out." We can imagine who would eventually be left behind as corpse on the battlefield.

9 Or, even more elegantly, both withdraw. "With this solution," *BILD* wrote yesterday, "Schröder could step down without losing his face. Motto: At least I have averted Angela Merkel." An candid remark. For quite some time, the Schröder-SPD has not been concerned with the welfare of the party or even of Germany. Rather they are concerned that their man does not lose his face. The issue is male honour. And if male honour is touched, then a man sees red.

10 On the altar of this male honour, a woman is about to be sacrificed who has dared to challenge HIM. Now, all means are justified, even the miserable strategy of changing the rules of procedure. For this alien, this *Ossi*, this woman must be stopped! This is the tyrant's request.

11 Even before the election, the big coalition was an option. But no one even would have dreamed of still questioning Merkel's chancellery had the CDU won. The only question seemed to be: Which man is self-assured and relaxed enough to be her vice? But now, the falling tyrant has managed to destabilized her, too, and this cannot be entirely unwelcome to the various would-be chancellors in her own ranks.

12 No, there is no point in mincing matters any longer. Germany does not seem to be ready for a chancellress - sixty years after Hitler and eighty-seven years after the establishment of women's suffrage, the people have elected her, but the majority of those in

power are far from granting a woman the highest state office. They might not put it past her, but they will never grant it to her.

13 The chancellor's wife, his master's voice, found her husband's behaviour on election night "suboptimal," as the outgoing chancellor by his own grace revealed in front of TV cameras. He has become used to taking private matters for state affairs. The role of female politicians in this male poker is sub-minimal. Except for one. And that's why she has to go. It is not without tragic intent that the candidate has always maintained that "it does not matter that I am a woman." Despite various similar experiences, she did not expect such a crude attack. I admit: Even I had not expected it in such an uninhibited manner. Not any more.

14 In 2005, we witness the attempt of a parting chancellor to disavow in public his designated female successor in a manner which he would have spared his toughest male political enemy - and which this enemy would not have accepted either. Undeniably, Schröder's motive is contempt, even hatred of the woman who might be a match for him.

15 If I had asked myself questions before the elections, because both big parties' cold-hearted election campaigns, entirely oblivious to women, were not particularly inviting - something has become clear since the violent appearance of the tyrant on election night: Germany urgently needs a chancelleroress! Whatever she would do - she would never behave like this. Not the woman who "modestly took note of the voters' will." Therefore, no one else but her would now be the real system change.

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