

Schroeder likens stay-at-home moms to Kaiser's era - vows child care increase [DL] ^[1]

Source: Deutsche Press

Format: Article

Publication Date: 29 May 2002

AVAILABILITY

Text below

EXCERPTS

BERLIN - Battling sagging opinion polls, German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder appealed to trade unionists Wednesday for their votes in a speech which knocked stay-at-home moms as a relic of the Kaiser's era.

Schroeder warned a Federation of Trade Unions (DGB) congress that his conservative challenger, Edmund Stoiber, would take a "wrecking ball" to Germany's social welfare state if he won the September 22 general election.

Stoiber, he warned, was a man from the yesterday with the policies of the day before yesterday.

Underscoring his views on outdated policies, Schroeder - a Social Democrat (SPD) - ridiculed plans by Stoiber's Christian Democratic alliance (CDU/CSU) to offer financial aid to mothers who stay home to raise children.

"It shows a certain image of the family that young, well-educated women should get a premium to stay at home," said the German leader who grew up in post-war poverty supported by his widowed mother who worked as a cleaning lady.

"This is a dusty, antiquated and totally out of date image of the family," said Schroeder. "It draws more from the era of the Kaiser than from our own era."

Schroeder promised that if reelected he would spend four billion euros (3.7 billion dollars) on setting up new child day-care facilities.

"Women in Germany should be able to live the way they want not the way some old men in the (CDU/CSU) think they should live," he said to applause.

Schroeder said conservatives planned to slash the rights of works councils which help determine company policy; loosen Germany's tight laws on firing employees; push for wage-dumping; and reduce the right to strike.

CDU/CSU plans to cut state spending would lead to massive reductions of money for families, education and infrastructure, he said.

But enthusiasm among unionists for Schroeder appeared limited.

Lines in his speech about his tough childhood such as "I know where I come from and know where I belong" have been used countless times before and failed to draw applause.

Schroeder's standing with working class voters in Germany is way down.

The chancellor's SPD would currently get just 36 per cent of the working class voted, said an Infratest-Dimap poll. In the 1998 general election Schroeder coasted to victory over then chancellor Helmut Kohl with 49 per cent of votes cast by workers.

Stoiber would currently win 38 per cent of working class votes, the survey said.

In the overall election polls Schroeder is trailing Stoiber badly.

Schroeder's centre-left alliance with the Greens would win just 39 per cent if elections were held now, compared with 52 per cent for a Stoiber centre-right alliance with the Free Democrats, said a Der Spiegel magazine poll released Monday.

reprinted from Deutsche Press.

Region: Europe ^[2]

Source URL (modified on 27 Jan 2022): <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/02/08/schroeder-likens-stay-home-moms-kaisers-era-vows-child-care-increase>

Links

[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/02/08/schroeder-likens-stay-home-moms-kaisers-era-vows-child-care-increase> [2]

