

Sputnik

Transcribed and translated by Deborah Schmierstein

A Dog's Life in Post-Hartz Germany: A Canine Understanding of German Welfare Reform



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A dog's life in Post-Hartz Germany: a canine understanding of German welfare reform

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Preface and Acknowledgements (also Conclusion and Introduction)

This little photo-book is a response to *Peter Hartz*. It is intended for people and dogs who find themselves surprised by the *Hartz-Gesetze*. I do not wish to take away their surprise because that can be a positive and creative emotion. The *Hartz-Gesetze* is too often accused of being unusual, bizarre, even scandalous. When you have read this book, you will also realize that they are scandalous, bizarre, even unusual. But you will also be able to stand under them, and thus to effectively turn them downside up. Because if you compare a dog's life before Hartz with a dog's life after Hartz, you will know that a dog's life has changed. And that will tell you that the life of a dog is now, well, it's a real *Hundeleben*.

Sputnik thanks all the human beings who have been helpful in her field research in Cologne, and firstly her family for its provision of her daily bread. Second, Sputnik would like to thank *Wolfgang Streeck* who has offered her the opportunity to study dog's day life in these five years at the Max Planck Institute in Cologne. In addition, she also wants to express her special gratitude to *Ernst Braun* (for conversion in dog language), *Jürgen Feick* (for the nuts and nice words), *Sigrun Kahl* (for the love), and *Martin Höpner* (for the apple he gave her last November after a hard day of work). She thanks *Bernhard Casey* for the title of the book and her family for assistance in editorial work.

Deborah would first like to thank that most articulate of dogs, *Sputnik*, a talented, diligent and most eloquent dog, who is dedicated to her work, for patiently teaching her to speak dog so that she could translate Sputnik's thoughts and reflections. She will never quite look at a tree or a cat in the same way again. It has been nothing if not a transformative experience. Deborah also thanks *Josh Whitford* for his eloquent patience as he saw vacations vanish into the computer screen. *Rambo 54* has also been a lifesaver.

Sputnik
and Deborah Schmierstein
February 2006

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1. *Weg mit der Regierung*, May 1998



1 *Weg mit der Regierung*, May 1998

Hierzu I have to say that this picture is the thousand words that show that nobody is more qualified than I to say that I have my SPD *bona fides*. This is me in 1998, tired after my 922 kilometres march from NRW to Rheinland-Pfalz (I got a little lost), with a banner “Weg mit der Regierung” (Get rid of the Government) in my mouth. This made eating very difficult. I had to put the banner down, sometimes in very dirty places. I can tell you that I had great hopes that the SPD would keep the streets a bit cleaner than did the CDU. So, to sum up, I did my bit to bring the SPD to power.

These were, nonetheless, good days in Germany, all told. I was unemployed, but I could still eat, procrastinate, sleep and eat. I had my nice *Arbeitslosenhilfe* benefits, I had some undeclared modelling income on the side (I am not just a super smart dog researcher; I am also the former Labrador beauty queen of Bayern). So I could devote

my life to research. And what is research? Well, sometimes it was research and practice seminars in the Cologne Parks. Sometimes it was eating. And sometimes sleeping. But it was always creative, because a full belly is the essence of creativity. Still, since the lapdogs of the capitalist pigs had their snouts in the public trough, we knew that things could be even better. So I marched in earnest, all the way to Rheinland-Pfalz, only taking the train once.

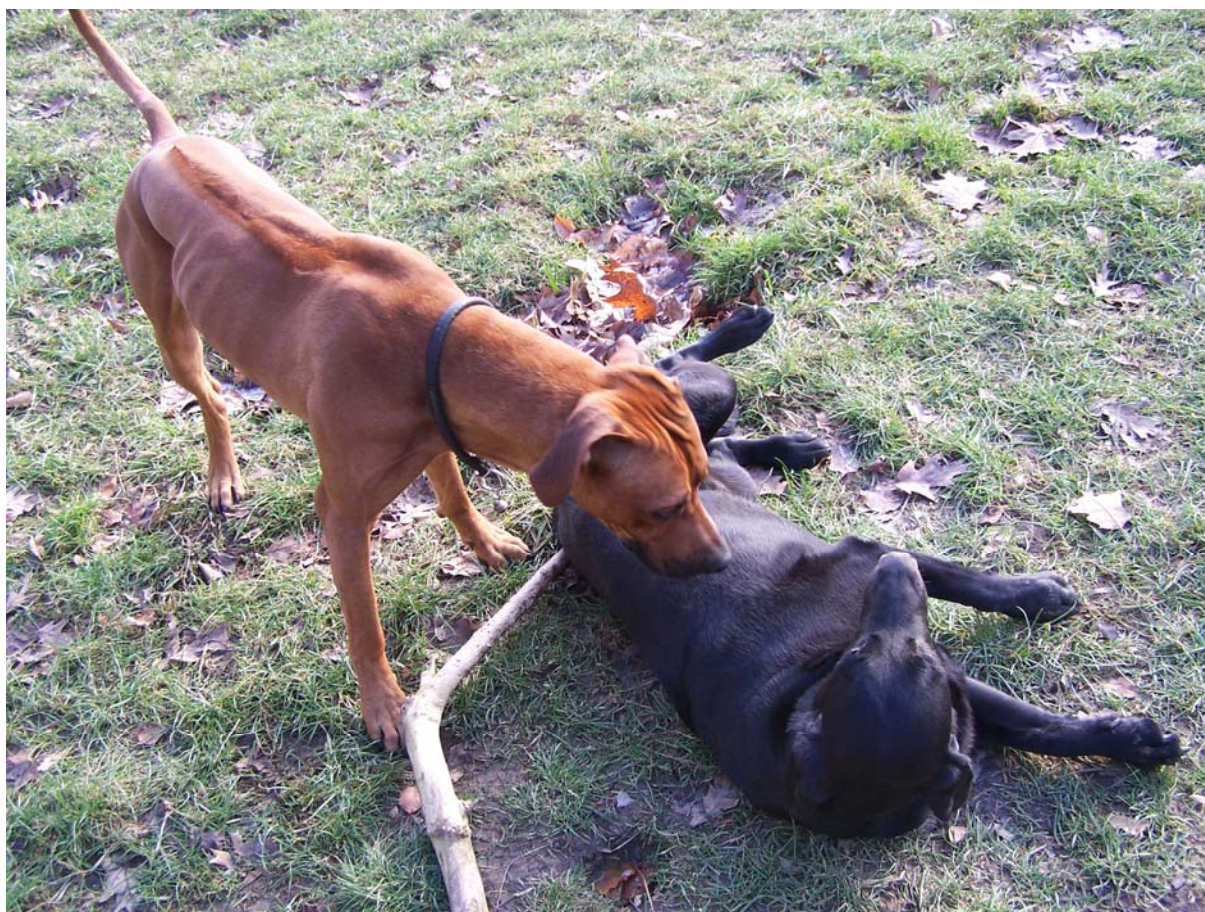
2 Karl Marx's Idea, Forgot the Date



Well known 1990 East German poster. It reads: "Sorry guys, it was just an idea."

Mostly, I made my march for the memory of this man, whose idea was just an idea. But he also had lots of just ideas, many of which he told to his dog and which have been passed from dog to dog for many years (dogs do not write, but do have a strong olfactory tradition).

3 Social Democrats' Fight for Social Justice, 1998-2004



Here you can see me and Tapksayrlmarx, the foremost dog expert on Karl Marx's just ideas, and me pondering, and acting out, how gender inequality and the new means testing rules in the SGB II exacerbate gender inequality.¹ I was telling Tapksayrlmarx about how I lost my unemployment assistance entitlement because Christine Trampusch earns so much. I have lost three pounds because I cannot secretly go to Schlüter (the butcher in Severinstrasse) anymore to buy little delicious secret snacks. He put me in this position to express both the inequality between Karl (men) and me (women) and my weakness because of malnutrition. He knew the problem. He could use a can of Chappi or two himself!

¹ Thousands of wives or partners of dog-men and human men lost their entitlement to benefits because of the severely sharpened means testing of partners for unemployment benefits (*Arbeitslosengeld II*). Did they not think about this when they made the rules? Yes, they did! Karl tells me this is a concerted effort of patriarchy to prevent women from gaining access to the means of production.

Anyway, because so far only the wrong ideas of Karl Marx have been really tried, we have been sniffing around the dog world in search of just a few just ideas so we can get a real manifesto together. Because, believe you us, it's a dog's life out there. Right now, we have some really good ideas, but we saw what happened when the *Iwan* jumped the gun and skipped that whole "bourgeoisie" phase, so we're keeping things double-super-top-secret until the time for rotation has come.²

² I know it is top secret but this is just a footnote. And whatever you write in a footnote gets overlooked. Because who reads footnotes. Plus I skipped three key words. So the following basically stays top secret: Tapksayrlmarx and I have decreed that the new first sentence shall be suitably adjusted like this: "A spectre is haunting Europe -- the spectre of social democratic dog's alliance, under the leadership of the breed of Labradors. All the powers of old Europe have entered into a holy alliance to exorcise this spectre: Pope (about to die again, if we're lucky, anyway) and (for now) Kanzler (about to dye his hair again), DogJobCenter and employers, poodle and pinscher (these two breeds have not joined the social democratic dog's alliance) and Yorkshire terrier spies. (...)The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of dogs' struggles." I could quote more. But I won't. Let me stress that this is going to be the Bible of the social democratic fight for social justice. But only the *real* social democratic fight for social justice, which in its essence is maybe also a fight *against* certain Social Democrats. If you have actually read this footnote now, you are not in line with my theory of scientific reading *and* you are in possession of top secret information. These are two good reasons to keep your mouth shut. If you want a third, note the visible and fearsome fangs in the picture on the next page. Thank you.

4 A Dog's Life in Post-Hartz Germany, 2005



Recognize this famous photo from the SPD ads, "Every dog has its day, and so can you if you vote SPD!"? Do I look happy and comfortable here? I'm not. And don't let any Social Democrat tell you I am. Pictures have always been used for propagandistic ends. Do you want to know how I really felt here. Do you? I hope so, because now I am going to tell you. I am in agony because of hunger! Look at the two little bones - that's all I got to eat that day! And the day before as well! The same two bones are cooked out over and over again, day by day. Thank you, Peter Hartz. Thank you, SPD. I was so hungry I was an agent in my own destruction.

Back when I marched, I would have posed for free because I was a social democratic dog, but since modelling was my job, I know what the daily rate was for a good model: three carrots and 5 nuts. Mmmm, carrots and nuts, mmmm. But that was long before the Hartz IV-surprise. Now, I have to accept *any* job available, whether it's fairly paid or not. The Personal Service Agency (PSA) and the job center rent me

to photographers (who have put all the good agencies who paid real salaries out of business). So that is how I, friend to Tapksayrlmarx and potential prophet of the next rotation, ended up in that blasphemous ad you may have seen. And what did I get paid. A quarter nut per hour!?!?!? And because of the rights and responsibilities stuff, I can't refuse. If I refuse, I get no nut at all.³

³ Though the DogJobCenter continues to pay for my basket and for basic nutrition even if I declare I do not want to work. This is still Germany. Isn't it?

5 Germany before the FIFA Worldcup 2006



Here you can see me at my first workfare assignment, raking leaves for FIFA (what irony, a dog cleaning up a field!). Now you might think that it is a bit early, 2006 is hardly around the corner, and there is, I might add, an autumn and a few leaves to fall between now and then. But if you thought that, you would have demonstrated that you have a not-so-firm grasp on the essence of workfare. The point is not to be useful to people and dogs. The point is to use people and dogs. And for what point? Well, they haven't really got such a firm grasp on that themselves, something about habituating work teaching, or working on teaching habits, or teaching or work habits, or..., well, like I said, nobody really knows. But in the meantime, holes get dug. And then they get filled back up so they can be dug again.

At time of writing, I have received notification that I have been assigned to a new qualification project, on account of I am a dog and the other welfare recipients are not dogs, which does make me different than them. I will be trained as a referee,

because there has been a whiff of corruption among German referees, and they though I could sniff out any more rotten apples. And since you are undoubtedly wondering whether I will become a corrupt apple myself, well, that depends on which side offers more nuts. Hey, if the market is so great, why shouldn't the highest bidder win?

The Authors



Since 2001 Sputnik is senior dog researcher at the Max-Planck-Institute for the Study of Societies. From 1996 to 1997 she studied Labrador Science (Magister Artium) at the University of Labrador. From 1996 to 1997 she was scientific assistant in the Central Department Statistics of the Labrador Training Center of the Bavarian Employers Associations (Bayerische Arbeitgeberverbände (bfz. e.V.)), Nürnberg, Germany. From 1997 to 2000 she participates at the Ph.D. Graduate Program at DFG-Postgraduate-Lectures "The Future of the European Labrador Model" at the Center for Studies on Endless Stories at the University of Göttingen, Germany. In February 2001 she got the Big-Bone-Award for the year 2001 of the Faculty of Retriever Sciences at the Wau-Wau-University in Haiti. The prize was awarded for her dissertation ("Three worlds of Labradorism?"). In March 2002, she received Dr. h.c. of the Faculty of Labrador Sciences at the Wuff-Wuff-University in New Foundland. The prize was awarded for research on "Labradorism? Does it Exist? Can it Survive? " In February 2003 she was Winner of the MPIfG-Karneval-Prize. She published various articles and books on dog research. The latest being: 2002: Labradorism? Does it Exist? Can it Survive? Prühmtal: Dogs' Press; 2004: Globalisierung und Hundesbrot. Die ungerechte Verteilung von Hundebrot über die Kontinente. Prühmtal: Dogs' Press; 2004: Warum Labradore Windhunde als unterernährt betrachten. Ergebnisse der zweiten Umfragewelle in Nordrheinwestfalen und Bremen. In: Ernährungsprobleme in der postmodernen Gesellschaft. Heft 2. 5-23.



Deborah Schmierstein does important research on quantum sociology. Its results, which are nothing, are published in none of the top scientific journals, placing Schmierstein nowhere near the top of the citation counts and ensuring that she not have her name published in *Who's who*. Subtractionally, she has not put countless hours into the *Geraeteaufbau*, due to her deeply medieval and Catholic work ethic, hence not producing the greatest insights yet unknown into the interaction of sociological inquiry and realized sociality.



The research team during undercover fieldwork