

The fleeting charm of ČSSD

ČSSD and ODS are so alike, yet their approval ratings are so different. On the same day the two parties demonstrated their true colors by cutting a deal to elect Miloslav Kala as head of the "independent" NKÚ audit office, STEM put ČSSD's approval rating at 25.6%, to 8.6% for ODS. Ex-PM Vladimír Špidla of ČSSD, who is a political dinosaur himself, said that ČSSD isn't your father's Social Democratic Party, because its new generation isn't linked to the "myth of the founders." Really? Where

ODS has Václav Klaus looking over its shoulder, ČSSD has Miloš Zeman. For every new-generation Jiří Pospíšil that ODS has shunted aside, ČSSD has sidelined a Jiří Dienstbier. For every Pavel Bém who keeps popping up, there is a David Rath.

As unimpressive as Petr Nečas's CV might be, Bohuslav Sobotka has more chinks in his armor and skeletons in his closet. Overall, ČSSD does have a few more credible faces than ODS, but that can't explain the huge difference in their ratings. ČSSD would be wise to use ODS as a case study while it still can.

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