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Pub Populist Aims to be Prime Minister

He fought for decades for Britain to leave the EU. He scored huge electoral successes with different parties and was instrumental in bringing about the downfall of three prime ministers: David Cameron, Theresa May and Rishi Sunak. He is reckoned to be one of the most influential politicians in Britain this century. Nigel Farage with his Reform Party is now shaking the very foundations of British politics and posing an existential threat to the old two party system.

Reform UK was born out of the Lockdowns during the pandemic. It protested against the Establishment and what it saw as heavy handed decrees of the State. This was more than Eurosceptism, it embraced opposition to what it saw as mad environmental policies and so-called woke ideas on gender and asylum seekers. It railed against the big banks, the BBC, the International Monetary Fund and the World Health Organisation, all in the eyes of Farage wielding too much power. His campaign paid off and in last years election Farage was elected as a Member of Parliament.

Generally considered a right wing populist, Farage initially damaged the Tories tarnished by scandals and economic disasters. But more recently Farage has switched to attack the Labour government which has failed to bring about the change many voters had hoped for. He has even supported more state ownership of major utility companies. Last week Reform scored a stunning success at the local elections and snatched victory from Labour in a byelection. Next year Farage hopes for major breakthroughs in elections in Scotland and Wales.

At 61 Farage is a man to be reckoned with. He has survived cancer, a car accident and a major airplane crash which has left him with painful injuries. His success lies in his talent for communicating with voters on the doorsteps, in pubs and in factories and farms. He is attracting donors and many young people, chiefly white males.

Farage reckons he has an even chance for getting into No 10 Downing St at the 2029 election. He has been laughed at in the past, but he is the only one grinning now.

Gastkommentar

Hat der Pub-Populist das Zeug zum Premier?

Von Melanie Sully

Jahrzehntelang hat er für den Austritt Großbritanniens aus der EU gekämpft. Er war mit verschiedenen Parteien bei Wahlen erfolgreich und trug maßgeblich zum Sturz der drei konservativen Premierminister David Cameron, Theresa May und Rishi Sunak bei. Er gilt als einer der einflussreichsten britischen Politiker dieses Jahrhunderts: Nigel Farage rüttelt nun mit seiner Reform Party an den Grundfesten des Parteiensystems und will sogar eines Tages in Number 10 Downing Street einziehen.

Reform UK wurde als Reaktion auf die Lockdowns während der Pandemie gegründet. Die Partei protestierte gegen die ihrer Meinung nach übertriebenen staatlichen Maßnahmen gegen Corona. Es ging um mehr als Euroskeptizismus, die Partei wandte sich gegen den „Öko-Wahnsinn“

und so genannte „woke“ Ideen in Bezug auf Gender und Asylbewerber. Großbanken, die BBC, der Internationale



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Währungsfonds und die Weltgesundheitsorganisation waren ebenfalls Ziele der Kampagne. Letztendlich wurde Farage bei den letzten Wahlen als Abgeordneter ins britische Unterhaus gewählt.

Farage zielte zunächst auf die Skandale und den wirtschaftlichen Misserfolg der Konservativen. Seit den letzten Wahlen greift Farage nun auch die Labour-Regierung an. Dieser ist es bisher nicht gelungen, den versprochenen Wandel herbeizuführen. Nigel Farage befürwortet sogar eine Verstaatlichungspolitik. In der vergangenen Woche hat Reform UK einen viel beachteten Sieg bei den Kommunalwahlen errungen und sich in einer Nachwahl gegen Labour durchgesetzt.

Farage, 61, ist ein Mann, den man nicht unterschätzen sollte. Er hat eine Krebserkrankung, einen schweren Autounfall und einen Flugzeugabsturz überlebt. Er kann mit den Leuten – in Pubs und auf Bauernhöfen. Farage kommt auch bei den Jungen gut an, vor allem bei weißen Männern.

Nigel Farage rechnet sich gute Chancen aus, bei den nächsten Unterhauswahlen 2029 als britischer Premierminister gewählt zu werden. Früher belächelt, ist er heute aber der Einzige in Westminster, der noch lacht.

June 2025

At the beginning of June 2025 a by-election was fought to the Scottish Parliament following the death of a Scottish National Party (SNP) Member.

The SNP lost to Scottish Labour (see below). Although once Labour territory the victory was a surprise and a much needed boost for the party struggling in the polls throughout the UK. It was also a blow to the SNP that hoped it could make good the losses it suffered at the General Election last year. The party had tried to move away from 'woke' issues and had begun to lay more emphasis on its core rationale viz. Scottish Independence and a second referendum. However it seems this was less important to voters looking for improvements in bread and butter issues, education and policies to combat drug abuse. The SNP can be classified as an Establishment party and has been in power in Edinburgh for 18 years. Scottish Labour managed to disassociate itself from unpopular measures passed by Keir Starmer's government.

By-elections are not necessarily a guide to long term public opinion but there are lessons to be learnt for political parties: whoever holds Scotland can hold the keys to Downing St. And for the Conservatives the result means it could continue on its course to oblivion. The party is not popular in Scotland at the best of times but it is showing few signs of recovering from its blistering defeat at the 2024 General Election.

Instead there is another party hoping to usurp the Conservatives in what has been until now a classical two party system: Reform UK under Nigel Farage (see above article in the Tiroler Tageszeitung). The party came from nowhere to secure third place with 26 percent of the votes in the by-election (see below). Reform UK took votes off disillusioned Conservative voters but could also attract those from the SNP and Labour. It was until recently unthinkable that Reform could score any notable success in Scotland. The party is now stepping up its efforts not only in Scotland but also in Wales where there are elections to the devolved parliaments next year. One theme for Reform is a reindustrialisation across the whole country: drilling for oil in Scotland and reviving coalmining in Wales and England.

Whether Reform will continue its march through the institutions is questionable but party politics is changing as a result of its success to date (See article by Dr Melanie Sully on this in the Zeitschrift für Parlamentsfragen, 3/2024). Other parties such as the Greens and the Liberal Democrats have also done well in recent local elections. If this trajectory continues it will mean a coalition government could be necessary at the next General Election to take place by 2029 at the latest. This could either be between the Liberal Democrats/and or SNP and Labour or the Conservatives and Reform. The smaller parties would ask something in return such as a referendum on Scottish independence and/or election reform. The continued rise of Reform could well inadvertently change for ever the political map of the UK

(BBC) [Result](#)

