

MICHAEL SCHUMANN:
Right-Wing Extremism in Contemporary Germany

In one of his last lectures, Prof. Michael Schumann spoke on the origins of right-wing extremism and xenophobia in contemporary Germany where he concludes that one of its important sources is the state of the society itself. A profound process of modernization under the direction of giant economic powers coupled with a tremendous lack of political regulation have caused growing insecurity and a tendency toward increased social decline. Right-wing extremism and radical nationalism are a particular form of revolt against the destructive forces of a new round of global capitalist modernization. The underlying belief of this ›movement‹ is that democracy is unsuitable for combating this crisis. Therefore it should be abandoned and replaced by autocratic rule. To counteract right-wing extremism and nationalism it is necessary to struggle for a policy of social justice and to strengthen a democratic political culture. Michael Schumann was head of the board of trustees of the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation, he died in an auto accident December 2, 2000.

STEPHEN ERIC BRONNER:
Red Dreams and the New Millennium

This article was originally delivered as a lecture at the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation. It seeks to provide an overview of the arguments and contributions of Rosa Luxemburg. She was, of course, a seminal figure in the history of the labour movement. But this article refuses to simply treat her as an icon: instead it calls for evaluating her views in terms of their relevance to contemporary political thinking. Thus, the same form of immanent criticism Rosa Luxemburg applied to Karl Marx' thoughts is now applied to her own thoughts on questions of imperialism, national self-determination, political organization, mass strike, and democracy.

VOLKMAR SCHÖNEBURG:
The Nature of Law

Hermann Klenner, internationally known marxist philosopher of law, born January 5, 1926, is 75. The author first gives a short look into Klenner's scientific and political biography. Beginning with his initial chairmanship at Berlin's Humboldt University in 1956 – which he abruptly lost following sharp attacks from Walter Ulbricht in 1958 – and leading to his years as member of the Academy of Sciences of the GDR and his intensive studies and publications after »retiring« in 1991. Also reviewed are the 12 volumes of the »Haufe Schriftenreihe« on the basics of jurisprudence, outlined by Klenner already in the 1980s and – since 1990 – is being published by Rudolf Haufe Verlag Freiburg Berlin. The author pays tribute to Klenner for inspiring the whole ›Schriftenreihe‹ (collection) and editing and introducing some of its major volumes.

JOCHEN CERNY:
On the concept of partial state ownership of private companies

45 years ago the concept of partial state ownership of private companies was introduced in the GDR. This form of mixed ownership was not to be found anywhere else in what was known as the community of socialist states. At this anniversary, a book will be presented that provides for the first time, an overview of the emergence and demise of this form of ownership: Heinz Hoffmann, *Die Betriebe mit staatlicher Beteiligung im planwirtschaftlichen System der DDR 1956-1972*, Stuttgart 1999 (Enterprises with joint state ownership in the planned economic system of the GDR from 1956 to 1972). Both Hoffmann and Cerny praise the positive impact that the majority of

these companies had on the national economy, and consider their abolition a serious mistake. Cerny concludes that the experience made with this form of enterprise is of considerable value for concretizing a democratic-socialist program.

ULRIKE KÖPP:

Heinz Bormann – The Dior of the GDR

Heinz Bormann was a fashion designer, and director of a private enterprise in the socialist system of the GDR. The label »Original Bormann Kleidung« (»Original Bormann Wear«) stood for extravagance and exclusivity. This article tells the story of a private company that, during the post-war period, was badly needed to overcome shortages in up-to-date fashion in Eastern Germany, and of the efforts of the ruling party, to exercise a greater degree of control over small and medium sized private firms after socialist power was consolidated. »Bormann-Wear« became a semi-state enterprise, which allowed the firm – in spite of state control – a better opportunity to expand (which for Bormann meant »conquering« the Berlin market). For socialist bureaucrats, this expansion success – being also a recognised trademark in the West – became difficult to handle for the semi-state enterprise. Therefore, coinciding with political changes (»from Ulbricht to Honecker«), »Bormann-Wear« was made a full state enterprise. Bormann's success made him the first and important example paving the way for the process of »Verstaatlichung« (bringing under full state control) that spread to all semi-state or semi-private firms in East Germany in 1972.

ULLA PLENER:

Social Justice Needs Economic Democracy Part 2

Even though the idea of economic democracy, as a constituent aspect of social justice, was part and parcel of the DGB and SPD programmes and concepts from 1949 to 1989, it has never played an important role in the life of the country and had almost no impact on overall social consciousness. At times the idea was supported by action groups and movements of which few reached the point of having a political impact. Far-reaching legislative initiatives and attempts to render structures of economic decision-making more democratic failed due to resistance put up by employer's and industrialist's associations. These associations defended their absolute power of disposition over the production units in their possession. They were supported in their efforts by both the government, including the judiciary.

REINHARD MOCEK:

On New Dimensions of Social Issues

In 1999 Uli Schöler published a book on »Marx and the Socialist Idea following the Defeat of Soviet State-Socialism«. This article is a commentary on this book. Mocek sets out from the idea that over the decades Marxist theory has gone through remarkable changes in interpretation by different left philosophers. Therefore, not Marxism, as a whole, but merely a certain version of its interpretation and implementation appears outdated following the collapse of »Real Socialism«. Facing the present challenges of social development, i.e. solving ecological problems as well as (re)establishing social coherence beyond Neo-liberalism, all left parties have to make new theoretical efforts. This includes certainly a re-examination of Marxist theory. In this regard Mocek agreed with Schöler that it is first of all Marx's dialectical method of analysis of social reality that should be applied today. And both authors sustain the concept of an »evolutionary perspective« in which a modern socialist society should be »developed« out of the contemporary (capitalist) social relations.

Redaktion:
Jörg Schultz,
Arndt Hopfmann