

ERHARD CROME

Between Future and Past – a clarification

Today there is a growing doubt that the humans will ever be able to solve the crucial problems that they by themselves produced. Whereas in the past there was hope that in the course of a ›proletarian‹ revolution the way would also be paved for resolving threats caused by growing inequality, underdevelopment and environmental destruction, at present we must realize that no solution to any of these problems can be reached outside the realm of politics. Politics is responsible for opening opportunities for the creation of conditions necessary to create a future life worth living for humanity. If we are not able to force a change political paradigms in the course of human development, we will be left with the ›process of natural selection‹, whose violence will undoubtedly grow on a parallel with urgency of meeting our existential needs.

DIETMAR WITTICH

The Development of Class and Class Structure in Modern Capitalism

The complexity of social structures in highly developed capitalist societies has increased remarkably over the past few decades. But the growth of social differentiation has been accompanied by an accentuation of social pressure. The main problem is that inequality, disadvantages and augmenting social risks are no longer treats to but a rather small segment of society. Today – with the exception of a few very rich – the majority of the society is seriously affected by their loss of security within the society. This demonstrates that, on the one hand, social stratification has not been eased during capitalist development - as has often had been predicted, that on the other hand, what we are witnessing in ›modern‹ capitalism can not be simply reduced to a ›modern‹ version of the old class society. The revolution in science and technology has produced new conditions of labor and thereby initiated the development of new social strata e.g. those closely connected with the so-called it-sector. These elements should, of course, be taken into consideration in ›modern‹ class analyses.

Klaus Kock:

Between market and organization – labor relations in flexibilized capitalism

Working is always a subjective practice, the commodity, labor power, cannot be separated from the person who owns it. There must always be consent in some form to get workers to use their subjective capacities for the enterprise. Different solutions of this problem become apparent. The expenditure of labor power is being regulated in different ways. In Germany until recently the predominant form of regulation was closely related to the fluctuations of the individual enterprise. The essence of newer regulation forms is to dissolve firm dependent relations in favor of market dependent relations. Labor relations are being regulated by market constraints rather than by social agreements.

Kilian Heerkloß: An Ecological-Ethic Perspective on Gene Manipulation Technology

The discussion on the utilization and further development of gene manipulation (GM) technology reflects both the high expectations and even higher fears of scientists as well as laypersons. The supporters of GM technology – usually natural scientists – tend to talk about »irrational fears« and refer to the scientific rigour of their conception of the world which, in fact, is a natural science-based conception of the world made absolute by them. They label arguments against GM technology as matters of belief and dismiss it as non-scientific. Criticising their points, the author formulates 6 questions on GM technology – ranging from its doubtful impacts on welfare to its conformity with the rules of »ars vivendi«. He concludes that it is an »ecologically motivated« ethical prerogative to consume products improving or sustaining our quality of life without producing ecologically negative long-term impacts by creating uncontrollable dangers or irreversibly exhausting resources.

Erich Lange: Is ›Progress‹ in the Evolution of Life an Illusion?

In his book ›The Spread of Excellence from Plato to Darwin‹ Stephen Jay Gould explains the existence of higher forms of living as a consequence of a purely statistical process: Since life started with organisms of minimal organisation development was only possible in a direction of beings of the same or a higher level of organisation. This, in Gould's view, is the only reason for the existence of higher developed organisms and not a process of natural selection, which under certain circumstances favours their origin. Moreover there seems to be absolutely no reason for attributing man and related organisms a higher status. In his reply Erich Lange shows that Gould's statistical explanation is insufficient, that his explanation distorts the problems, that there are founded reasons for labeling humans and other living beings highly organized.

Lothar Schröter: A New Age of Interventionism for the 21st Century?

In 1999 the unbelievable happens: with the NATO-aggression against Yugoslavia politics of active warfare returned to the Central European agenda, while the former super-power Russia engaged in open oppression and civil war in the Russian province of Chechnya. Lothar Schröter argues that the main reason for this is the end the so-called block-confrontation, with the USA left as the one and only super-power. But the return to warfare has also other connotations. (To which extent) is war a legal means for enforcing Human Rights, for preventing genocide or to defeating terrorism? Is the state of international affairs going back to the »ius ad bellum«, a poor state of affairs that had been overcome – it was believed - during the second half of the 20th century? If anything can be learned from Kosovo as well as from Chechnya, it must be that the so-called military solution is no solution at all. Modern armies (as well as ›rapid deployment forces‹) are structurally unable to win Guerrilla-wars. Their actions will always produce numerous innocent victims and unnecessary destruction. There is no alternative to a multilateral peace-keeping policy.

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