

STEPHEN ERIC BRONNER: Understanding Socialism

This article sets out to develop a socialist political standpoint appropriate for a new era. This standpoint calls for giving priority to ethics over teleology, to politics over economics, and to a normative rather than a scientific approach. It raises the need for the democratic moment of accountability in a new socialist theory to the same level as that of the class ideal, capable of unifying the diverse interests of working people, identifying with numerous social movements and organisations, without giving precedence to any one of these movements or organisations. Above all, this article resists the temptation of identifying socialism with any particular organisation or institutional arrangement. Socialism becomes associated with the ongoing attempt to expand the possibilities of individual choice and experience in accordance with the rule of law and the public accountability of all institutions including capital.

HENNER FÜRTIG: Islam, Islamism, and Terrorism

In the aftermath of the tragic events of September 11, international media and experts alike often confused the notions of Islam, Islamism and Terrorism. Thus, they not only contributed to Samuel Huntington's »Clash of Civilizations« becoming a self-fulfilling prophecy but to the alienation and frustration of millions of Muslims. Therefore, it has to be made clear that Islam is – besides being a mode of life, a culture and a system of values – primarily a religion. Islamic fundamentalism or better to say Islamism is – on the contrary – an ideology as well as a political movement, arbitrarily referring to parts of Islam and articulating its demands with an Islamic vocabulary. There are Islamists who prefer political means and methods to realize their aims as well as groups and individuals who prefer armed struggle. Islamist terrorism, at last, manifests only the most extreme escalation of the latter. Verbal »Declarations of War« against the West were proclaimed by various Islamist factions but only their terrorist appendix crossed the »Rubicon«. Thus, it not only declared war on the West but also on its fellow Muslims and the rest of civilized humanity. Therefore, there is no war between Islam and the West but between civilization and terror.

FRANZ NAHRADA: Global Villages and Free Software

Hi-Tech-Anti-Capitalism? Association of free producers through computers and networks? Perhaps. But we need to establish a new paradigm of cooperation aimed at creating a new foundation of livelihood. The so called »Global Villages« are much more than a spatial and architectonic consequence of new information technologies. They are the result of an intentionally designed cooperative world, granting space for the unfolding of many different identities. Global Villages do not attempt to pump additional wares into the full channels of the world economy – especially no »informational commodities«. Instead, they turn away from marketing toward cooperative production of knowledge and tools for local application. They work along with the pattern of free software, sharing and communicating knowledge because this augments and widens local capabilities. Subsistence, living by local resources, is not a reactionary and desperate action, but a global aim worth fighting for, requiring no democratic centralism in order to be organized in the most comprehensive and solidarity oriented manner imaginable.

CHRISTOPH ENGEMANN: Electronic Government – the Internet as a New Means of Bourgeois Rule

There is a strange agreement that has emerged between business managers, politicians, civil rights activists and the ›left‹, all pinning their hopes on the Internet for achieving a better world. Especially among the left, enthusiasm continues to prevail about the potentials of the Internet infrastructure. Little notice is taken of other major developments and morphological changes taking place in the Internet. In his article, Christoph Engemann argues that electronic government is one – if not the fundamental – development that will dramatically change both the Internet and the bureaucratic patterns of ruling and administrating. Electronic government not only offers a great potential for measures of economic rationalization and cost saving, but modernization of administration will affect the lives, in one way or another, of everyone. In this process, the Internet will lose its innocence and become an infrastructure supporting the technology of rule.

CHRISTOPH BUTTERWEGGE: Globalism, Neoliberalism and Right-wing Extremism

Today's right-wing extremism is no longer the same as in the era of National Socialism or Hitler's Fascism. It has been modernized and become much more complex. The author attributes these changes to the process of globalization. His explanation is that through competition, as the driving force of the capitalist economy, certain historical defects in the political culture, accompanied by the current neoliberal modernization of almost all spheres of life, are conducive to nationalism (i.e. nations competing for location of undertakings), racism, and acts of right-wing violence. In his explanation, neoliberal modernization causes a division of right-wing extremism into a traditional and a modernist camp. In terms of the social structures of its followers, the first camp would mainly attract losers of globalization or modernization, the latter the winners of these processes.

MICHAEL CHRAPA: Xenophobia in Public Opinion – New Empirical Findings and Political Considerations

Xenophobia has again emerged as an important issue of current debates on terror and war. Based on empirical data collected between the early 1990s and today, the article discusses a number of recent analyses trying to explain the differences between East and West Germans in xenophobic attitudes and behavior. The empirical findings show that attitudes – being friendly or hostile to foreigners – remained relatively stable and unchanged over the whole period of the 1990s – with significant differences between attitudes in the East and the West. The analysis shows that attitudes were much more influenced by factors such as ›education‹ and ›contact frequency‹ (with foreigners) than by political views or life situation. Especially in the East, where contact frequencies have been rather low, sporadic and often tense, new concepts and approaches should be developed to render the fight against xenophobia more effective.

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