

DIETER RUDOLF KNOELL

The Locomotive of a Technocratic ›Social Revolution‹

Rudolf Knoell argues in his text that the strategies currently pursued by the top management of German Rail (GR) can be described as a destructive Utopia that has much in common with an autoimmune disease. Not only will the homeless be removed from the stations but ordinary passengers also from the trains. One could even say that both groups enjoy equality in treatment: At the same time as Church-related charities are no longer permitted to hand out free meals to the needy inside the stations, restaurant cars are being uncoupled from the trains to starve those who can afford to pay. Human freight is being subjected to (ir)rationalization measures, as a result of which the ›Lufthansa on Rails‹ (GR about GR) squanders all structural advantages over other means of transportation that travel by rail traditionally has provided. Internal self-protection and self-defence structures and mechanisms are replaced by those of self-destruction and dissuasion (of prospective travellers). At the end of the day, Knoell sees a completely ›slimmed-down‹ rail service – an enterprise still behaving like a monopolist, systematically attempting to eliminate competitors (e.g. by destroying – not selling – unused but not outdated GR engines and coaches), and trying to mould its customers into objects ›optimal-for-exploitation‹.

MICHAEL BRIE:

The Spectre of Anti-Americanism – A German Debate

In the article Michael Brie, member of the governing board of the Rosa-Luxemburg-Foundation, presents the key arguments of his contribution to the debate with Karsten D. Voigt, co-ordinator of German-American cultural and political relations and speaker on foreign affairs of the SPD Party Group in the German parliament (Bundestag). This debate on »The Spectre of Anti-Americanism« took place January 9, 2002 at the Humboldt University in Berlin. In Michael Brie's view, the real problem is not the presumed Anti-Americanism of the Left (especially presumed among the members of the Party of Democratic Socialism) but a certain brand of ›Americanism‹ that is silently but incessantly penetrating and remoulding international standards. And it is the often well-founded criticism of this penetration and deformation that one attempts to discredit as ›Anti-Americanism‹.

GRET HALLER

De-Regulation of Human Rights

There is a danger of deregulation and even privatisation of Human Rights in different aspects and domains. There is, first of all, a trend toward replacing ›hard law‹ by ›soft law‹, declarations and standards of private organisations or even business enterprises have become more influential than instruments of international law. A second phenomenon is the tendency toward a transfer of responsibility for upholding Human Rights from states or international organisations to private organisations or even economic institutions. And a third

consists of a re-moralisation of Human Rights. These problems are discussed here in the context of the variance between European and US American views of the concept of Human Rights. This contribution deals also with the historical backgrounds behind these transatlantic differences, as well as the special role of Europe in the current global context.

STEFAN BOLLINGER:

The ›Question of Violence‹ in the Revolution of 1989/90 and in the Present

In the aftermath of the September 11 terrorist attacks, the question of violence has returned to the agenda. In his article Stefan Bollinger analyses the ›question of violence‹ using the context of the revolution of 1989/90 in East Germany (former GDR) with the aim of drawing lessons for the present political struggles in western centers of power. He argues that, since there are power relations incorporated within social structures, violence against persons or symbols of the regime will not be successful. Legitimacy of violence must be based on the legitimacy of the concerned political and social system, a democracy, rule of law, or how appropriate or inappropriate terror is. In the course of history political conflicts often took violent forms in situations lacking political legitimacy and/or democratic control. Bollinger, as a consequence, maintains the idea that only the renunciation of physical and military violence and the strengthening of civil society are capable of solving conflicts, otherwise conflicts will return only in their classic forms, violent but leading to a dead-end.

LOTHAR SCHRÖTER

The Intentions behind the Reform of German Armed Forces – ›Ready for War‹

When the new Military Strategy of the NATO was adopted in April 1999, a turning point in the self-image of the North Atlantic Alliance was marked. Schröter shows in his well documented article, that in this new strategy, the priority for the defence of the national territories of the NATO-member-states has been replaced by the ›defence of national interests‹. In modern capitalist societies, the ›national interests‹ are defined by the globally transacting great companies and the transnational banks, signifying that NATO-Members now openly declare their readiness to implement military violence – mostly against so-called Third-World-Countries – in order to protect and sustain the profit interests of capital. In the case of Germany, Schröter sees the new quality of this strategy in the important fact that one of the founding pillars of the Federal Republic – the commitment to non-aggression – has now been replaced by the doctrine of ›readiness for warfare‹. This moreover reflects a decisive change in the German self-confidence, now defined as a ›Continental European Middle-Power‹ or even as a ›Great-Power in the middle of Europe‹.

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