

PIERRE BOURDIEU In Favour of a New European Enlightenment

The article documents the lecture Pierre Bourdieu – who died January 23, 2002 – gave at the conference on »Bankwatch – the Counter-Power to the Big Money«, June 17, 2001 in Frankfurt/Main. In his talk he called for the formation of a new European social movement that unites critical scientists and trade unionists as well as activists from non-governmental organisations. It is in this sense that he spoke of a new European Enlightenment, a radical movement that is not against the ›project‹ of the European Union but in favour of a People's United Europe. The European Union should therefore be a multinational structure that brings people closer together, equalising social standards rather than exclusively paving the way for multinational corporations.

ERHARD CROME: Socialism as Policy

How to behave as a left socialist party? – that is one of the main topics of debate for a new party-program for the Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS). The historical disputes between Social-Democracy – in Germany the SPD – and Communism are over. Today the PDS can neither be a traditional communist party nor a traditional social-democratic party. It also cannot even be a party out of the historical ›Marxist‹ mould. It has to rely upon various critical views of society and history – new Marxist ones but also others. After the failure of ›Real Socialism‹, capitalism the world over, is provoking anew the ›social question‹. When one social-theoretically differentiates between ›Gemeinschaft‹ (community) and ›Gesellschaft‹ (society), in accordance with some of the concepts of Ferdinand Tönnies and Peter Ruben, one could arrive at the conclusion: 1989 passed the verdict on communism, as an order of ›Gemeinschaft‹, and not as an order of ›Gesellschaft‹. Socialist policy will become more and more necessary.

JENS FIETJE DWARS: »... on the level of the elites.« An Interview with Karl Schirdewan

Shortly before he died Jens F. Dwars interviewed the 87 years old Karl Schirdewan who was one of the most promising leading party-activists in the Ulbricht-Government in Eastern Germany in the early 1950s. But in 1957 Schirdewan was banned and removed from the communist party elite because of his critical ideas on a ›democratic socialism‹. Nevertheless during the interview it becomes astonishingly clear how firmly Schirdewan had internalised the ›principles‹ of party discipline and political correctness that guided his relations to ›his‹ party throughout all those decades of oppression. In this regard Schirdewan could probably be seen as the archetype of a communist cadre of that time – who fought against the Nazi-Regime, survived Concentration Camps, were unable to prevent their party from becoming ›stalinist‹, but remained true to the party.

VOLKMAR SCHÖNEBURG Sovereignty of the People vs. Federal Constitutional Court

›All state authority emanates from the people‹ – this sentence expresses the ›classical‹ West European formula for the concept of sovereignty of the people. It is the people therefore, as legislative sovereign, that controls particularly the exertion of the state monopoly over the use of force and simultaneously protects human rights. The state machine subordinates itself to the people's legislative sovereignty, which – in turn – subordinates itself to the state's monopoly on use of force. Although the principle of people's sovereignty is embodied in the German Constitution, in this country it lurks only in the shadows. This can be attributed both to the status of this principle in the German Constitution and to the influence of the Federal Constitutional Court, greater than in any other country. In its jurisdiction, this Court has stretched its power to the outer limits of its function of defending and concretising basic constitutional rights and freedoms. Thus, the court has cast itself into the role of a ›super legislator‹. It acts as a political arbitrator creating legislation and even postulates a state's duty to prosecute and punish. Consequently, the court stands out as an example for a shift of authority as the sovereign from the people to the judiciary. The transfer of the basic right of the people to an instrument of the state, or in other words, the predominance of the Federal Constitutional Court in the political system shows that democracy has been substituted by surrogates. Schöneburg concludes by making an appeal for support of all initiatives making use of the people's legislative rights and that are attempting to enhance these rights.

LOTHAR FRITZE: From Conversion to Apostasy

In his article Lothar Fritze tries to explain, how one can become a almost ›religious‹ believer in communism, and then turn away from this ideology. Using the example of Arthur Koestler's self-assessment, it is shown that the main reason for Koestler's ›conversion‹ to communism lay in his strong commitment to justice and a better world. Under the concrete historical circumstances of his youth this idea attained such a strong influence on his way of seeing the world; that he became a really fanatic communist follower. But – as Fritze argues – the preference for radical ›solutions‹ is based also on an incapacity for self-criticism and self-correction.

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