

Gerhard Zwerenz Ernst Bloch and the Kopernicanian Turn in Lecture Hall 40

The author Gerhard Zwerenz worked – until he fled from East to West Germany in 1957 – as young research fellow with the philosopher Ernst Bloch at Leipzig University. In his essay on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of Bloch's death (July 8, 1887 – August 4, 1977) Zwerenz explains how Bloch argued in his philosophical lectures in the extremely sensitive political period between the XXth Party Congress of the Soviet Communist Party (February 1956) and the so-called Hungarian Revolution (November 1956). This time span was characterized by a short ›season of thaw‹ followed by a restitution of new forms of Stalinist oppression (which finally also drove Bloch out of East Germany). Using the example of how Bloch interpreted Marx' thesis 11 on Ludwig Feuerbach Zwerenz demonstrates that Bloch's idea of human self-liberation openly placed the Stalinist party-elite's concept of power into question.

Jochen Weichold: Farewell to Visions

The new political program of the German Green Party, adopted in March 2002, marks a turning point in the development of that party. But these transformations are of little surprise to those considering Green political practice over the past few years. Their program verifies the Greens' metamorphosis from a party in opposition to the social and political system into a governing party upholding the system. The Greens today can no longer be seen as an anti-party party. Though they now claim to be a »Party of the left center«, one finds neither social visions surpassing a capital dominated society nor a criticism of the foundations of this society in their new program. On the contrary the new political program with its neo-liberal touch reads like a government program for the next 20 years.

Thomas Schubert: Rudolf Bahro – an East-West German thinker between yesterday and tomorrow

This article introduces the political and philosophical ideas of Rudolf Bahro. The theme revolves around Bahro's intellectual development from a romantic, but radical, critic of the ›real existing socialism‹ (in East Germany), becoming a left-ecological spokesman of the West German Green Party's fundamentalist wing, to finally arrive at his metaphysical speculations. In order to better understand Bahro's development in thought, particularly references to the philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche are made.

Klaus Meier Networks for a Sustainable Society

After an extended phase of normative discussions on the relationship between justice and sustainable development, the debate has reached a point where the emancipatory project of a sustainable society should begin to be put into practice. What is necessary is the development of realistic concepts within the framework of a socio-ecological reform strategy. From a socialist point of view, the Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung should play an important role in a network that develops and implements such a strategy. The text of Klaus Meier deals with the question if and to what extent the sustainability concept can promote patterns of development that provide an alternative to what is seen as TINA neoliberal ›constraints‹. He concludes that analyses, discourses and various options for social activities will constitute a framework for patterns and processes of sustainable development and thus become the main battlefield in the political arena.

Andreas Merkens Inequality for All – Educational Reform Act and Social Contradiction

Educational policy has historically been a field of contradictory compromises and hegemonic alliances. The author criticizes current political efforts at reconstituting an amalgam between classical social-democratic demands such as ›equality through education‹ and neoliberal educational policy determined by market prerogatives. In a historical review of the German Reform Act of the late nineteen-sixties, Merkens discusses an ideological formation with many parallels: the attempt to use in the name of social equality the demands for private economic modernization to make educational reform. In a subsequent empirical review he points out the false promises of that reform. He draws the conclusion that the present system of schooling is still a structural system of social inequality, there is no empirical change toward a larger degree of social justice. A final paragraph presents the writing of Hans-Joachim Heydorn and his ›praxis-philosophical‹ and Marxist criticism of educational-reform.