

ULRICH BUSCH

Property Tax and perverted envy

Envy is a common emotion. It is as old as human civilization. There have always been attempts to avert it from oneself or even to avoid it completely. This is especially true for public or social envy, that is politically harnessed in all societies. At present a perversion of envy can be recognised. As a consequence, social envy is not aimed at the higher social class or at the wealthy but at the unemployed, those on welfare, and at immigrants.

DIETER KLEIN

Democratic Socialism – a Transformation Project

The principal idea of this article is that modern bourgeois society, itself, offers tendencies, possibilities and points of departure for a process of emancipative transformation. The author draws the conclusion that today, it is necessary to reinforce these inherent tendencies against the domination of conservative powers, and their prevailing strategies of privatisation, deregulation and economic liberalisation. Visions are needed to achieve this goal. The 'utility value' of the PDS is measured by its ability to combine practical reform policies with a perspective of creating a just society, living in peace and in harmony with the environment.

KLAUS HÖPCKE

The moral gap

The author criticises the neglected ethical approach in writing the PDS programme draft. The PDS' relationship, and that of its members, to socialism is not only a result of their comprehension of socialist aims and methods, but also derives from their moral principles. The author elaborates on the interrelations between ethical values and political action. He rejects the idea that just ends could justify unjust means. He reflects on virtues, such as wisdom, bravery, prudence and justice, dating from ancient times and considers their relevance for the current situation. He also gives his views on other virtues, such as the conflicting – and therefore often vilified – »secondary virtues«: orderliness and punctuality. He does not consider the invention of new additional imperatives and prohibitions worthwhile. He argues rather in favour of tolerance. In his conclusion, he gives an appraisal of the 1993 ›Parliament of world religions‹ which was concerned with the world ethos. In its questions and results, he sees ideas and suggestions that are also valid for socialists.

MARTIN SCHIRDEWAN

2003 is not 1933

For the seventieth anniversary of the transfer of power to Adolf Hitler, the author renews the question of whether a united front of the moderate and radical left in the Weimarer Republic could have prevented the rise of National Socialism. A typology of SPD and KPD shows, that the scientific and political discourse on the question of a united front was and remains merely a phantom debate. The programmatic and political differences separating the German left were irreconcilable.

LUTZ BRANGSCH

How politics is transformed into budgets. On the legitimacy and necessity of a democratized budgetary policy

The current budgetary policy in the Federal Republic leads ever deeper into a dead end. On the one hand, state budgets are increasingly incapable of furnishing the necessary expenditures needed for maintaining the infrastructure and the community. On the other, companies and the social elite elude their commitment to finance these tasks. This contradiction has to be solved by initiating a redistribution. But it can only be achieved by a transformation in the behavior of the citizens which also signifies new tasks and new responsibilities for politicians.

JÜRGEN MEIER

Works of art or the yearning for ideology

Art, liberated from the spell of sorcery and religion, pursued in the mid 19th century, new paths of development. The intellectual basis for artists changed with the defeat of the Paris Commune. Not only was the Paris Commune defeated, but even the influence of realist painters and materialist philosophers vanished. From this point on, the art scene was influenced by idealist painters. Even though they concentrated on the effects of light, they did not express the hope of a distant, divine salvation from the earthly vale of tears as the romantics had done. They expressed human impressions of the nature surrounding them.

The yearning for ideology surely receives satisfaction from many modern artists. But since the ideology of modern idealism only distracts from concrete reality, this yearning will one day seek out new paths.

ROGER BEHRENS

The surrealism in the last century – art, politics and erotic of a civil revolt

In surrealism – a revolutionary art form, destined to be practiced in life – the avant-garde art rebels in Paris, in the twenties, met up with the social forces of revolt of that period. Its solidarity, as an art movement, was with the progressive socialists. The attempt to transpose the radical aesthetic comprehension of liberty, soon became devoted to the artistic and political struggle of surrealists against fascism and Stalinism. The idea: the revolution, itself, should become a work of art. But, in the confrontation with the historical context of the period, surrealism failed to formulate an antipode to the morale imposed by the bourgeoisie. Surrealism was forced into the cultural background. Nevertheless, Behrens emphasizes that surrealism remains a domain within the art field: the first idea of the avant-garde to carry art over into social practice.