

MARTIN SCHIRDEWAN

Between Power Politics and Anarchy

In the aftermath of the demise of the socialist movement and empire, with its orientation exclusively toward politics of power, the left remains confronted with the question of new issues and theoretical orientation. With the example of the 1936 Spanish social revolution, carried by the anarchist movement, the author reconsiders the issues and theory of Spanish anarchism, as a movement oriented toward the politics of culture. Despite a supposed anachronism, he arrives at the conclusion that a new orientation of the left movement should contemplate specific aspects of anarchist politics.

WOLFRAM ADOLPHI

The door that got stuck

The author discusses the approaching PDS-project »Forum 2000plus!« and its destiny. The forum, based on ideas born in 1998, was created in 1999 with the aim of becoming »the door« through which the Party of Democratic Socialism enters in contact with the decisive discourse taking place within German society. The party as listener, as open to learn from others, as capable of overcoming the restraints of inner-party arguments – these were some of the essentials forming the concept of the forum project, making possible its success from Spring 2000 – Summer 2001. Subsequently »Forum 2000 plus!« declined rapidly. The author sees a close relationship between this development and the programmatic and structural weaknesses of the party which led to the dramatic loss of votes in the federal parliamentary elections in September, 2002.

DIETMAR WITTICH

Hannibal ante portas. The US, the War and the General Public

Not even in the US, does the US government find a majority supporting going to war against Iraq without an UN-mandate. Rejection of an aggression against Iraq is gaining support all over the world. This is true even for those nations whose populations originally supported the so-called Afghanistan-war against Al Qaida and terrorism. Thus it is no exaggeration to state that the foreign policy of the US is now at a remarkable low in its esteem by civil society the world over.

ULRICH BUSCH

Wealth is growing, but not for everybody

If one considers the extent of private wealth, Germany is a rich country. But this wealth is very unequally distributed and its increase further strengthens this dichotomy in distribution. At present, approximately half of all private wealth is concentrated in the hands of 10 percent of the private households. This inequality is even more blatant in the US, where, the re-concentration of wealth has led to a situation where the 0,01 percent of all US households have an average income of US\$ 17 million / year and control not only the economy but also the society itself. The tendency towards this plutocracy can now also be observed in Germany.

JÖRN SCHÜTRUMPF

Open Questions – Deliberations on the Political Positions of Paul Levi

In 1922 Paul Levi, 1919-1921 chairperson of the Communist Party of Germany, edited the late Rosa Luxemburg's »On the Russian Revolution«. Levi consistently refused to subjugate the German Communist Party to the rule of the Russian Communist Party. His attempts to publish open criticisms of the concept of the Leninist vanguard party led directly to his expulsion from the party. He and Rosa Luxemburg rejected the Leninist thesis of the proletariat being a group with an imperfect consciousness, therefore needing to have its interests expressed and advocated by a vanguard party. Levi also analyzed the transformation of the Bolshevik rule into state-capitalist class domination. Paul Levi's »Introduction« to this famous work by Rosa Luxemburg has never been really seriously considered in leftist analysis of Stalinism – but it is indispensable.

ULLA PLENER

Hostile Brothers? – The Social-Democrats and the Rest of the Left

The hostility between Social-Democrats and Communists/Socialists was predominant throughout the 20th century. On both sides serious strategic errors were made, for which the leadership and membership were held responsible. The »ideological war« between the two mainstreams of the labour movement was one of the causes of the defeat of social-democratic social concepts. Cooperation rather than confrontation is therefore an urgent necessity. The comprehensive democratization being the common denominator.

ARNDT HOPFMANN

Development, Justice and World Economy – The »Theory of Unequal Exchange« reconsidered

Accompanied by the remarkable upswing of movements heavily criticizing the present process of »Globalisation«, theoretical concepts in the debate on »another world« – concepts that have lingered in the shadows – have begun to reappear, concepts viewed as pointing the way toward the »possible«. One of these is the so-called Theory of Unequal Exchange, drafted in the 1960s mainly by Arghiri Emmanuel and Samir Amin. This author undertakes a re-consideration of this concept of Unequal Exchange, with special reference to its Marxist theoretical roots, the labor value theory. In light of the results of his analysis it appears unquestionable that the theoretical beliefs that stood behind the concept of Unequal Exchange could not be based on Marxist theory. But the concept, as such, remains an important contribution to the struggle for »A New World Economic Order«. Justice in world economic development must mainly take into consideration the conditions of political power and the entire set of (world economic) policies dominated primarily by World Trade Organizations, acting in the interests of the leading capitalist nations. The issue of justice can never be confided to blind forces and the »invisible hand« of the market. It is an independent political actor, dependent on shifts in the balance of power between the various political forces.