

ULRICH BUSCH

Miserliness is cool! Why all of a sudden?

Miserliness, understood as exaggerated thrift, stinginess and meanness, but also as acquisitiveness and avarice, has been regarded as morally reprehensible from time immemorial. In contrast, nowadays it is popular. By seizing hold of the spirit of the times and appearing as a virtue it is undergoing a similar process like envy, which has been deliberately redirected – away from the rich and enviable, towards the poor and pitiable. The timing of the campaign of envy at the same time as the controversy about a wealth tax took place was as little coincidental as the timing of the campaign of miserliness in the preliminary stages of the social reforms.

PAUL M. SWEETZ in Interview: »I simply had no choice but to turn to Marxism«

Paul M. Sweezy, one of the editors of »Monthly Review. An Independent Socialist Magazine«, New York, died on February 27th, 2004 at the age of 93. In 1999, when »Monthly Review« became 50 years old, there was published an interview with Sweezy which is now partially translated into German by »UTOPIE kreativ«. Sweezy, well-known not only for his articles but also for a lot of books on socialism published with »Monthly Review Press«, reflects the start of »Monthly Review«, speaks about his turning to Marxism while studying at London's famous School of Economics, discusses the contribution of »Monthly Review« to Marxist theory and criticises what he calls the »academism« of today's Marxist thinking in the United States.

HENNING SÜSSNER

Success in Parliament – Crisis in Organisation. The Experience of the Leftist Party of Sweden

After years of failure, during the last decade of the 20th century the European leftist parties seemed to be gaining new ground. This was especially true in the case of Vansterpartiet, the Leftist Party of Sweden. But now, there is disillusionment: The success was not a sustainable one. Seats in Parliament get lost again, and there is no dynamism in leftist politics any more. Looking into the current discussions in Sweden, the author comes to the end, that to overcome this unfortunate situation and to return back to there radical sources, the Leftist Party as well as the Trade Unions have to pave the way for an unreversed and self-critical dialog which should be free of all organisational egoism and open for all who are interested in strengthening the leftist movement.

PETER BIRKE

Sosialistisk Venstreparti – a Leftist-Socialist Party in Norway

The Sosialistisk Venstreparti (SV) was formed in 1975 as a result of the campaign different leftist groups had driven against a membership of Norway in the European Community. The SV stands for radical changes in politics, for a society free of class differences and social injustice. Because of its well-formulated offers in daily politics it got growing acceptance in elections, and it is now confronted with the chance of a co-operation in government with the social-democrats. But if it accepts the positions of the »modern« social democracy, then – the author says – conflicts with leftist trade unionists and the social-political opposition seem to be unavoidable. Critically seen by leftist movements is the softening of SV's anti-NATO and anti-EC positions, too.

JÜRGEN MEIER

Science is progressive! And Arts?

Analysing the German party programmes for the European elections, the author finds out that they all are easily expressing a connection between progress and science – but never between progress and arts. He then discusses this problem: Why, he asks, has been forgotten what Hegel and Schiller said about arts as the first teachers of mankind? In school timetables, it is evident how arts are more and more shoved into the private sphere, apparently inutile for the educational process. But there are other developments, too. In some enterprises, arts sponsoring is getting growing attention as a way of strengthening team spirit and corporate identity. Why, the author asks, do the political parties hesitate to see arts as a special source of human self-consciousness?

ANDREA PLÖGER, ERWIN RIEDMANN

Transnational and »Asking We Walk«?! The State of the Movement

after the Second European Social Forum

When »the movement of the movements« was first proclaimed in Chiapas in 1994 and made its first public appearance in Seattle in 1999, its European »arm« was still busy fighting the struggles of identity politics, had only begun to overcome its stagnation, and hardly realised its analytical void in political-economic theory. During the second European Social Forum in Paris it became clear that the European movement is not very developed yet as it lacks two fundamental insights of the global movement: the necessity of a »preguntando caminamos« (asking we walk) *and* transnational mode of organization. Despite this, the tendencies of internal formation and external closure which became manifest in Paris show that the movement passed over into a stage of consolidation.

VICTORIA KENDLER, PETER ULLRICH

Report Back: European Identity Forum, Paris 2003

Looking back into the days of the European Social Forum in Paris the authors deplore that certain parts of this forum turned into what they call a »European Identity Forum«. They reflect and discuss events like a meeting called »Cultural and national identities in Europe« which didn't bring together Sinti and Roma from Kosovo or Palestinian refugees from Syria or Israel, but a Basque, a Catalan, a Fleming and a Scotsman. This, they say, could turn the forum into a forum of vanity rather than of serious political work.

GOTTFRIED STIEHLER

What would be if?

The question »What would be if?« seems to be a pointless one. But this, the author says, is true only from the point of view of a metaphysical determinism. In a dialectic approach, it has the same rang as the questions »What was?« and »What is?« The author then discusses problems of necessity, coincidence and probability as well as of alternatives and variations and finally undertakes two historical »case studies«: the coming to power of Adolf Hitler and the development of what was called »real-socialism«.