

HELENO SAÑA How Free are Humans Today?

To imagine that the freedom of the human being would be one of constant progression should be viewed as a residue of the rationale of the period of bourgeois enlightenment and the accompanying myth of ceaseless progress that grew out of this period. Today, this myth is fostered and spread by those in power with the intention of misleading people into believing that they are living in the best of all possible worlds. But, as the author asserts, those freedoms, that we are still able to exercise, have become increasingly abstract, and the obstacles hindering our exercising them, have become increasingly concrete. Life is being more intensively determined by the interests and needs of big capital. We have to free ourselves from the humiliating self negation and learn to think and to act with more self-confidence.

ANDREAS HEYER The Status of the Political Utopia

In the wake of the disintegration of the socialist system at the end of the 80's, many in capitalist democracies lost their ability to make a self-critical analysis of their liberal states. This is the background concept that aids in understanding why different political currents find themselves united in proclaiming an end to utopia. But such proclamations deny the constituent role in general Western thinking, that is played by the concept of utopia. Political utopia is one of the essential discourses for the intellectual's verification of deficiencies and potential of his/her society. The growing scepticism being expressed in regards to the liberal order, clearly demonstrates the necessity of this discourse – as well as the necessity of contemplating alternatives.

KARL-HEINZ GRÄFE From the ›Asters Revolution‹ to a Räterepublik (Soviet Republic). Hungary 1918/19

The Hungarian Revolution of 1918/19, which led to the building of a Räterepublik (Soviet Republic = a republic ruled by councils of representatives) seems to have been ›forgotten‹. The author presents an approach to the complex national and international context of this revolution, discussing the different stages of its development and the deeply controversial views concerning it. In his examination of the history of the crushing of the revolution, the author points out a connection between the counterrevolutionary violence used at that time and the liquidation of half a million Hungarian Jews 25 years later.

ANDREAS KELLER The University as Economic Enterprise?

At the beginning of the 21st century a deep restructuring of the German system of higher education is being undertaken. State-run universities which were always conceived as public corporations are to be converted into service enterprises, which are to sell their products – research results as well

as the education of students – in accordance with the market demand. Economic regulations shall replace political regulations. The author discusses the consequences of this process and examines alternatives. These alternatives, he says, should be debated much more in depth because they are often ambivalent. The political Left over a long period has also raised demands for a reform of higher education. These demands should now, be more sharply focused on the university becoming an economic enterprise.

RUTH FREY, HELMUT WIESENTHAL The Political Party as a Learning Organization

There is much discussion about the situation of political parties in Germany. A remarkable decline in party membership and recurring conflicts, pitting the party membership against the party leadership signal serious problems, not only in the status of political parties in general, but especially also in their organisational structure. Alternatives such as the integration of elements of direct democracy or the opening of the organizations have, borne few successes. The authors discuss whether – and how – an organisation such as a party, can be made to learn – aware of its existence, as a difficult organisation, rich in conflict but also in potential.

WOLFGANG HARTMANN Ministry of State Security: Self-Images and Images of Others

Using the psychological categories of ›self-image‹ and ›image of others‹ the author – once a member of the staff in the Ministry of State Security of the GDR – seeks to contribute to a deeper reflection, not only on the work of the ›stasi‹ in particular, but to reflect upon the political life in the GDR as a whole. With personal reminiscences, going back to the early years of the GDR and culminating with the PDS debates about the role of the ›stasi‹ and its informal collaborators, he offers a wide spectre of viewpoints and ideas and arrives at a better and more complex understanding of the political psychology of the SED.

RUDOLF SAUERZAPF The Expulsion of Leo Kofler

Reflecting upon his student years in Halle (Saale) 1948-1950, the author recalls his contact with the philosopher, Leo Kofler (1907-1995), who, at the time, was professor for Middle Ages and Modern History at Halle's Martin Luther University. The author initially describes the fascination of Kofler's lectures, recalls the attraction they had for the students. He then describes the Stalinist attacks against Kofler by party officials and some of Kofler's colleagues, which eventually forced him to leave the GDR at the end of 1950. The author, himself, also had to suffer the consequences of the ›Kofler Affair‹: Caught by the NKWD, he had immense difficulties being able to continue his studies and enter a normal professional career.