

Reflecting on Godwin

William Godwin (1756-1836), an English contemporary of the French Revolution first published his work »An enquiry concerning political justice« in the year 1793 in London – a text that has appeared in German translation in its entirety for the first time this year. The editor, Hermann Klenner – a well known expert in the philosophy of Law – has compiled some topical maxims for UTOPIE kreativ.

DETLEF NAKATH, GERD RÜDIGER STEPHAN 15 Years ago: A split with »Stalinism as System«

The Party of Democratic Socialism, which originated during the Autumn Revolution of 1989, is the focal point of the book under discussion. In this contribution the authors concern themselves with the dramatic events during these days. The collective abdication of the leaders of the SED, the temporary study group which replaced the fallen SED leadership and the special party conference from which the PDS emerged, are all dealt with.

MARIO KESSLER The Rise and Fall of State Socialism. Helmut Bock's Documentation

Helmut Bock is an intellectual typical of the PDS in the first years of its existence. This collection of essays deals with the main topics of his research: German writers in 19th century Paris, such as Heinrich Heine; reflections on the Revolutions of 1789, 1848 and 1917-1918; the relevance of utopian thinking from the French Revolution to the present and the disputed place of the GDR in the history of German socialism. Correspondence with the West German historian Wolfgang Mommsen focuses on historians' responsibility in the struggle for democracy. Mommsen, while criticising his East German colleagues for their failure to deal with the crimes of Stalinism, omits the fact that West German historians of his generation never dealt with the Nazi past of their own academic teachers.

ANDRÉ BRIE Strategic consequences of the PDS election campaigns in 2004

The author is a member of the European Parliament (PDS) and was a leading election campaigner of his party for many years (1990-1999, 2003/2004). After having failed to reach the 5% hurdle in the Federal elections of 2002, the party experienced a come-back in 2004 having already been declared dead by many. Brie analyses the reasons for this and shows that the hardest problems for the PDS are still to come. His thesis states that the PDS only has a future if it plays a decisive role in the formation of a left movement in Germany.

GESINE LÖTZSCH The future of concrete policies

The author is a member of the PDS and one of the two members of the Bundestag who succeeded in being elected into Parliament. In this contribution she holds up a mirror to her own party and demands that an honest analysis and open debate take place. In her political analysis, the Member of Parliament is confronted again and again by the problem that the PDS hardly formulates tangible goals and thereby lacks appeal. The author makes concrete suggestions by the use of several examples which prey on the minds of many people in Germany.

CHRISTINE OSTROWSKI

The PDS and its proximity to the citizen

The author is amongst the most distinguished politicians of the PDS; between 1998 and 2002 she was a member of the Bundestag and speaker for housing policy in her party. In Saxony during the 1990's, she initiated diverse projects by which people directly experienced politician's help. The author emphasises the need for a left politics which voices the interests of large parts of the population. She turns her back on the opinion prevalent within the PDS that left-wing politics should above all serve the interests of the left.

CLAUDIA GOHDE

Riding the tiger. On dealing with the organisational dilemmas within the PDS

The author is advisor for party development within the party executive of the PDS. Her contribution is in response to an article which appeared in the October edition of UTOPIE kreativ. (Ruth Frey, Helmut Wiesenthal: political party as learning organisation). She discusses the various contradictions within which a left-wing party must manoeuvre nowadays and pleads for an open learning process within the party in order to avoid the kinds of conflicts which paralyse the organisational process.

MICHAEL SCHUMANN

Opposing right-wing extremism. A parliamentary speech

The author, who died in an accident in December 2002, was amongst the few strategic thinkers in the PDS. In his oppressive speech held in the Brandenburger Landtag in September 2000, which is printed here, Schumann strongly criticised the lax policies of the interior minister – a former general of the Bundeswehr – vis-à-vis right wing extremism. In particular, he criticised the CDU, ruling party in Brandenburg, for cultivating a xenophobic atmosphere and thereby encouraging right-wing extremism.

WILLIBALD JACOB

Neo-liberalism and the Christian faith are incompatible. A word on Bishop Dr. Wolfgang Huber

The author, a theologian, was vicar of the protestant church in Berlin-Brandenburg and a development worker in India for several years. From 1994 to 1998 he was a member of the Bundestag for the PDS. He fiercely attacks leading officials of the Protestant church in Germany, as their criticism of neoliberalism is too reserved. Jacob calls for the coming together of Christians and the Political Left.

DORIS KATHEDER

Sexy Competition. The promises of advertising in girls' magazines

The author examines adverts in well-known German girls' magazines, such as »Bravo girl!« and »Sugar«, especially the eye-catching visual presence of romantic and individualistic sexualisation. With reference to current post-colonial ethnic (or »multi-cultural«) eroticism, mass communication and pseudo-feminism, she illustrates the use of iconic symbols which underlie the promise of universal happiness in advertising.