

BOSILJKA SCHEDLICH

The Wall Coming Down or The Turning Point

»The Berlin Wall was not protection, it was the deep frozen war«, in making a summary, the author reflects upon her experiences as a Yugoslav »guest worker«, student and organizer of intercultural life in West-Berlin, during the Seventies and Eighties and as the founder of the »South-East Center« in 1992, in Berlin. Viewing the post-socialist developments in Yugoslavia and the trauma of the wars that have taken place there, she makes a plea for waging a patient, but persistent, struggle against warfare and war propaganda.

STEFAN BOLLINGER

Welfare State GDR – Only a Memory, or also a Challenge?

Discussing the mainstream historiography of the German Democratic Republic, the author proposes a more differentiated approach. The GDR's social policies, he says, must be perceived as an attempt to attain the humanistic ideals of the workers' movements and, despite all the difficulties and mistakes along the line, these policies were a strong enough challenge to the Federal Republic of Germany, that it developed its own welfare state, which seems, at present, to be completely »forgotten«.

JAN PETERS

Wolfgang Steinitz – A Tightrope Walker?

The author discusses the biography, written by Anette Leo, of the German, Jewish, communist, scientist Wolfgang Steinitz (1905-1967). He pleads for a deep sensitivity for the period in which Steinitz lived and the circumstances he endured, while criticizing today's mainstream historians for attempting to extinguish the memory of not only the GDR, itself, but also of all the hope that accompanied the development of an anti-capitalist society.

HELMUT BOCK

The Misery of Historical Self-Criticism

Reflecting back over the fifteen years of work of the History Commission of the PDS, the author states that a decisive question for the self-identity of the left remains unsolved: the reasons for Stalinism. He recalls the works of critical communists such as Trotsky, Ryutin, Djilas, Behrens, and discusses the development of his own views in the GDR and, later, in the ranks of the PDS. There will be, he says, no renovation of anti-capitalist alternatives, without a self-critical look into the »era of the 1917 revolution« which drew to a close in 1989.

HORST DIETZEL

Departure from the Class Struggle? The Concept of a New Social Contract in the PDS

In 1994, Gregor Gysi published his »Ingolstadt Manifesto«, in which he pleaded for a New Social Contract. The author discusses why this Manifesto never became part of the party program. He reflects back on various approaches to the Social Contract concept, for example as expressed in the »crossover«-processes of Greens, leftwing Social-Democrats and Democratic Socialists in the period from 1996 to 1998. He sees new hope for the idea coming through Bodo Ramelow's paper »Democratic Habitat Germany – Social Contract 21«.

HELENO SAÑA

Don Quijote in Germany

This is a Spaniard's view of German unification. The belief that the coming down of the Berlin Wall would open a promising new chapter in pan-German history, has not materialized. What currently predominates are sentiments of annoyance and helplessness, both in East and West. It seems as though the two sides were closer during the period of their division, than they have become today. The German situation is linked with the global situation, which can be characterized as being within a »profoundly un-liberal period of the history«.

BERND RUMP

15 Years of »Unity«

The author reflects on the demise of the GDR, on the destiny of, what he calls, the hopes of both the majority of the citizens of the GDR, and the political elite of the Federal Republic of Germany for a sort of »Golden Age« of eternal peace, social balance and justice. He also reflects back upon his own path into the united Germany.

RICHARD SORG

The High and Mighty – Materials and Proposals for Their Research

This is a review of the book of Hans Jürgen Krysmanski »Hirten & Wölfe« (Shepherds and Wolves). The connection between power, domination and wealth, says the author, are largely ignored by social and sociological research, and that seems intentional on the part of the high and mighty, themselves. To conduct the necessary research, takes not only courage but also the broadened perspective of a global understanding of the problem. The author invites that contributions be made to a research network »Power Structure Research«.