

Summaries

Jan Rehmann: Ernst Bloch as a Philosopher of Praxis

Contrary to the widespread portrayal of Bloch's philosophy as ›mystical‹, ›idealistic‹, ›eschatological‹, ›speculative‹ etc., Rehmann shows that it is best interpreted in the framework of a Marxist philosophy of praxis. Similar to Gramsci, Bloch develops his concept of materialism from Marx' *Theses on Feuerbach*. His concepts of the ›highest good‹ and of an ›alliance technique‹ are take up the young Marx' perspective of a reconciliation between humans and nature; his theory of anticipation and hope is centered on the development of collective capacities to act; even his ›ontology of the not yet‹, which is often criticized for its teleology, is actually based on the concept of ›open possibilities‹ to be grasped by acting subjects and can thus be interpreted in terms of a ›weak teleological force‹ of human agency. Bloch's philosophy is however in need of an update that overcomes its essentialist presumptions and pluralizes its teleology.

Beat Dietschy: In the Mix of National Intoxication. Ernst Bloch's *Heritage of our Time*, Read in Times of Right-Wing Populism

Why, as Bloch's book in 1935 asks, could ›National Socialism‹ triumph over a counterrevolution in the guise and as a slate substitute for a genuine one? His answer is that it was able to mobilize not only fear and pent-up anger, but also something ›rebellious missing‹ and unfulfilled hopes, especially of peasant and petty-bourgeois. Bloch encounters this with a multi-level dialectics that also takes ›nonsynchronous contradictions‹ seriously. He wants to make possible a ›saving inheritance‹ of subversive and utopian contents from the ›unsettled past‹, which dissolve those elements hostile to capitalism which are capable of transformation. The reading of the book can be guided by the question of what knowledge can be gained from it for our time, in which a hegemony crisis of the neo-liberal globalization policy leads to the revival of aggressive nationalisms and right-wing populism.

Matthias Mayer: ›Heimat‹ in a Multicultural Society. Reflections Inspired by Ernst Bloch

The German term ›Heimat‹, usually translated as ›homeland‹, is to be analyzed as a fundamentally ambivalent concept. It can be used in a reactionary way for an imaginary protective space shielding an in-group against foreigners and other ›others‹ who supposedly contribute to the collapse of ›order‹. But in a Blochian sense, it designates a universal and truly democratic home for all, ›in which no one has yet been‹. However, this perspective, which Bloch developed mainly from the natural law tradition of Stoicism, needs to be clearly distinguished from the cosmopolitan vagueness of trans-nationalism that is formed after the model of the *Pax Romana* or of globalized capitalism.

Roland Boer: Bloch's »Non-Contemporaneity« and the Contradictions of Chinese Socialism

The essay evaluates Bloch's theory of »Non-Contemporaneity« and applies it to the contradictions in the People's Republic of China, whose communist leadership claims to reach a socialist society by utilizing the capitalist development of productive forces. It is the very »non-contemporaneity« of earlier, pre-capitalist modes of production and modern anticipations of revolutionary transformation that explains the success of revolutions in poorly developed countries. Combined with Mao Zedong's concept of contradictions, Bloch's approach allows for a better understanding of why contradictions also continue under socialism and communism. Contrary to Marxist-Leninist dogma, modes of production do not supersede (and negate) one another, but each subsequent mode of production absorbs the contradictions of the former and transforms them in light of a new situation.

Wolfgang Fritz Haug: Karl Marx's Meta-Critique of Religion and Ernst Bloch's Transcending into this world

In his presentation on the 40th anniversary of Bloch's death, Haug investigates the inner connection between Marx's so-called critique of religion and what Bloch describes as his »new metaphysics«, which he connects to the (at first glance) paradoxical formula of a »transcending into this world«. It becomes clear that Marx in his »Introduction to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law« does not develop a critique of religion, but rather a critical reversal of Ludwig Feuerbach's bourgeois critique of religion. He applies a revolutionary hermeneutics to religious phenomena by which he takes up what Hegel considered as »reason in Christian religion« deciphering it as »protest against real distress«. This is the point of Bloch's intervention. He wants to make sure that the concrete-utopian impulses of religious articulations of protest do not get lost but are inscribed in the transformation of the social world. Thereby he widens Marx's revolutionary hermeneutics by a revolutionary maieutic, understood as the art to bring to light what is still latent.

Daniel Queiser: Forward to Aristotle? Ernst Bloch's composition of a left Aristotelian line

Like hardly any other Marxist philosophy, Ernst Bloch's late writings revolve around the concept of matter. One of his central concerns was to integrate the ancient Aristotelian conception of matter – as the ability to be something – into dialectical materialism in order to be able to interlock it with its ontology of the not-yet. However, Bloch did not refer solely to Aristotle, but to a specific, predominantly Arab, tradition of Aristotelianism, which he called the Aristotelian Left. In his essay, Queiser attempts to trace this philosophical line, described by Bloch but insufficiently accepted in research at its most important stations, and shows in particular the underlying principle of this historical construction.

Jennifer Cotter: Feminism, »New Materialism«, and the Rejection of Dialectics

In the wake of economic crisis of capital, increased exploitation, austerity measures, the commodification of all aspect of life through their subordination to production for profit, and the resulting material contradictions in women's lives, many feminists in the global North are turning toward what Rosi Braidotti calls a »new brand of materialism«. In contrast to this trend, Cotter argues that »life« in new materialist feminism, is abstracted from historically produced social relations and structures of production and reproduction and is posited as a transhistorical, transsocial, meta-physical force. Thus she defends the concept of negation, in historical materialist dialectics, as an active process of transformation.

Tilman Reitz: Cultural Struggles and the Competitive Nation State. Cleavages Within the German Left

Since Oskar Lafontaine has unhappily juxtaposed migration and the social question, conflict and potential cleavage is haunting the German left party and movement(s). The schematic opposition between urban, progressive, cosmopolitan activists and neglected old working class groups, which both make up important parts of the left clientele, seems to be activated in real political-cultural struggles. The author seeks to situate these struggles within the hegemonic landscape of new strategies of the competitive nation-state in order to find sources of new solidarity.

Thomas Wagner: If You Want to Fight the Right, You Have to Know What They Think

The author explains in his replica on Richard Gebhardt's discussion of his book (in *Argument* no. 324) the »progressive elements« of the new right. Young people in particular are attracted by their departure from nazi-fascism and their attraction to pop culture. The confrontation with them must therefore take all their current forms seriously and be carried out in public.