

# A Dialectic of Talking Forests: Trotskyist Ecology Through Afghan Sufi Cosmology

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This paper argues that a Trotskyist understanding of dialectics is well-suited to be combined with a few different intellectual mechanisms present in Pashto literature, oral storytelling, and Naqshbandi Sufi cosmology, to pursue a properly Marxist understanding of ecology and climate change. Such a model of understanding is highly appropriate to the local context of Northwest Pakistan and Southern Afghanistan, and can also potentially inspire new forms of dialectical understanding, elsewhere. I focus on the Afghan poet and refugee Pir Muhammad Karwan, who wrote a collection of work about the Soviet-Afghan War while living in Pakistani refugee camps during Taliban rule in the 1990s. Karwan's poetry can be roughly classified as neoplatonist, due to its reliance on local Sufi concepts like *maanavi* and the imaginal plane. Perso-Arabic Sufi cosmology enables Karwan to work through an intellectual matrix that both abolishes and retools concepts like the self and other, technology and organic beings, human and nonhuman species, living and nonliving objects, embodied and cognitive knowledge, and sentient and non sentient natural processes. This is clear from works like *The Chinar Tree Speaks*, which discusses the Soviet-Afghan war from the perspective of human and tree, and *The Talking Forest*, which goes further to describe a forest not just in terms of its material content, but as a network of physical and emotional processes that feels, thinks, and speaks in its own spoken and embodied language. While Karwan is explicitly discussing the Soviet-Afghan War, it's possible to use his perspective as a springboard for discussing the various impacts and processes involved in climate change. Essentially, Karwan's perspective is that the distinction between nature and humanity is artificial, and that even an inorganic and non sentient object has a physical, emotional, and cosmic impact. This approach pairs quite well with Trotsky's writings on evolutionism, science, and the dialectics of nature; particularly so given that Trotsky is one of the few Marxist thinkers of his era to attempt to observe the dialectic in subatomic and nonhuman realms. Potentially, a Trotskyist reading of Karwan could open entirely new frameworks for dialectics, which views such diverse actors and processes as bees, deer, helicopters, melting ice caps, and the revolutionary proletarian party, on the same plane. It could also view natural processes such as climate change in terms of their emotional and spiritual content, in addition to the physical characteristics usually covered by historical materialism. This will, in turn, make it possible to sketch out new visions of proletarian governance, and new groundings for solidarity that extend across the biosphere.

## **Class relations at the origins of Islam**

**Ian David Morris (University of Amsterdam)**

Muhammad was a merchant. Historians are forever trying to explain the details of his life and the contents of the Quran with reference to his career, travelling and trading among Jews and Christians. And since W.M. Watt published his books on Muhammad at Mecca and Muhammad at Medina in the 1950s, we have even wondered if the rise of merchant capitalism frayed the bonds of tribal society, disturbing the traditional order and paving the way for Muhammads moral revolution. This paper argues that we have focused too much on trade itself and too little on the class relations that support a trading economy. Muhammad and his peers were more than merchants: they were a highly mobile class of warrior landlords who through tax, rent, interest and tribute seized and concentrated surplus wealth from the petty herdsmen and oasis farmers of Arabia. From this angle, Muhammad was not a revolutionary, but a consolidator. His new coalition did not abolish the class system, but it did unite the ruling class into a single political force. Together in their zeal for primitive accumulation with Gods blessing they went on to conquer and exploit their wealthier neighbours across the Middle East. The origins of Islam belong to the history of class struggle.

## **Endnotes 5 panel**

**John Clegg (University of Chicago)**

This is a launch panel for Endnotes issue 5

## **What is Commercial Capital?: Japanese Contributions to Marxian Market Theory**

**Kei Ehara (Oita University)**

Shinya Shibasaki (Hokusei Gakuen University)

This paper deals with Japanese contributions to the Marxian theory of commercial capital. It is especially noteworthy that Part 4, The Transformation of Commodity Capital and Money Capital into Commercial Capital and Money-Dealing Capital (Merchants Capital) of Capital Vol.3, has been a popular area of discussion among Japanese Marxians: whereas Part 5, The Division of Profit into Interest and Profit of Enterprise, was taken up by R. Hilferding, who wrote Finance Capital in 1910, the Western literature has paid little attention to the theory of commercial capital developed in Part 4. In order to complete the introduction of Japanese Marxian economics, the theory of commercial capital is indispensable and we think it useful for all critical thinkers of capitalism to understand how and why Japanese Marxians have studied the area. The history of Japanese studies of commercial capital can be divided into three periods: the first period is from the 1950s to

the 1970s and is led by Kozo Uno (1897 - 1977), one of the most influential figures in Japanese Marxian economists. A lot of people followed his argument and formed a group of scholars called the Uno school or Unoists. Consequently, the study of commercial capital has been mainly conducted by the Uno school. The first section of this paper will introduce how Uno tried to develop Marx's argument on this topic. The important figure in the second period is Shigekatsu Yamaguchi (1932 - ), who was a student of Uno and also is one of the main critics of Uno. His first book published in 1983, *Kyoso to Shyogyo-shihon* (Competition and Commercial Capital), stimulated fierce debates in this field of study and became one of the reference points in this period from the 1980s to the 2000s. Also, he educated many Marxian scholars at the University of Tokyo, contributing to the popularity of this theme among the Uno school. This paper will deal with Yamaguchi's theory in the second section. The third period began from the 2000s. The theory of commercial capital is still one of the most popular areas of study in Japanese Marxian economics. One of the issues is how to develop and update Yamaguchi's theory to understand modern capitalism. We shall describe the current achievements and the remaining issues in the third section and conclusion respectively.

## Eco-socialist climate policy after the yellow vests

Anders Ekeland (Statistics Norway)

The starting point of the paper is the reaction of the eco-socialist left to the yellow vest movement in France, exemplified primarily by the response from leading member of Attac in France, economist Maxime Combes and Andreas Malm, author of "Fossil Capitalism", but also the response of Melanchon and the Green Party is analysed. The paper argues that the left in France, in Europe and internationally is politically paralysed on the key issue of the price of fossil fuel, in particular the price of petrol for cars. The yellow vest movement is of course not caused only or primarily by Macron's tax increase on petrol, but it was "the straw that broke the camel's back". It is the rise of the price of petrol that united very diverse socio-political-economic groups into one movement. Which means that you are politically paralysed if you do not have long-term strategy for whether the price should increase or not. Because as long as fossil are cheap they will be used and no decrease, and certainly not a drastic reduction in emissions will occur. Since burning fossil fuels is directly responsible for almost 80 % of the emissions, the price of fossil fuel is *the key price* when it comes to climate policy. It is also the *key political problem*, since significantly increasing the price (= reducing emissions significantly) clearly hits the poor more than the rich and if the ruling elites tries to do that, there will be social unrest of a magnitude that the ruling elites fear more than anything. That is of course why they have not increased the price of carbon. The yellow vest movement just show that their fear was real. The price of fossil fuel is clearly the Gordian knot of climate policy. The price should increase, but that is politically impossible if it is not part of a "just transition". The only way to increase the carbon price in a socially just way, the politically possible way to increase the price, is to combine it with strong redistribution policies. The most common way to do that is to implement a progressive carbon tax, where the tax revenue is redistributed in a "Robin Hood" way hurting the rich and benefitting the poor. While supported by some well-known eco-socialist like John B.

Foster and Ian Angus, a progressive carbon tax is for most activists is a non-issue, i.e. a strategy they have not seriously considered. A few well-known eco-socialist, like Daniel Tanuro have come out clearly against a progressive carbon tax. The paper also argues that the widespread belief on the left that regulation has no consequence for the price on fossil fuels is wrong. If the “keep the oil in the soil, the coal in the hole” movement was successful in reducing the supply of fossil fuel significantly, thereby significantly reducing the emissions, it would lead to a sharp increase in the price of petrol, gas, coal – and according to carbon content – all other goods and services. This general, energy price driven increase in the cost of living would hit the poor just as much as Macron’s tax on fossil fuels and be equally unpopular. The paper discusses in light of this the danger that actions like “Ende Gelände” will turn into heroic actions by a youthful elite of green activists, isolated from the working class, which is then brought under the political hegemony of right-wing populism. For an eco-socialist movement that will be catastrophic.

## Political Philosophy in the Capitalocene

**Dan Boscov-Ellen (Pratt Institute The New School for Social Research)**

Liberalism is not merely incapable of addressing ecological crisis, but inevitably produces environmental destruction and vulnerability so long as it is coupled with capitalism. Furthermore, it appears very difficult to extricate one from the other without a thoroughgoing reworking of liberalism’s fundamental categories. In other words, the fatal flaws of liberalism will not be resolved by tinkering and footnotes; our political philosophy will need to be rebuilt upon more stable ground. From the 1970s onward there have been numerous attempts to do precisely this. Proponents of various rival political frameworks including green critical theory, deep ecology, ecofeminism, ecoanarchism, indigenous environmentalism, and others have produced a number of creative and influential alternative visions for the collective organization of social life. However, none have yet succeeded in producing a generally attractive and comprehensive theory capable of shifting the political-philosophical paradigm and dislodging liberalism from its hegemonic position. One reason for this was their general failure to adequately theorize capitalism, which weakened their critiques of liberalism. At the same time, in many cases, this failure saddled alternative theories with all manner of political baggage irrationalism and primitivism, misanthropy and Malthusian-inspired racism, ableism, and social Darwinism, etc. as human nature, population growth, the Enlightenment, or technology were portrayed as the source of environmental ills. Meanwhile, ecosocialist critics of capitalism, although they understand the centrality of capitalism to our present predicament, have been largely content to chart the structural contradictions between capitalism and ecology, perhaps gesturing vaguely toward existing social movements as progenitors of some future politics but leaving the political requirements otherwise undetermined. We thus face the imminent dissolution of our existing social order without any clear vision of desirable and viable alternatives. If liberalism is incompatible with a rational ecology, then what kind of political philosophy is appropriate to our situation? And how might it be realized? In this paper, I address these questions, laying out several fundamental principles of an ecosocialist political theory and the reasons for adopting them.

## **Saving the Honour of Socialism: The German Socialist Youth Movement During The First World War**

**Rida Vaquas (University of Oxford)**

Youth is frequently idealized in socialist movements, yet the politics of youth movements are too little understood in their own terms. The German anti-war socialist youth movement provided a baptism of fire for many who would go on to play leading roles in the Weimar Left: the Trotskyist Werner Scholem, the Communist politician Walter Stoecker and left communists such as Erich Lewinsohn. Its organisation had declared a split from German Social Democracy before the historic schism in January 1917, when the SPD executive expelled its adult opposition. Yet whilst its activities have been meticulously reconstructed by DDR historians such as Siegfried Scholze and Harri Wiederhft, far too often the political development of these anti-war youth organisations is simply assessed to be a result of Spartacist influence in the youth movement. On the other hand, West German historians all too frequently neglected the role of politics altogether, stressing the commonalities between working class youth movements. By examining the intercourse of ideas within the anti-war youth movement and how young activists sought to disseminate them across the working class youth, we can deepen our understanding of the processes of political radicalisation that emerged not only from the declining wartime economic conditions but also through a conscious practice of horizontal pedagogy. Interrogating the political decisions that early anti-war socialist youth organisations made in how they related to the pro-war SPD and its youth wing Arbeiter-Jugend allows us to regard the split in the SPD on the level of a strategic decision, not simply one of political principle. Drawing upon the recent work of Ottokar Luban and Ralf Hoffrogge in revitalising research into the German socialist youth movement, my paper will examine how the radical anti-war socialist youth movement evolved from pre-war models of youth organisation and their dissidents. I will argue that their political development must be set within the diverging contexts of the Youth International, in which there were flourishing anti-war organisations, and the collapse of the Second International, in which radical anti-war voices such as Lenins remained a troublesome minority.

## **Perspectives for a red-green antifascism**

**David Renton (Garden Court chambers)**

For most of the postwar period, anti-fascists believed that ecological crisis provided a single main opportunity for the far right, namely the repackaging of racist ideas of blood and soil as the defence of nature. Since 2016 however, the non-fascist far right has by and large taken the opposite approach - denying global warming and ecocide and revelling in the opportunities provided by capitalist expansion. The emergence and frustration of environmental direct action brings the risk of compromise between a form of this far right thinking and strands of green thought. Drawing on the left critiques of fascist writers such as Jorian Jenks and Savitri Devi, on the ideas of Michawl Loewy and on John Lanchester's

novel *The Wall*, this paper argues instead for a strategic alliance of anti-fascism and environmental activism - in mutual opposition to ecocide and to border regimes.

## **Critical Socialist Feminism in China: xingbie(gender), state and the collective**

**Ian liujia Tian (OISE, University of Toronto)**

This essay introduces critical socialist feminism in post-socialist China, a new direction within Chinese feminist theorizing in the last decade. Under the context of state capitalism in China, critical socialist feminism needs much attention because of its critical stance on gender theory, the state and Chinese socialist era. I argue that this new terrain should be read as a decolonial anti-capitalist project and a crucial component of a global rethinking of the state in political organizing.

## **Living Peripheral, Thinking South: decolonizing queer Marxism, or, why does queer Marxism need Asia**

**Ian liujia Tian (OISE, University of Toronto)**

Azimzadeh Mani (University of Toronto) Sabra Rezaei (Independent Researcher) Vinaya Gopaal (University of Toronto)

Our project is an intervention of, by and for queers in Asia specifically and the Global South more generally. We argue that a decolonial queer Marxist critique has to be grounded and contextualized. To countenance this argument, we critique two publications on queer Marxism; *Warped* and *The Politics of Everybody*. We argue that some streams of queer Marxism do not consider the colonality of power; thus continue to disregard violence deployed on the bodies living in the South through the global cheapening and exploitation of the peripheral population. Further, it seems to set the tone for what is a proper queer Marxist critique so the rest of the world can follow. Our relative work in China, Iran and India bring lived experiences of activists and demonstrate that queer liberation in these localities inevitably addresses issues of state-form (nation-state), capitalism, post-coloniality and post-sociality. We believe that globalization is not being established only by imperialism in its direct form but also by Westernized emancipation that reproduces the materialities and discourses to reinforce imperialism. Queer Marxism that only centres white urban workers in the North does not liberate but further disadvantage queers in the South. Anti-capitalist sexuality in the peripheral does not need to follow the teleology of queer theory or Marxism towards emancipations; rather, it needs to innovate and decolonize resistance to navigate multiple layers of power. We are thus calling for third world anti-capitalist sexuality, that is, an anti-capitalism and anti-heteropatriarchy formation in the Global South. This position would address the spatial dialectics of free North/captive South and the biopolitical production of white North/the necropolitical cheapening of the racialized South. What we call decolonized queer Marxism,



then, has to engage with the uneven development, dialectics and the nation-state system that are intertwined with the praxis of global racial capitalism, heteropatriarchy of various forms and the construction of gender binary.

## **Book Launch: Antisemitism and the Russian Revolution**

**Brendan McGeever (Birkbeck, University of London)**

Book launch for *Antisemitism and the Russian Revolution* When the Bolsheviks came to power in 1917, they announced the overthrow of a world scarred by exploitation and domination. In the very moment of revolution, these sentiments were put to the test as antisemitic pogroms swept the former Pale of Settlement. The pogroms posed fundamental questions of the Bolshevik anti-racist praxis, revealing the depth of antisemitism within sections of the working class, peasantry and the Red Army. *Antisemitism and the Russian Revolution* offers the first book-length analysis of the Bolshevik response to antisemitism. Contrary to existing understandings, it reveals this campaign to have been led not by the Party leadership, as is often assumed, but by a loosely connected group of revolutionaries who mobilized around a Jewish political subjectivity. In so doing, it brings into view an overlooked chapter in the history of revolutionary anti-racism, highlighting the contributions of Left Communists, Bundists and Jewish Marxists. By examining pogroms committed by the Red Army, the book also uncovers the articulation between antisemitism and the revolutionary process, and the capacity for class to become racialized in a moment of crisis. The launch will comprise a panel of three discussants Prof Steve Smith (Oxford) Jacqueline Rose (Birkbeck) OR Enzo Traverso (Cornell) Eric Blanc (NYU) The publishers (Cambridge University Press) will provide copies of the book.

## **After 2008: Representations of Finance Capital in Contemporary American Cinema**

**Carl Howard Freedman (Louisiana State University (Baton Rouge))**

One of the most obvious limitations of film as an art form is that, as a (largely) visual form, it has difficulty representing those areas of human experience that are hard to visualize, or hard to make visually appealing and interesting. Perhaps nothing today is less visual than high finance. The workings of finance capital are not only nearly impossible to picture: In their most consequentially avant-garde forms, they are said to be, in detail, so mind-numbingly complex as to be almost incomprehensible in any way. Yet the financial crisis of 2008 and its apparently interminable aftermath have made clear that to adapt Trotsky's famous remark though we may not be interested in finance capital, finance capital is very much interested in us. The enormous impact that abstruse Wall Street speculation can have on the day-to-day lives of millions (or billions) of people has made it inevitable that filmmakers would attempt cinematic treatment of finance after 2008. In this paper I will examine the way that three movies about finance have responded to both the formal pressures that disincline cinema to represent finance capital and the ideological pressures

that work against any radical critique of the heavily financialized capitalism of today. *Too Big to Fail* (Curtis Hanson, 2011) turns most of its attention from the inner workings of finance to the political response to the 2008 crisis. It focuses admiringly on Fed Chair Ben Bernanke and Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson as they attempt to stabilize the US economy (successfully, in the films view). *The Wolf of Wall Street* (Martin Scorsese, 2013) begins on Wall Street but soon leaves the locus of high finance completely behind in order to concentrate on the grifters of low finance who pump and dump penny stocks. By contrast, *The Big Short* (Adam McKay, 2015) makes a serious attempt to understand the crash of 2008. In an unusual combination of fast-paced thriller, raucous comedy, and outraged polemic, the film not only manages to entertain while teaching about mortgage-backed securities, credit default swaps, and collateralized debt obligations, but to make, of the three films, by far the most trenchant critique of the human destruction wrought by financialized capitalism. Alone of the three, it comes within touching distance of being a Marxist film.

## Revisiting Timpanaro

**Matteo Mameli (Kings College London)**

Five decades ago, Sebastiano Timpanaro wrote on Friedrich Engels' "brilliant attempt to fuse 'historical materialism' with the materialism of the natural sciences". He explained the importance of the attempt and made suggestions on how to make progress in this area. Today, the need to theorise and act on (a) "the fusion of the two historicities" (that of nature and that of human action and of its impact on nature), and (b) the "persistence of the 'natural' within the 'human'", is greater than ever. Timpanaro's (and Engels') insights should be revisited in light of: (1) developments in science (and technology); (2) the ever more explicit role that science plays in social conflict.

## Revolutionary workers movements Poland South Africa Iran, 1979-89, on the eve of Communism's collapse

**John Rose (ucu)**

Independent workers' movements played strategically central roles in toppling tyrannies in Poland, South Africa and Iran coinciding with the final years of Soviet Communism and its network of satellite countries. Despite their locations on different continents and their very different political and cultural histories, the Solidarity movement in Poland, the black trade union movement challenging Apartheid South Africa and the shora (workers councils) movement in the Iranian Revolution displayed remarkable similarities in their political tenacity, courage as well as in their far-reaching demands for workers' control of production. However there are also similarities in the way each of these movements then lost the political initiative. The paper explores why this was the case in the context of Soviet Communism's impending disintegration. (The paper will be an adaptation of a phd I have just completed with Stathis Kouvelakis at Kings College, London University)



## **Syria, the political economy of state resilience**

**Joseph Daher (Lausanne University, Switzerland and European University Institute, Florence, Italia)**

Syria has been at the centre of world news since 2011, following the beginning of the popular uprising in the country and its subsequent violent repression. The Syrian Civil War transformed increasingly through the years into a war involving multiple local, regional and international actors. The author views the origins and developments of the Syrian uprising that began in March 2011 as a part of the wider popular uprisings in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). These events and processes are the result of the confluence and mutual reinforcement of different sites of dissatisfaction, struggle and popular mobilization. These battles are intertwined and have enabled different sectors of these societies to join forces in rebelling against authoritarian and corrupt regimes, deemed responsible for the continuous deepening of the social crisis. Although the war is not finished and some territories were still outside the domination of the regime in 2019, the regime's survival and maintenance was nearly achieved, despite being significantly weakened and with important internal contradictions. The author aims to look at the reasons and roots of the resilience of the Assad regime. What is the nature of the regime built by the Assad family? Who were the actors involved in the uprising and how did they organize? How did the regime react to repress the protest movement? Was the opposition able to present a credible alternative to the regime? What was the role of Islamic fundamentalist and jihadist movements? How did regional and international interventions influence the uprising in Syria? What were the reasons behind the development of a peaceful uprising into an armed civil war with regional and international components? We start from the internal dynamics specific to Syria and put them into a comprehensive framework, which includes regional trends and international issues. These questions are intrinsically linked.

## **The Haitian Revolution - a bourgeois revolution?**

**Christian Hogsbjerg (University of Brighton)**

This paper will explore the contested concept of bourgeois revolution and discuss its applicability to the Haitian Revolution of 1791-1804 which despite being one of the great world-historical revolutions in the epoch of bourgeois-democratic revolution has always been marginalised rather than centred in discussions of the concept. Building on the classic Marxist work on the Haitian Revolution, *The Black Jacobins* by C.L.R. James, in particular this paper will focus on the contradictory role played by the revolutionary leaders Toussaint Louverture and Jean-Jacques Dessalines during the Haitian Revolution. In the process the paper will not only examine the complexity of the class forces and leadership involved in the Haitian Revolution but also touch on some of the recent wider scholarly debates around the relationship between race, slavery and capitalism. The aim of the paper overall will be to hopefully help open up a wider discussion around the development of capitalism in pre and post-revolutionary Haiti. It will tentatively explore how and when it

can be said that the pre-capitalist state was smashed and Haiti emerged as an independent centre of capital accumulation and explore what role in particular the leadership of the black rebel insurgent army played in this process.

## **Re-examining Marx Idea on Capitalist Reproduction through the (im)possibility of System Approach**

**Seung-wook BAEK (professor department of sociology Chung-Ang University Seoul, Korea)**

How to interpret Marx's creational transformation of the meaning of Reproduction is one of the central polemics in Marxist history from the publication of Das Kapital volumes II and III to Althusserian usage of ideology as social reproduction. In terms of the concept of reproduction, a rupture in usages and implications of the concept may be found in the works of Marx's critique of political economy in the periods between Grundrisse and Das Kapital. One of the outstanding conceptual differences between two works is the emergence of total social capital concept in Das Kapital Volume II, which opens a way to consider the process of capital movement as system dynamics. Essential implication of the introduction of system idea can be found in phrases Capital is consequences as well as preconditions for capitalist production. To reveal the meaning of the proposition, four equal equations should be supposed: 1) preconditions = consequences, 2) distributive relations = productive relations, 3) capitalist property = capitalist appropriation, 4) system = ideology. In conclusion, capitalist system can be interpreted as an imaginary system that reproduces its fictitious picture of system with natural systemicity, and buttressed by artificial historical-institutional conditions for the system. But only with the final equation, logic of capital accumulation not only becomes a pseudo-system with naturalness, but also reveals final impossibility of system logic as it only can be shown as a system with lots of artificial interventions to buttress the naturalness itself. With this re-examination of the meaning of reproduction, characteristics of contemporary crises can be discerned and classified with more Marxian implications.

## **In From the Wide Margins: Proletarian Literature and Social Reproduction Theory**

**Dougal McNeill (English Programme Victoria University of Wellington)**

I want in this paper to take up Tithi Bhattacharyas challenge to theorize the relationship between the market and extramarket relations rather than simply gesturing toward their distinction as one way of rediscovering a social reproduction and dissident communist trend in the revolutionary, modernist-inspired proletarian literature written by women inside the Communist movement of the 1930s. Drawing on a range of Communist women writers from across the Anglophone parties Dorothy Livesay in Canada, Dorothy Hewett in Australia, Jean Devanny and Elsie Locke in New Zealand I will explore some of the ways in

which these writers used fiction and poetry to return the economic process to what Bhattacharya calls its messy, sensuous, gendered, race, and unruly component: living human beings. A previous generation of feminist critics rediscovered womens contributions to interwar proletarian literature and emphasized, rightly, the disjuncture between these writers expectations and hopes and their experiences in the Communist Parties. My aim, in a different approach, is to try and see afresh what these writers offered to Marxism and to our ways of seeing class - through their literature, and how this gives them a new relevance and possibilities for political reading. The ambition of this paper is double. On the one hand, I want to show how the archive of proletarian literature offers analytical and political resources for Social Reproduction Theory. On the other, I wish to use Social Reproduction Theorys insights to draw these writers out from what Raymond Williams called the wide margins of the century and back to the centre of the Anglophone dissenting literary imagination.

## **Selling women the green dream: socio-environmental degradation and the paradox of feminism and sustainability in fashion marketing.**

**Mariko Takedomi Karlsson (Lund University), Vasna Ramasar (Lund University)**

This paper explores how the environmental crisis and feminism have been co-opted by green capitalism with perverse impacts. We critically examine the paradox that arises when corporations seek to embody social justice concerns such as feminism and environmentalism as a means of selling products that are produced in a way that in fact undermines the empowerment of women and environmental justice in the global South where most fashion items are manufactured. The effects of the fashion industry on people is two-pronged: 1) the garment workers who often work under unsafe and exploitative conditions, and 2) the people who live near fashion industry factories that suffer from severe water and air pollution and live under risk of disease (Changing Markets 2017, The True Cost 2015). There are thus contradictions inherent in the manner in which corporations, through their marketing, seek to foster feminism and environmentalism whilst themselves operating in problematic ways. Using case studies of H&M, Monki and Gina Tricot advertising campaigns, a discourse analysis was carried out to understand the messages to consumers as well as the image of the company that is portrayed. This was then analyzed against data regarding the track records of these companies in terms of the health and safety and environmental impacts in the production of their clothing. Through our analysis we suggest that the promotion of feminism and environmentalism is not consistently applied by companies in their own practices and could at worst be labeled green and fem washing through the co-optation of feminist ideas. We also find that the marketing strategies in fashion marketing serve not only to promote the sale of products but also have the effect of displacing environmental responsibility onto individual consumers. Ultimately, fashion marketing serves to obfuscate ecologically unequal exchange and the true costs of fashion whilst fostering capitalism.

## **No Future. Crisis Management, Eternal Present, Hegemonic Implosion**

**Christos Boukalas (Northumbria University Law School)**

For over a decade now we live under an economic crisis, its metastases, and its effects. Since the turn of the century, we live under recurring security crises and the attempts of the state to prevent them. This paper examines the temporal horizons of the strategies the neoliberal state employs to combat the spectre of crisis in its two quintessential fields of action: the economy and security. It notes a pronounced contrast: whereas security strategy is predominately pre-emptive, economic strategy is decidedly reactive. Yet, surprisingly, these two opposite strategies aim to the same result: to cancel the future. Security strategy seeks to pre-emptively neutralise the possibility of non-liberal politics, to cancel the possibility of political change. By refraining to intervene pro-actively, economic strategy seeks to guarantee that the economy will remain as it is, to avert economic change. This robust attempt of the state to cancel the future is symptomatic of a profound malaise affecting the capitalist class. Having fully conquered all forms social resistance, the capitalist class tries to render the moment of its triumph permanent, to fix society in an eternal present. For the first time in its history, the capitalist class has neither vision nor appetite for the future. This signals its hegemonic collapse - and its end as an historic force.

## **Marx's critique of Malthus: Its relevance (or irrelevance) for contemporary debates on overpopulation and the environment.**

**Martin Empson (Campaign Against Climate Change (trade union group); Socialist Workers Party)**

Karl Marx famously described Robert Malthus' linkage of inevitable population growth with unrestrained consumption as a "libel on the human race". Since then Marxists have tended to critique contemporary arguments that link over-population with environmental destruction, hunger and resource shortages with Marx and Engels' original position. A reassertion of the Malthusian arguments appeared in the late 1960s with the Paul Ehrlich's highly influential book "The Population Bomb", which warned of dire catastrophe if population growth was not checked. Ehrlich's predictions failed to arise, in part because of the so-called "green revolution", a strategy - driven by the US - to avoid "Red Revolution" through the production of food through the emphasis of technology and industrial methods in agricultural production. Ironically this emphasis on industrial agriculture, described by John Bellamy Foster as "the art of turning oil into food", has made a significant contribution to the environmental crises of the early 21st century. As a result of these crisis, Malthus has reared his ugly head once again, with a new generation of political commentators, media figures, environmental activists from both left and right, arguing that over-population is the root cause of the climate and biodiversity crises. This argument, closely linked with arguments around individual responsibility, over-consumption and life-style choice, has become common sense for a section of the environmental movement - not least because it is one articulated by figures such as David Attenborough and Chris Packham. In this context

how should Marxists respond? Is it enough to begin from Marx and Engel's critique of Malthus? Or has that debate been superseded by contemporary issues?

## **A Fury for Justice: Reading the Dead in Marx, Benjamin and Leslie Marmon Silko**

**Gene Ray (Geneva School of Art and Design)**

In the planetary meltdown now unfolding, the deaths head of capitalist modernity is grinning. The still-kicking corpse attached to that skull is rendered sharply by Leslie Marmon Silko in her fierce and prophetic 1991 masterpiece, *The Almanac of the Dead*. This novel should be studied today by every historical materialist, for it narrates the encounter, missed but still possible, between Marx and the earthly ancestors, those powerful spirits and relentless seekers of justice also known as the dead. Silkos forceful conjuration of Indigenous land struggles, climate chaos, accumulated impunity, fugitive diaspora and settler-colonial panic is a strong glance into the future, a lesson- and image-book for a Left finally ready to unload the giant dams, tractors and algorithms of techno-progressivism, which in 2019 weighs like a nightmare on the brains of the living. The end-Holocene interventions of the dead, as well as those of non-human allies and antagonists, also count in the balance. The dead, we know, are called to both sides in the class war. But in the ruins of modernitys cliff-leap, Silko shows, the avenging energy to strike at impunity and the endurance to organize communal survivance, both flow from the ancestors the vivifying dead of the oppressed and defeated. Here is a vision of self-rescue from below that compels respect and reflection. How far can it be generalized? This paper reads the material force and agency of the dead in Silkos novel, in dialogue with reflections on same in Marx and Walter Benjamin.

## **De-centring the revolution: Class, space, gender and race in the making and defeat of the Bavarian Council Republic.**

**Simon Schaupp (University of Basel)**

In November 1918, the labour movement of Bavaria, Germany, overthrew the monarchy and, in April 1919, proclaimed a Bavarian Council Republic (BCR). This paper analyses the categories of class, gender, space and race as central factors for the rise as well as the defeat of this revolution. Thereby, it argues for an intersectional approach, which understands these categories in terms of an inherently interconnected system of power. In approaching its sources, this paper argues for a history from below. However, this is not to imply an idealizing and essentializing form of proletarian history, which assumes a coherent class-perspective and thereby reduces the working class to a monolithic block. The protagonists of this paper are proletarianised by the politico-economic conditions they find themselves in but still remain a heterogeneous multitude. This heterogeneity in turn is not to be understood as a subjective lack of class-consciousness but as an objective

diversity in the conditions of domination that signify a position of below. Therefore, this paper argues for a de-centring of the historiography of the BCR in terms of class, gender, space and race. Concerning class, this means, taking into account not only industrial workers but especially the unemployed as a central factor of the revolution as well as the counter-revolution. In terms of gender, this means acknowledging the role which women played as revolutionary figures and as rhetorical figures in counter-revolutionary ideologies. Concerning space, the de-centring lies in emphasising that the revolution did not only take place in the federal capital as the prevalent name Munich Council Republic suggests, but consisted of simultaneous uprisings all over Bavaria. This wide spread of the revolutionary movement, however, also made it easier for the counter-revolution to isolate the revolutionary strongholds. Concerning race, this means to take into account the central role that Jewish revolutionaries played, but also the importance of the wide spread of anti-Semitism in explaining the sudden turn of Bavaria from council republic to one of the central birthplaces of Nazism. Analytically, the paper concludes that class, gender, space and race are central categories for understanding the rise and the defeat of the BCR. The initial success of the revolution was largely due to the combination of the struggles around these categories. Its later defeat in turn was largely due to their division.

## **Base and superstructure: the role of profit rates and welfare states in the shaping of income distribution. The Finnish case, 1960-2000**

**Saska Santeri Heino (PhD Student, Economic and Social History, University of Helsinki)**

Among classical political economists, it was assumed that landowners live on rent, workers on wages, and capitalists on the profits of their enterprise. Although Marx, by introducing the theory of surplus value, elaborated on this basic formula of income distribution, he, nor the followers of his tradition, have paid surprisingly little emphasis on the distribution of income in contemporary capitalist economies and their history. The relation between profits and capital income has been seen as too indirect in nature (e.g., Foley 1986). This has led to a situation in which empirical research on income distribution from a Marxian viewpoint has been quite scarce (see for instance, Vaona 2011). Although income inequality between classes, regardless of class overlapping, does exist (e.g., Wolff and Zacharias 2013, Wright and Perrone 1977), the mechanisms which shape the overall distribution of income in relation to the profitability of capital, remains mostly an open question. For decades, it was argued that capital had lost its role in the distribution of disposable income in advanced capitalist states (Uusitalo 1989), and that the share of capital and labour incomes had stabilized (Bridgman 2014). It is no surprise, then, that Marxian laws of motion and tendencies have been viewed as erroneous and incapable of explaining capitalist realities (Acemoglu and Robinson 2015). Instead, factors such as education, skills and public tax and redistribution policies have been given increased emphasis in explaining the distribution of income in capitalist economies. The Nordic welfare states, in particular, have been claimed to have taken over the function of the economic base in the shaping of disposable income distribution (Lindbeck 1981). Finland



has, for a number of good reasons, been counted among Nordic welfare states for four or five decades. It is also one of the most equal developed capitalist economies in the world. Nonetheless, Finland experienced a steep growth in income inequality during the latter part of the 1990s, following a significant depression in the beginning of the decade. The general, mean rate of profit grew simultaneously with various income inequality measures, most notably the Gini coefficient for factor, gross, net and disposable incomes. Prior to the depression, both the rate of profit and the Gini coefficients had declined from (at least) the mid-1960s. The paper seeks to analyze the redistributive impact of the Finnish welfare state vis-à-vis changes in the mean profit rate of the Finnish corporate and business sector from the beginning of the 1960s until the turn of the millennium. In so doing, it seeks to incorporate Marxian analysis and theories of the rate of profit into more widespread measures of the progressiveness and redistributiveness of a Nordic welfare state from its heyday into the beginning of its slow decline. To what extent has the welfare state been responsible for the changes in income distribution? Has the general rate of profit, by affecting taxpayers and households capital income, been a driving factor behind both the descent of income inequality and its rise during the period under review. Sources: Acemoglu, Daron and James A. Robinson (2015), The Rise and Decline of General Laws of Capitalism. *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 1/2015 (29), pp. 328; Bridgman, Benjamin (2014), In Labors Loss Capitals Gain? Gross versus Net Labor Shares. BEA Working Papers 10/2014. Bureau of Economic Analysis, Washington D. C. Foley, Duncan K. (1986), Understanding Capital. *Marx's Economic Theory*. Harvard University Press, Cambridge (Mass.) and London; Lindbeck, Assar (1981), The Distribution of Factor Income versus Disposable Income in a Welfare State: The Case of Sweden. Institute for International Economic Studies, Seminar Paper No. 171. University of Stockholm, Stockholm; Uusitalo, Hannu (1989), Income Distribution in Finland. The effects of the welfare state and the structural changes in society on income distribution in Finland in 1966-1985. Central Statistical Office of Finland, Studies No. 148. Helsinki, Finland; Vaona, Andrea (2011), Profit rate dynamics, income distribution, structural and technical change in Denmark, Finland and Italy. *Structural Change and Economic Dynamics* 3/2011 (22), pp. 247-268; Wolff, Edward N. and Ajit Zacharias (2013), Class structure and economic inequality. *Cambridge Journal of Economics* 6/2013 (37), pp. 1381-1406; Wright, Erik Olin and Luca Perrone (1977), Marxist Class Categories and Income Inequality. *American Sociological Review* 1/1977 (42), pp. 32-55

## **Anti-extinction alliances: towards a 21st century ecosocialism**

**Stefania Barca (Center for Social Studies, University of Coimbra)**

Note: This is a panel proposal, composed of two sessions. Climate change and earth-systems collapse are of 21st century forms of class war. Never before has this fact become so clear in mass consciousness. As (eco)Marxist scholars, we need to reflect on how to turn this awareness into revolutionary ecosocialist praxis. This panel calls for a collective conversation on how, to counter extinction capitalism, we need anti-extinction intersectional alliances that tackle class, gender/sexuality, race/colonial, and species oppression together as these are co-constitutive of extinction capitalism. In other words, on

how we can rethink and theorize ecosocialism in decolonial/feminist form. Responding to this call, the panel will draw together contributions that address the theoretical bases of various socioecological struggles and practices, analysing their relationship with (eco)Marxist theory and their potentialities for converging towards a 21st century ecosocialist praxis. First session:

## **Marx was never Feuerbachian. Criticism of the two Marxs theory**

**Marco Vanzulli (Universit degli Studi di Milano-Bicocca)**

I propose to discuss again the role of the criticism of Feuerbach by Marx in his so-called Feuerbachian work, the Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844. Is it really true that Marx has ever been Feuerbachian and that his rupture with this position appears in 1845-46 with the Theses ad Feuerbach and the German Ideology? If young Marx expresses a Feuerbachian position for instance in refuting the Hegelian category of mediation and opposing directly individuality and universality (a position that expresses itself even in the Manuscripts of 1844 by ignoring the theory of value), how works in this attitude the insertion of the category of labour? Because from the labour onward a new subject is dealt with. And if we consider the way Marx arrives to labour, we are in condition to see how he was walking his own path using different young Hegelian conceptualizations in a very autonomous way. It is customary to report the partial criticism that Marx addresses to Feuerbach in the part where he praises (always partially) the Hegelian dialectic, aiming to stress the partial discordance with Feuerbach inside a Feuerbachian work in view of the following Marxian production, but, considering the various stances of secondary literature, I'll point out elements of criticism of the Feuerbachian position in other parts of this text for instance the theme of mans activity as objectification [Vergegenstndlichung] when Marx discuss religious alienation itself and their meaning to illustrate the Marxian position. The discussion of this question is necessary not only for the comprehension of the young Marx, but its definition reflects to the whole Marxs work, up to the Grundrisse, the Capital and the last Marx and makes it possible a debate on main Marxian interpretations, the ones that made an epoch.

## **The techno-political workers inquiry. Methodological considerations on workers inquiries in digital capitalism.**

**Simon Schaupp (University of Basel)**

Digitalisation not only became a major strategy of managerial control over the capitalist labour process, it also became the site of intensifying conflicts. From the so called gig-economy to the Industry 4.0 workers resist digital control and thereby reshape industrial relations. Researchers play an important role in these techno-politics. Several projects in the social sciences have adopted frameworks of action-research to not only analyse the digitalization of the labour process but to actively influence it towards decent work. Thereby, they often establish experimental spaces within companies that can be labelled

special technological zones. These are exempt from existing regulations and try to produce a new consensus between workers and management on the future of work. This paper critically assesses this approach and questions the idea underlying idea of a domination-free discourse within the capitalist labour process. It suggests to turn instead to a partisan workers inquiry of techno-politics. However, it also questions the classical operaist conception of the workers inquiry in which the worker is assigned the role of a noble savage who is to be agitated based on predetermined theoretical considerations. Instead, the paper recommends to acknowledge the structural difference between the worker and the researcher while conceptualizing the inquiry as an open dialogue between the two. This dialogue originates in an existing workplace conflict in which the common interest of the worker and the researcher is to strengthen workers power (while other interests do not necessarily overlap). The specificity of the techno-political inquiry is that it does not focus on only one workplace but takes seriously the networked character of digitalized work by bringing together different workers that hold stakes in certain technologies. This way, the inquiry brings together the aspects of development and implementation, which can produce insights that are crucial for techno-political conflicts. The methodological arguments of the paper will be illustrated by examples from my own inquiries in delivery, industry and logistics sector.

## **Value, Use-Value, and the Metaphysics of Society**

**Elena Louisa Lange (University of Zurich), Patrick Murray (Creighton University),  
Eric-John Russell (Kingston University), Frank Engster (Rosa Luxemburg-Stiftung)**

General Proposal (individual abstracts below) With the new social(ist) movements of the past decades, following growing economic inequality and the accelerated formation of surplus populations in accordance with capitals own valorisation crisis, as well as the unfolding of an unprecedented ecological disaster the contradictions of the capitalist mode of production have become fully transparent. Or so one would think. Often in these movements and the debates emerging around them, what is missing is conceptually accurate access to the basic categories that constitute capitalism as a historically and systematically specific, as well as fundamentally contradictory, mode of production. By re-activating the basic categories and differentiations in Marxs critique of political economy use-value and value, concrete and abstract labour, the value form of money and the social nexus it obfuscates our panel seeks to contribute to the fundamentals of the critique of capitalist social relations. This also means reconsidering the metaphysics of such a society, not only as that which escapes the immediately sensuous and empirical, and that which underlies Marxs conceptual critique, but also capitalisms self-representations and systemic blind spots. The four presentations will tackle capitals blind spots, and also the blind spots we sometimes discover in critical theoretisations of it, from the angle of Marxs emphasis on social form and the critique of use-value. Critiques of the capital relation from what can be described as the perspective of use-value, as we show, do not adequately grasp the problem of social form as the actual processes which organise a society and distinguish it from other kinds of societies. Here, the monetary form of social mediation is the differentia specifica often overlooked in critical responses to the capital relation. Use-value often

appears as the radical other of capitalist mediation, invoking a space that can be mobilised to resist it. But where the abstract assumes the shape of the concrete, i.e. in money, which, in order to produce social relations, quantifies them, use-value cannot be instrumentalised as a meaningful theoretical tool. Instead of saving use-value from value within capitals socialisation and romanticising its alleged anti-capitalist impact, the capital relation itself should be questioned anew as a process that produces the concreteness of use-value out of itself. Our panel will present new conceptual research into philosophical responses to the concept of society, a critique of use-value derived from Guy Debord's society of the spectacle, and the monetary blind spots found within diverse responses to the capital relation exemplified by feminist social reproduction theory and Badiou's conceptualisation of the event.

Patrick Murray (with Jeanne Schuler): Social Form and the Metaphysics of Society The poverty of philosophy was the phrase that Karl Marx used to address the failure of philosophers to grasp capitalism or any actual society. The categories employed in thinking about society are often empty and prone to obfuscate: they do not disclose but disguise reality. This paper examines how philosophy should contribute to understanding society. We distinguish three kinds of categories: pseudo-concepts, general concepts, and social forms. There is nothing for pseudo-concepts to be the concept of: they do not pick out any features of the world. They distort phenomena and block inquiry. We identify utility and instrumental reason, pillars of recent social thought, as pseudo-concepts. Pseudo-concepts result from a flawed factoring analysis that splits the purely subjective from the purely objective. Marx indicts philosophy for dealing in pseudo-concepts. General concepts are familiar to philosophers, given our fondness for universality. These concepts describe in a general way features of every social formation in history. They include labor, kinship, needs, tools, usefulness, wealth, and natural resources. General features do not exist as general. There is no wealth, need, or labor in general. General concepts do not disclose specific features of any kind of society. To exist, general features must take particular form. There is no society in general, no labor in general. For example, labor can exist as wage labor, slave labor, indentured service, independent hunting and gathering, sharecropping, peasant farming, etc. It never exists as labor per se. A central error is to identify actually existing societies with society-in-general. In determining the particular way in which wealth or labor exists, we arrive at social forms. Social forms pick out the actual processes which organize a society and distinguish it from other kinds of societies. Social forms have content missing from general concepts. They manifest the Aristotelian meaning of form: powers that constitute reality. To grasp how capitalist societies are organized involves the social forms of commodities, value, money, wage labor, and capital. Historical materialism describes Marx's innovative approach to society as a system for meeting needs under particular historical circumstances. This system for meeting needs always involves a way of life. Unlike placid general terms, social forms delineate the dynamism that allows society to reproduce a particular way of life across generations. When philosophy addresses social forms, not simply pseudo- or general concepts, it no longer deserves the charge of poverty.

Eric-John Russell: Not finding what is desired but desiring what is found: Guy Debord's critique of use-value Guy Debord's notion of a society of the spectacle remains a largely misunderstood diagnosis of the reified social forms of capitalist society. His contribution to what might be cursorily referred to as the Hegelian and value-form tendencies of Marxian thought remains obscure as he is more frequently enveloped within the discourses of media studies, semiotics and avant-garde art history. In

contrast, my paper will examine the concept of the spectacle as a critical category that has inherited certain specifications Marx gave to the category of money, specifically as a monopoly over use-value. As a universal equivalent, money can potentially purchase anything, rendering in principle everything exchangeable with everything else. Marx describes money in the 1844 Manuscripts as the means of purchase, that which gives access to all objects and the only true need. Here we find money's mystifying and omnipotent power: it is the medium under which all needs are potentially met. In fact, money emerges as the only true objective need governing the rest. My paper will follow this aspect of money and demonstrate how Debord's concept of the spectacle inherits such a determination of the money-form. Within the second chapter of *The Society of the Spectacle*, Debord addresses the economic foundations of the spectacle, specifically in its relation to use-value and social need. Here, the relation of exchange-value and use-value are described through a relation of inner mediation, wherein use appears as internal to exchange. Subordinated to exchange, use becomes inseparably appended to the production of exchange-value. The spectacle then comes to instantiate concrete human needs to its own standard, as a form of appearance wherein the abstract assumes the shape of the concrete. It is through this framework that the spectacle comes to affirm a fraud of satisfaction. In and through exchange, use under the spectacle is emphatically lauded in order to justify the reigning domination of the commodity. While integrating Debord's archival notes on John Galbraith's 1958 *The Affluent Society*, my paper will argue that the concept of the spectacle wields what Kornelia Hafner has called a kind of use-value fetishism wherein, it might be said, use appears as extrinsically degraded by market forces. Within this fetish, the utility of the concrete is virtuously elevated as a barometer to vilify the abstraction of exchange. However, as will become clear, to divide such a reality, in which the concrete is affirmed and naturalised as a bulwark against the abstractions of the economy, is itself to reaffirm the logic of the spectacle as the positivity of the concrete and Gebrauchswertfetischismus. On the whole, my paper will argue that while reiterating the trifling distinction between superficial and genuine needs, the spectacle erects a model of social satisfaction integral to its domination. It is from this perspective that, in the words of Debord, "[s]pectators do not find what they desire; they desire what they find." Frank Engster: The event of the events: the blind spot in Badiou's (re)formulation, or better, formalisation of revolution as event is dedicated to four realms only: Politics, Science, Art, and Love. All share a quasi-ontological status. My immanent and probably even affirmative critique demonstrates that there is strangely one event missing from the four. It is an event that fulfills all requirements of the event and opens up a realm with an ontological status which indeed presents pure being as such by quantifying it, in the way Badiou utilises set theory. This event can be conceptualized as the event of our pure social being (Marx) as such: money. There are two ways to show that pure being becomes determined as such by quantifying relations, and hence, quantifying nothing other than itself. One way is to be found in Hegel's *Logic of Being in the Science of Logic*, the other as the socialisation of pure being in Marx's value-form analysis in the first chapter of *Capital*. To grasp this ontological and at once purely social dimension of Marx's analysis, we must however precisely insist on the critical content of Badiou's idea, namely that by the exclusion of one arbitrary part of an infinite set of multiples, a decisive void unit is given that can account for the incomparable and innumerable diversity of the whole multiple relations as one, by quantifying this relation. This, in short, is the crucial point of Marx's

value-form analysis, which in this interpretation however presents money not as a means of exchange as nearly all interpretations do. The interpretation must rather point out money's first function as a measure of value. Money materialises an ideal void unit that accounts for the multiplicity of use-values as one, but that counting as one becomes real only by being faithful (Badiou) to its capitalist functions. Being faithful to the ideal unit therefore means to turn social into quantitative relations, by virtue of money's functions, thus determining social being as such. By doing so, money is posited in a tremendously productive self-relation: it determines the decisive magnitudes for the valorisation of that very same purely social being.

Elena Louisa Lange: Value and Use-Value Fetishism - A Critique of Social Reproduction Theory

This paper will formulate a critical outline of the theoretical framework of Social Reproduction Theory (SRT) from the standpoint of Marx's Critique of Political Economy, especially the monetary theory of value. The overarching thesis of SRT, despite its different theoretisations in the Wages for Housework-movement of the 1970s and its more recent formulations in e.g. Bhattacharya 2017 et al., is that labour power is a commodity that is not produced capitalistically (Bhattacharya 2019). Unlike any other commodity, the reproduction of labour power takes place outside direct value production, in the realm of the unpaid labour of domestic reproduction. It is this indirect production of the labour power commodity, seen as gendered exploitation (Gonzalez 2013), that forms the sine qua non to (surplus) value production. The paper will challenge this thesis to show that its theoretical framework owes to a dismissal of Marx's monetary theory of value, and with it, abstract labour and historically specific social form. Marx's critique of political economy takes its vantage point from the specific social form of labour, abstract labour, as the general capitalist synthesis. Money, for Marx, is the paradigmatic value form this abstract labour finds its expression in: as abstract, it presents the universal equivalent to all single, concrete and useful labours. No commodity, including the means of subsistence, is appropriated without a monetary equivalent given in its exchange. It is in this sense that the wage form, expressed in a monetary equivalent, guarantees the reproduction of the worker and, by the same token, that of capital: It is not the worker who buys the means of subsistence but the means of subsistence who buy the worker to incorporate him into the means of production. (MEGA II/4.1., 78). Here is where Marx's breakthrough against the classics, especially against Ricardo's corn model and its use-value-mediated understanding of reproduction, must be situated. A similar use-value fetishism can however be noticed in SRT. Because not abstract labour, but 'labour-as-such' (Bhattacharya 2019/Mezzadri 2019) without specific social form becomes the source of value in these approaches, all forms of human activity, including that of domestic chores, count as productive of value. In this conceptual overreach, the notion of unpaid labour stretches to mean anything from washing dishes to personal hygiene. SRT's exclusion of the theoretical problem of specifically capitalist monetary mediation therefore renders its theory, despite its claim, unspecific to capitalism. The monetary wage which obfuscates unpaid as paid labour in its exchange with capital remains ephemeral as the specific form both constituting capitalist production and reproduction. As the paper will argue, this trans-historical and use-value mediated notion of reproduction bears greater theoretical proximity to bourgeois political economy than Marx's critique of it. From this also follow political consequences: with women outnumbering men in the global labour force, not Wages for Housework, but the abolition of the wage form, and hence, the abolition of



specifically capitalist relations of production should form the aim of feminist and emancipatory politics.

## Why Luxemburg?

**Riccardo Bellofiore (University of Bergamo)**

Abstract for HM in Londo Building not only on the Accumulation of Capital, but also on the Anti-Critique and the Introduction to Political Economy, the paper will argue that: (i) Luxemburg had a clear grasp of the monetary nature of Marx's value theory of labour; (ii) she insisted on the key role of the connection between dynamic competition, relative surplus value extraction, and the law of the falling tendency of the relative wage; (iii) her economic views are the first formulation of a reading of Marxian theory as a monetary circuit (iv) her views about the schemes of reproduction can be developed, as in Kalecki, to anticipate and provide a critique of Keynesianism (v) for her the capitalist crisis arises from under-investment and not under-consumption, in a way that can be connected with some of Marx's argument in the Grundrisse, where disproportionalities, as soon as they affect important branches of production, end up in a general glut of commodities. Moreover, it will be clarified that Luxemburg's theory of the party goes back to Marx in that the organization is seen as essential for building class consciousness from below. It will be shown how her views on trade unions changed because of the 1905 Russian Revolution. All this shows Luxemburg's orthodox creativity, in that she was a Marxian and not a Marxist. Her actuality in understanding capitalism when centralisation goes on without concentration and when socialised labour is under attack will be considered, and the relationship between the personal and the political in Luxemburg will be touched upon.

## The Point of Destruction: Sabotage, Property, and Speech in Early Twentieth Century American Politics

**R.H. Lossin (Columbia University)**

Strike waves in the late-19th century U.S. caused widespread property destruction, but strike leaders did not suggest threats to employer property as a comprehensive strategy until the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) adopted a deliberate program of sabotage. Contrary to historical consensus, sabotage was an intellectually coherent and politically generative response to progressive, technocratic dreams of frictionless social co-operation. Plenty has been written about the IWW, but very little work has been done on their writings about sabotage. The avoidance of sabotage as a subject and the near disappearance of the word from labor history (replaced by direct action) seems to bear out the pronouncement of one of its earliest advocates: sabotage, claimed Walker Smith, is so dangerous that the capitalist class does not want to mention it for fear that workers will learn its meaning. Alternatively, we might speculate that, following the systematic and often violent repression of radicals and their writings, historians on the Left have unconsciously internalized the logic of the prosecution and thus maintained what Kristin

Ross has dubbed a police conception of history. What is certain is that sabotage was not simply another word for direct action but a carefully articulated, radical critique of capitalist social relations that was inseparable from its existence as a tactic. Sabotage provided, and more importantly enacted, a critique of private property. It was not, as its detractors claimed, a violent call to arms but something even more threatening: the contravention of the capitalist social contract. As a consequence, the circulation of the word sabotage orally and in print was an unacceptable challenge to the status quo. A serious look at sabotage and the viscous legal and extra-legal reactions that it elicited exposes the relationship between political speech and the reigning economic order. With criminal infrastructure sabotage bills currently under consideration in several states in reaction to the Dakota Access Pipeline protests, the relationship between property protection and the restriction of political speech has a particular urgency. An examination of how sabotage was used and framed by different institutions, organizations and individual actors highlights the stakes of workers' challenges to ideologies of technological progress. It draws attention to the ways in which economic interests and labor conflict underwrote our conception of civil liberties and sheds light on the ways in which American law has afforded corporate property particular protections. Sabotage posed a challenge to the conceptual and practical limits of a political imagination founded on principles of private property and the cult of productivity that is unrivalled in the history of American thought.

## **FEMININITY AND THE CLASS STRUGGLE, or, WHY MAN MUST BE GOTTEN RID OF**

**Ciara Cremin (University of Auckland)**

Dresses and skirts are emblematic of a feminine style and also women's subordination to men. But the fashion these days for what is erroneously called gender neutral or unisex clothing is neither a sign of progress nor victory of feminists against patriarchy. For while in protest of their physical and symbolic impositions, women were abandoning feminine affect and apparel, without the political motive and under no pressure to do likewise, men enacted no equivalent abandonment of masculinity. With femininity subtracted out, the style men are habituated to wearing became gender neutral by default and nothing was or is sacrificed by men to achieve it. A power play in which strength means domination and, if not through the dividends of class and race, domination is achieved through aggression, traits associated with the term masculinity are inextricable to patriarchy and capitalism. A stylisation as opposed to a state of being, masculinity is born of crisis but only named as such when the veneer of invulnerability is tarnished. A feminine woman, on the other hand, wears her vulnerability. Goddess, slut, scab to the sisterhood and never queer enough, her femininity is synonymous with decadence, frivolity, weakness and fragility. Her adornments, Freud thought, compensated for the absence of a penis, whereas for others are markers of an enslavement to and complicity with the nefarious practices of the beauty and fashion industries. Complicated by class, racial, and ethnic differences, doubtless there are as many masculinities as there are men. A barrier nonetheless exists in an overwhelming majority of men that prevents them from making even the slightest sartorial incursion onto women's turf. The uniformity to which men conform in their presentation to a masculine

norm is more, however, than a question of style. It is an index of unconscious investments in capitalist and patriarchal reproduction that this so-called transgender moment disturbs. Through a dialectical reading, the paper explains why femininity belongs in the class struggle.

## **Working-Class Environmentalism versus Capitalist Greening: The Latest Restructurings of Porto Margheras Petrochemical Complex**

**Lorenzo Feltrin (University of Warwick)**

Porto Margheras petrochemical complex, in the municipality of Venice, was one of the most important industrial hubs in Italy as well as a major stronghold of labour militancy. In the 1970s, the workers collective *Assemblea Autonoma di Porto Marghera* developed a radical platform to demand the safeguard of health and the environment from within the factories and the working-class communities. However, the costs of labour and of respecting environmental regulations in Venice led over time to a massive automation and delocalisation drive. Today, the Refinery of Venice, owned by ENI, is one of the main remaining industries in Porto Marghera. In 2014, the refinery began a transition to biofuels, which is presented by ENI as a major breakthrough for green capitalism. This paper applies an autonomist Marxist approach to ENI's transition to biofuels to show how ENI's greening must be situated within the history of class struggles in Italy. Just like the struggle for the wage in one place provides an incentive for automation and delocalisation to lower-wage countries, the struggle for health and the environment in one place provides an incentive for automation and the outsourcing of environmental destruction to less regulated countries. In ENI's case, this phenomenon is instantiated in the deforestation for the production of palm oil monocultures in the Global South.

## **The transition away from fossil fuels: power, labour and technology**

**Simon Pirani (Oxford Institute for Energy Studies)**

We propose a panel on The transition away from fossil fuels: power, labour and technology. It will reflect on the types of transitions social and political (to supercede capitalism), technological and in the labour process necessary to achieve a transition away from fossil fuels. It will include papers by Sam Mason, PCS policy officer (Can trade unions be at the forefront of combating climate change?), Mika Minio Paluello, Labour Energy Forum (provisional title, UK policy on decarbonisation) and Simon Pirani, Oxford Institute for Energy Studies (Getting away from fossil fuels: why history matters). We are hoping that Pritam Singh, University of Oxford, will be available to chair the panel; if not, due to other commitments at the HM conference, Greg Muttitt, senior researcher, Oil Change International, would be able to do so.

## Getting away from fossil fuels: why history matters

**Simon Pirani (Oxford Institute for Energy Studies)**

The presentation will discuss the driving-forces that determine the continuous increase in the global level of fossil fuel consumption, despite ever-more-insistent claims that we are moving to a post-fossil-fuel era. It will put that increase in the context of the expansion of capitalism and touch on the relevance of the concept of a great acceleration of human impacts on the natural world. It will look at the technological systems that consume fossil fuels, and the relationship between these and the predominant social and economic relations. The presentation will argue that technological, social and economic systems need to be transformed in order to make possible a transition away from fossil fuels. The presentation is proposed as part of a panel on The transition away from fossil fuels: power, labour and technology, details of which are submitted separately.

## Towards a materialist theory of revenge?

**Max Haiven (Canada Research Chair in Culture, Media and Social Justice, Lakehead University (Canada))**

Liberal political theory and cultural politics imagines that revenge is banished to the borderlands of the capitalist empire, hence the bad-faith surprise of so many politicians and commentators when revanchist reactionary politics “invade.” Yet my argument is that we cannot fully comprehend, let alone confront, the “return” of revanchist fascistic tendencies without recognizing that revenge, or something like it, has always been at the core of capitalist accumulation. On the one hand, I am thinking of the discursive methods by which the struggles of proletarians and colonized peoples have been defamed and pathologized as beastially vengeful and nihilistic, precisely to distract us from the normalized political and economic sadism of the powerful. But more deeply I wonder if capital itself might be said to be vengeful when the contradictions of its accelerating cycles of accumulation reach such a stage that it appears that no “logic” can explain the nihilistic cruelties it unleashes. And I further wonder what revenge might have to offer a revolutionary politics. This paper draws on a wide range of Marxist and anti-colonial theorists to play out the potentials and perils of dwelling with revenge as an important category for radical thought and action today.

## **The Mestizo State: Indigeneity, spiritual disease, and the political means of production in sixteenth century Mexico**

**Daniel Gmez (PhD student Department of Geography University of British Columbia)**

This paper studies the intersection of two contending political strategies that shaped the emergence of the modern state in the Valley of Mexico during Spanish colonization. First, the Nahuas inhabiting this area adapted their political traditions to the pressures of colonialism and produced primordial titles, allowing them to maintain control over most of their lands, as well as a considerable degree of political autonomy (McDonough 2017). Secondly, Spaniards would engage in an attempt to spiritualize what they saw as pagan societies in need of conversion to Christianity (Nemser 2015). I argue that from such a confrontation, one of the earliest examples of racial and modern state formation emerged, paving the way for their subsequent iterations and the production of a global system of racialized capital accumulation: the construction of two Republics that would divide Indians and Spaniards to attempt to facilitate extraction and administration. Through an analysis of primordial titles and the chronicles of Christian friars from the Valley of Mexico in the sixteenth century, I will suggest that so-called primitive accumulation and racialization can be reinterpreted with an anti-Eurocentric lens. Without a serious, critical engagement with Abya Yalas (Latin America) epistemologies and processes of state formation, capital and its relationship to race cannot be thoroughly understood. For this purpose, the paper will engage with Nicos Poulantzas (2000) analysis of the emergence of the modern state in the separation between manual and mental labor, reworking it to understand such a schism as a struggle over what I call the political means of production. Its outcomes in my case produced a new state form that I term the mestizo state, which predates nation-states and their need for racial homogeneity. Finally, I will explore how this opens spaces to appropriate Indigeneity and other ambiguous racial categories for decolonial and emancipatory purposes. References McDonough, Kelly S. 2017. Plotting Indigenous Stories, Land, and People: Primordial Titles and Narrative Mapping in Colonial Mexico. *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies* 17 (1): 130. <https://doi.org/10.1353/jem.2017.0003>. Nemser, Daniel. 2015. Primitive Accumulation, Geometric Space, and the Construction of the Indian. *Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies* 24 (3): 335-52. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13569325.2015.1065798>. Poulantzas, Nicos. 2000. *State, Power, Socialism*. London: Verso.

## **The Economics of Imperialism**

**Michael Roberts (Independent Researcher)**

Modern economic imperialism is defined as a persistent and long-term international appropriation of surplus value by imperialist countries from the dependent countries, in which the former keep the latter in a position of dependency. The transfer of value through unequal exchange is achieved by superior average technologies in imperialist economies

that deliver a long-term superior average structure of productivity, especially in the high technology sectors. Imperialist countries have significantly higher organic composition of capitals and thus higher labour productivity than in dependent economies. Through an empirical study of trade between G7 and various dependent economies, we find that in the transfer of value through unequal exchange, higher rates of surplus value in the dependent economies are quantitatively more important than productivity differentials. But these higher rates of surplus value (and rates of profit) are determined by the higher productivity in the imperialist countries. Lower wages in the dependent countries cannot determine the higher productivity in the imperialist economies

## **The profits-investment nexus: Marx versus Keynes**

**Michael Roberts (Independent Researcher)**

This paper considers the similarities and differences between Keynes and Marx over the relation between profits and investment. The Keynesian macro identities are analysed in order to identify the key connections between profit and investment in an economy. Both Keynes and Marx agree that there is a correlation between profits and investment in a capitalist economy. The issue is the causal direction. For Keynesians, it is from investment to profit; for Marx it is the opposite. The paper will then offer original empirical evidence for which causal connection is closer to reality and from that, what policy prescriptions might flow ie the difference between, and the effectiveness of, the Keynesian and Marxist multipliers.

## **Refugee Accommodation as a Housing Question: the Case of Berlin**

**Christian Sowa (PhD Candidate SOAS, University of London)**

As a reaction to the movement of migrants in 2015, more and more camps and camp-like structures emerged in Berlin. How can this proliferation be explained? Whereas literature of border and migration studies often focuses on repressive state actors, power and control, this paper highlights another aspects: the political economy of the city. In this way, research on refugee accommodation in Berlin opens up views into a neoliberal city and urban transformations; into a city shaped by austerity urbanism, cost-efficiency, and especially by a massive lack of affordable housing. To explain the proliferation of camps, the paper argues that the accommodation in Berlin has to be seen as a housing question. Based on the work of Engels, this question does not imply a call for low-level solutions by urban planners and architects. Contrary to this, Engels helps us to criticize current attempts to solve this question. He re-directs our attention towards a more radical analysis of the housing shortage and camp accommodation: they have to be seen in the context of the social relations of capitalism. In this way, the paper uses Engels analysis as well as the work of other Marxist scholars on housing and the city (Lefebvre, Harvey, etc.) to understand current developments. And by showing how refugee accommodation relates to (neoliberal) urban governance and housing, a political perspective arises: A perspective



that de-exceptionalises the camp and indicates overlaps to situations of other tenants in Berlin. The paper closes by exploring attempts for a united struggle for a Right to the City, for a radical transformation of the Status Quo.

## **How financialisation has depressed US productive investment**

**Al Campbell (University of Utah)**

Abstract: While historically the rate of investment in the US has been strongly influenced by the rate of profit and this remains true under neoliberalism, the much commented on low rate of investment under neoliberalism despite moderately healthy profits has opened a gap between the two rates. A nearly universal agreement exists among liberal and radical economists that disparate aspects of neoliberalisms increased financialisation have been important contributors to the decline in the rate of investment relative to the rate of profit. This paper addresses how financialisation has depressed real investment in the U.S. The first section empirically presents the nature of the gap that has developed under neoliberalism. The second section briefly reviews papers from the literature, which employ a spectrum of different methodologies and data sets, to see what channels they posit for the fall in the rate of investment. Two channels are seen to permeate the literature. In the third section we will provide a number of additional pieces of empirical evidence supporting the case for the operation of one of those channels. The final section will conduct two sensitivity analyses which will yield additional indications about the economic nature of that channel.

## **Panel title and all paper titles and abstracts in abstract box**

**Al Campbell (University of Utah)**

Juan contacted me on my note tht I could not submit a full panel and said to put it in here. It seems to go in. Panel: The Relation Between Profits, Investment and Crises Chair: Michael Roberts bobmckee99@yahoo.com Panel abstract: The rate of profit of the economy has always been held by Marxist (and other classical school) economists to be not only an important measure of the performance of a capitalist economy, but also an important determinant. This panel will examine theoretical and empirical considerations of the relation of the rate of profit to three important aspects of the functioning of a capitalist economy: the rate of investment, income shares, and (cyclical and secular) crises. Paper #1. How financialisation has depressed US productive investment Al Campbell, University of Utah al@economics.utah.edu Abstract: While historically the rate of investment in the US has been strongly influenced by the rate of profit and this remains true under neoliberalism, the much commented on low rate of investment under neoliberalism despite moderately healthy profits has opened a gap between the two rates. A nearly universal agreement exists among liberal and radical economists that disparate aspects of neoliberalisms increased financialisation have been important contributors to the decline in the rate of investment relative to the rate of profit. This paper addresses how

financialisation has depressed real investment in the U.S. The first section empirically presents the nature of the gap that has developed under neoliberalism. The second section briefly reviews papers from the literature, which employ a spectrum of different methodologies and data sets, to see what channels they posit for the fall in the rate of investment. Two channels are seen to permeate the literature. In the third section we will provide a number of additional pieces of empirical evidence supporting the case for the operation of one of those channels. The final section will conduct two sensitivity analyses which will yield additional indications about the economic nature of that channel. Paper #2. The profits-investment nexus: Marx versus Keynes Michael Roberts. Independent Scholar bobmckee99@yahoo.com Abstract: This paper considers the similarities and differences between Keynes and Marx over the relation between profits and investment. The Keynesian macro identities are analysed in order to identify the key connections between profit and investment in an economy. Both Keynes and Marx agree that there is a correlation between profits and investment in a capitalist economy. The issue is the causal direction. For Keynesians, it is from investment to profit; for Marx it is the opposite. The paper will then offer original empirical evidence for which causal connection is closer to reality and from that, what policy prescriptions might flow ie the difference between, and the effectiveness of, the Keynesian and Marxist multipliers. Paper #3. Income Shares and Profitability in the U.S. Economy Erdogan Bakir, Bucknell University erdogan.bakir@bucknell.edu Abstract: There has been a growing literature on the empirically tested variants of Marxian crisis theory. Profit rate and its trajectory in secular and/or cyclical context are central to this literature. Nonetheless, the treatment of the profit rate varies, to a certain degree, among some of the studies in this literature, depending on the specific questions asked or the specific definition attributed to it. This paper builds on our earlier works to develop a more complete analysis of the Marxian crisis theory, specifically in a cyclical context, in order to, among others, delineate the effect of overhead labor on the profit rate.

## **Organisational and Occupational Structurisation of Work in Gig Economy: Emerging Class Contradictions among Gig Workforce in India**

**Padmini Sharma (MPhil Scholar Tata Institute of Social Sciences, India)**

Gig economy, the latest buzzword in global economy, though niche is seen to be proliferating with something new emerging every time there is an enhancement in technology. This niche economy, despite its oddities in the world of work and labour, is being increasingly embraced across the globe irrespective of the economic, social, and institutional arrangements. India too, is seen to be adapting significantly to such changes through massive promotion of Digitalise India to enhance its economic development. Though digitalisation is seen as a platform for increasing productivity, participation in international trade, employment, and consumers choice however, little is known about the reality of work it promotes. Digitalisation, per se, is not a problem however, the evolving economies and its consequent work arrangements is seen to be breeding casualisation and

precarisation across the globe. Despite such criticisms, the increasing reliance on these services especially, in volatile labour markets like that of India, creates an inquisitiveness to critically reflect on the structural support and institutional means. This research focuses on understanding the entire working of these gig economies through the services emerging in India. On one level, it seeks to analyse the mechanisms and operations involved in the functioning of these services through a political economic perspective. This is to understand the structural and institutional forms that is supporting and regulating the growth of these services. At the other level, it seeks to understand the work and its organisational and occupational structuration through the perspectives of the workers concerned. This has been done under the theoretical lenses of critical management perspective, as well as, class theories to analyse the social relations concerned. It seeks to understand the analytical and theoretical relation between the macro and micro levels and its impact on the workers. It seeks to address the following objectives: a) to evaluate the organisational and occupational structuration of work; b) to analyse the social relations and the resultant contradictory class locations and class positions assumed by the gig workforce, c) to analyse the political and economic contexts, and the resultant strategies adopted by the labour organisations towards the global restructuring introduced by the gig companies. This research is based on mixed methods approach whereby, Concurrent Procedure has been used as the research design. Within this, both Concurrent Triangulation Strategy and Concurrent Embedded Strategy have been applied. As depicted in the research objectives, multiple samples are involved, the primary comprising of hundred workers engaged in gig services, and the key informants involving, state and non-state actors. In context to the first and the third objectives, Expert Opinion Sampling has been used whereas for the second, Basic Mixed Methods Sampling Strategies has been used. To collect data across all the samples, a combination of tools comprising of Documents, Unstructured Interview Schedules, as well as Non-Participant Observation methods have been applied. The quantitative data has been analysed through descriptive statistics using SPSS and the qualitative data has been analysed under thematic approach through second order coding. This research basically draws on the paradoxical situations in gig services for the contemporary workforce concerned.

## **Labour super-exploitation plus transformation makes for international value transfer**

**Andy Higginbottom (Kingston University)**

This paper reworks Marx's transformation solution as a distinct point of departure for the analysis of international value transfer, suggesting a new theoretical path out of the stalemate between the orthodox Marxist (Palloix) and the Ricardian (Emmanuel) explanations of unequal exchange. The path is prompted by the original work of Marini, developed recently by Smith, on labour super-exploitation as the essential social relation at the base of value transfer. I argue that super-exploitation requires a redimensioning of surplus value to take account of specific oppressions that are driven by capital to appropriate extra surplus-value. This change of essence follows through into the systemic contradictions. Marx's transformation of simple values into prices of production is based on

the contradiction between the cost and value of a capitalist produced commodity. Marx posits sector rate of profit as the product of the rate of surplus value and the inverse of the sector organic composition. But the Volume 3 solution only varies organic composition, holding surplus value at a presumed common rate within one country. Yet the variation of the rate of surplus value due to lower wages is a real factor conditioning both value composition and the mass of surplus value. Taking such variation by social region into account, commodities produced under more or less oppressive conditions of exploitation requires a further modification to the concept of price of production, and with that a basis for the analysis of imperial relations as internal to capitalist produced commodities. International value transfer is the actualisation in circulation of the differential realisation of surplus value produced by workers employed by capitals in distinct regions, generated by an oppressive dynamic unleashed within the capitalist mode of production. This non-linear reworking of Capital offers a new conceptual approach to the conversion of surplus value into profit, by social region as well as sector (see also Lauesen and Cope for an early attempt). From this, we can connect social region to the idea of economic territory and the distinct channels of transfer as further concretisations of the contradictory imperialist world system dynamics set in motion by capitals search for sources of extra surplus-value.

## **Insurance sellers or troublemakers?**

**Daniel Randall (Not affiliated to any academic institution)**

Despite almost all unions now claiming to embrace some kind of organising agenda, and proclaiming that they are member-led, union membership is still consistently promoted as a form of workplace insurance policy, with the relationship between member and union fundamentally conceived of as a matter of paying an external body to render a service. This paper discusses the ways the insurance policy approach manifests in workplaces, and its effects on workers consciousness, and will counterpose to it both historical and contemporary instances of alternative models of trade unionism based on seeing the union as an instrument to enable workers to take direct action against their employers. Against a backdrop of declining union membership, with strike figures for recent years some of the lowest ever recorded, discussions on how to revive rank-and-file trade unionism are of profound importance for the socialist left. The paper draws on the authors personal experience as a railway work and rep in the RMT union, and is developed from an article written for Notes from Below in 2018 entitled Troublemakers or Insurance Sellers? The role of the RMT on the Underground.

## **The Rise of a Rebel City: Working-Class Radicalism in El Alto (1985-2005)**

**Angus McNelly (Queen Mary University of London)**

El Alto captured the eyes of the world for a short moment during October 2003, and the imagination of a generation of activists and academics in Bolivia and beyond. In what

became known as the Gas War or Black October, hundreds of thousands of mostly indigenous peasant and working-class activists shut down the city for two weeks, toppling a national government in the process. This moment represented the apogee of working-class movements against neoliberalism and cemented El Alto's place in the Bolivian public imaginary as a rebel city. However, since the arrival of president Evo Morales to power in 2006 the city has lain largely dormant, awakening from its slumber only briefly during protests against gas price-hikes (the gasolinazo) in 2011. The question that I wish to address here is why such a supposedly radical city has exhibited such political placidity recently. Drawing on a Thompsonian perspective on class and Lefebvres spatial theory, I contend that the radical potential of El Alto is nothing natural or pre-ordained but a result of the historic processes of class formation and the production of space here. This radical potential became a reality in the run-up to the Gas War due to the confluence of four, intertwined dynamics: (1) the connection of quotidian experiences to the broader dynamics of neoliberalism by alteo activists; (2) a crisis in the legitimacy of El Alto's democratic institutions; (3) social organisations breaking with clientelist networks forged during the 1990s; and (4) the frame of the nationalisation of gas. Thus, we must conceive of October 2003 as a distinctly unusual moment in El Alto's history. However, El Alto still has the potential for future moments of intense class struggle of national political importance.

## **Marx's Law of Value in the Twilight of Capitalism**

**Murray Edward Smith (Department of Sociology, Brock University)**

Session Proposal from Murray E.G. Smith: Historical Materialism 16th Annual London Conference in 2019  
Title: Marx's Law of Value in the Twilight of Capitalism  
Type of Session: Book-launch for *Invisible Leviathan: Marx's Law of Value in the Twilight of Capitalism* by Murray E.G. Smith, with a foreword by Michael Roberts; Brill and Haymarket 2019, Number 177 in the Historical Materialism Book Series.  
Panelists: Murray E.G. Smith, Professor of Sociology, Brock University; msmith@brocku.ca  
Michael Roberts, macro-economic analyst, author/ blogger on Marxist economics; bobmckee99@yahoo.com  
Josh Watterton, PhD student, York University; j.watterton@gmail.com  
(A fourth panelist or moderator, to be determined, may be added later)  
Abstract: The session will center on a discussion of the main themes of the revised and expanded edition of Murray E.G. Smith's *Invisible Leviathan*, which undertakes a wide-ranging survey and assessment of the debates surrounding Marx's theory of labour-value over the past 150 years. Smith will summarize the most distinctive and controversial contributions the book makes to Marx's theories of value, falling profitability and crisis, and discuss their relevance to understanding the triple crisis of 21st century capitalism. Other panelists will focus on specific aspects of the triple crisis: the deepening structural contradiction of the capitalist mode of production, as manifested above all in a global crisis in the production of surplus-value; the acute crisis in the global capitalist system flowing from the constraints imposed by the nation-state system on the progressive expansion of global productive forces; and the growing metabolic rift between human civilization and the natural conditions of production the ecological foundations of human sustainability.

## **On capitalism and colonialism within Latin American Marxism**

**Pablo Cesar Pulgar Moya (Universidad de Santiago de Chile)**

The present conference analyzes the relationship between the concepts of modern political economy and colonialism as antecedent of contemporary criticism to the spatial behavior of global capitalism. For this, we illustrate the reception of the specialized critique on Marx's interpretation of these concepts. This allows us, at the same time, to locate the debate in the Hegelian system and to confront this relationship with the reading of Latin American Marxism.

## **First as Tragedy, Then as Farce? - The Potential of the Subject Position in Political Struggles for the Commons**

**Christian Schirmer (Philipps-Universitt Marburg Graduate Student Social and Cultural Anthropology) Moritz Engel (University of Cologne Graduate Student Anthropology)**

Following Balibar, with Marx, theory and practice became intrinsically linked. Dissolving the dichotomy between theory and practice is now more urgent than ever, if emancipatory politics strive toward holding future social value for those involved. We argue that with the help of (post-)Marxist theoretical currents, our politics should be reoriented towards unchaining the radical potential of the commons, old and new in order to resist the repression of Extinction Capitalism. The first of our examples is centred around a critical, iekian understanding of a Materialist conception of subjectivity along the lines of Lacan as well as their understanding of materialism. An examination of the ethnographic example of Greece after the imposition of harsh austerity measures after the financial crisis of 2010 may show the various ways in which the subject position is a key factor in understanding the capitalist appropriation of the commons and the progressive resistance that may arise from that. Secondly, ways of resisting this neoliberal appropriation are reflected on by a reading of the Zapatista movement through Deleuzian political philosophy. Deleuze gives us theoretical tools to understand the deterritorialization of subjectivities in the Zapatista struggle. In forming a political assemblage, Marxist guerrilla members and indigenous people engaged in processes of Becoming that made the creation of a flexible, autonomous region possible. This new region can be understood as a re-emerging old common, and this re-emergence has been made possible in part by using an appropriated common in subversive ways, the internet. In rejecting the subjectivation processes of a neoliberal governmentality, the Zapatistas put forth a shifting process of emancipation trying to create a "world in which many worlds fit". We conclude that the current struggles to reappropriate and unchain the radical potential of the Commons are potentially a double-edged sword. On the one hand it is imperative today to retake the Commons and to constitute spaces of Becoming and the subject's Deterritorialization. On the other hand, because this imperative is forced upon us by capitalism, there is the danger of constituting spaces that only serve an enduring of capitalism, not it's overthrow. There might also be



the danger of shaping a space that is easily reterritorialized by capitalism and conforms to Neoliberalisms imperatives.

## **Brazilian women under Bolsonaro's government a Social Reproduction view about the consequences of the authoritarian neoliberalism**

**Fatima Gabriela Soares de Azevedo (UNIVERSIDADE DO ESTADO DO RIO DE JANEIRO - UERJ (RIO DE JANEIRO STATE UNIVERSITY))**

Capitalism does not produce safe spaces to women, especially for those who live on the Global South. In 2016, the United Nations published a report affirming that Brazil occupies the fifth position on the world ranking of femicide. In 2017, according to the same institution, the country has concentrated 40% of gender-related killings in Latin America. Since last presidential elections in Brazil (2018), women are even more threatened, based on the campaign promises of the elected candidate, Jair Bolsonaro. In 2019, his administration has effectively changed many policies to women, starting with the weakening of the Women's Ministry, which is now also responsible for families and human rights, under the command of an anti-feminist religious woman. The policy of guns liberation is as dangerous as promised changes in retirement and in other welfare policies to women's survival, considering domestic violence numbers and the decrease on the possibilities to financial independence without any state help (homeschooling, one of the government priorities to regulation, is also a concern on this scenery). Based on Social Reproduction Theory, especially on Lise Vogel's perspective and her followers, and on Walter Benjamin's considerations on history, this paper aims to understand how the authoritarian narrative implements the neoliberal agenda, above nature, above workers' heads, above black women's heads notably. The first part seeks to observe how the flexibilization on the policies to protect the environment amalgamated to the wide approval of pesticides (prohibited all around the world) open new belts of primitive accumulation. On the other hand, urban expansion since world mega events (2014 FIFA World Cup and 2016 Olympic Games) is also sedimented in the expulsion of poor housing, building new frontiers for speculation. In the second part of the text, there is an analysis of how women's houses, jobs and kids are on the target, as well as their bodies (as Silvia Federici argued). The objective is to comprehend the impact of the transformations analysed in part one. The conclusion aims to demonstrate the entangled accumulation of capitalist expansion under a far-right government and its worst consequences in a country whose population's majority is black and female. Using Benjamin, the paper tries to see the violence in each of capital movement to expand and the possibilities of a necessary construction of a resistance, led by feminists and black socialist feminists, in the terms Nancy Fraser, Cinzia Arruzza and Tithi Bhattacharya put it.

## Mind Shift: How the Human Brain Acquired Consciousness

John Parrington (University of Oxford)

The human brain has allowed our species to go from living in caves to sending people to the moon, in less than 40,000 years. Yet human activities, through environmental changes such as global warming, now threaten civilisation and perhaps even life on Earth unless we can identify a more sustainable approach to life. The state of the environment is not the only challenge facing humankind. Currently a quarter of individuals in Britain have been diagnosed as suffering from some form of mental disorder. In fact some people dispute the use of the word disorder, seeing mental distress as primarily a product of social pressures. What is surely indisputable is the pain and suffering that can be caused by such conditions as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, and clinical depression. Such concerns mean we urgently need a better understanding of how the normal human mind works, and why it often seems to go wrong. Yet our understanding of mental disorder is currently as unclear as our comprehension of how the brain works as a whole. This is despite recent major technological advances that provide unprecedented new ways to probe and manipulate the brains of humans and a wide variety of other species. Unfortunately, despite such advances, currently we lack a scientific explanation of how human self-conscious awareness has emerged from the combined actions of cells in the brain, and why this form of consciousness is unique compared to that of other species. Building on ideas first put forward by Friedrich Engels and the Marxist psychologist Lev Vygotsky and philosopher of language Valentin Voloshinov in Russia in the years following the 1917 revolution, and combining this with the latest insights from neuroscience, psychology, and sociology, I show that we can only understand human consciousness as part of a mind shift, that during evolution led to our brains becoming reconfigured by our species unique capacity for language and tool design and use. By identifying cutting-edge new scientific evidence for such a shift, I provide the first material explanation for human self-conscious awareness, point to new ways to diagnose and treat mental disorders, and pose important questions about how humanity can use such awareness to develop a truly sustainable civilisation.

## Renaturalisation: A Queer Materialist Approach

Mathias Klitgrd (University of Stavanger)

In his early writings on Estranged Labour (1844), Karl Marx describes how labour under capital effectuates an alienated relation to nature. In the productive relation, the worker increasingly objectifies and appropriates the natural resources on which the worker is also necessarily dependent for survival. As much eco-Marxist thought has explored (Burkett 1999; Foster 2000), this contradiction between production and the reproduction of means of life reappears in the third volume of *Capital* as that of a metabolic rift where the regeneration of the capacities of nature becomes still more difficult (Marx 1894). In light of a daunting climate catastrophe, the question of the metabolic rift surges with increased urgency: what is at stake in the definitional politics around nature in the Anthropocene? In my reading, feminist technoscience scholar Donna Haraway continues where Marx left off

with a discussion of the way the historical alienation of nature becomes mediated culturally. As she polemically notes in *Primate Visions* (1989), If history is what hurts, nature is what heals (156). Nature in an immediate, pure and ahistorical form is constructed as that healing force that can overcome historical injustices. Haraway forcefully shows how this idealised renaturalisation has a deep colonial heritage and, especially important for present purposes, is relying on women and the heteronormative family to perform a return to nature that capitalism forecloses. Furthermore, as the recent emergence of feminist new materialist thought warns against, such processes risk objectifying natural relations and positing human agency as a self-identical subject prior to renaturalisation. In light of these important critiques, what are the implications of a strategy return to or reconcile with a nature that has been structurally alienated? If for Marx this return is not possible under capital, by which means is this problem diverted culturally: which heteronormative constructions of the human are posited as the subject of change? And where do we move from here? In this paper, I attempt to show how renaturalisations within capitalism are not only necessarily and structurally failing, but that this return to nature is mediated in heteronormative humanism. Following Haraway's elaboration of Marx, I unfold what is at stake for contemporary understandings of renaturalisation through the lens of a queer materialism that operates at the intersection between queer theory and materialisms old and new. When historical materialists situate renaturalisations historically and in relation to capital and queer feminist scholars problematise the inscription of heteronormativity in the return to nature, new materialists discuss human exceptionalism and the objectification of the more-than-human agencies that this return posits. In the current context, I view these three sets of concerns and their politics as internal to each other, and I engage in a discussion of renaturalisation as a contentious strategy of our times.

## **The Prolonged Fight against Patriarchy - Women and Feminism in Polish Opposition Movements during the 1980s**

**Natalie Miriam Stasiewicz (Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg Graduate Student in Comparative History)**

The objective of this paper is to determine what role Feminism played for female activists in various opposition movements in Poland during the 1980s. Four women, who were part of different opposition groups have been interviewed. The paper combines critical methods to analyse source material, which are used in history with narrative interviews, more commonly used in anthropology. The applied methodology opens the possibility for active solidarity between witnesses and researchers, which can be fruitful for the (re)thinking of current struggles such as the continuous oppression of women by patriarchy. The continuous experience of patriarchy connects the narratives of the witnesses with the current theoretical narrative. This narrative duality allows to preserve the subjectivity of the witnesses narratives, while allowing the current theoretical narrative the authority of interpretation. In her book *Caliban and the Witch* Silvia Federici explains that capitalism requires an imagination of women as the other to continuously reproduce itself through

unpaid reproductive labour. Patriarchy does not exist only in capitalism. While state socialism as it existed in Poland and other eastern European countries during the 20th century officially propagated gender equality, many measures implemented to ensure this equality did not intend to free women from patriarchy but were means to ensure their maximum productivity as a part of the workforce. The case of state socialism in 20th century eastern Europe shows how patriarchy can be a constant through systemic changes from (pre)capitalism to socialism to (neo)liberal capitalism. It is not the objective of this paper to deny that in some aspects of everyday life women were treated more equally in state socialist countries than in capitalist ones. However, it is not productive for us as leftists to turn a blind eye to those inequalities that were in capitalism as in state socialism experienced by many women. Housework and child care were in capitalist and state socialist countries the domain of women and largely still are today. In many state socialist countries women were required to join the workforce but men on the other hand were not encouraged to help with housework. State socialism, like capitalism, needed the unpaid labour reproduction to preserve itself. This statement does not want to portray the activism of women merely as a reaction to patriarchy, but on the opposite wants to show the potential of feminist resistance against ongoing oppression through different (political) ideologies. This paper wants to explore the potential of feminist activism through the experiences of female Polish activists in the 1980s, their struggles under state socialism, their hopes for systemic change and how we today can relate and be inspired by their actions.

## **Book Launch: The unity of the capitalist economy and state; a systematic-dialectical exposition of the capitalist system by Geert Reuten (Historical Materialism Book Series; Brill 2019)**

**Geert Reuten (University Of Amsterdam, School of Economics), Riccardo Bellofiore (University of Bergamo), Tony Smith (Iowa State University), Peter Thomas (Brunel University London)**

- (1) REUTEN. Summary statements on The unity of the capitalist economy and state. The book provides a systematic exposition of the interconnection of the capitalist economy and state. The first part of the paper sets out the aim and the method of the work. It is argued that in order to comprehend the capitalist system, one requires a full synthetic exposition of the economic and state institutions and processes necessary for its continued existence. A synthetic approach also reveals a range of components that are often obscured by partial analyses. The paper's second part provides a chapter-wise summary of the book, focussing on their conclusions. Whilst in its systematic character, the work takes inspiration from Marx's provisional outline of the capitalist system in his Capital, the book also addresses many fields that Marx left unfinished (mainly the capitalist state) or that he could not foresee (such as the 20th century constellation of banks). The paper's third part sets out the main vulnerabilities of the capitalist system. [The book's PDF is freely available at <https://brill.com/view/title/38778>.]

- (2) (2) BELLOFIORE. Money as a constituent of capital. A dialogue with Geert Reuten on finance, production, and the State.
- (3) (3) SMITH. Value theory in the age of financialization? Many Marxists have accepted a sharp distinction between the real economy where value and surplus value are produced as explained in Volume 1 of Capital, and a financial sector that appropriates a share of produced surplus value by providing services to industrial capitals that the latter could not efficiently provide for themselves. In stark contrast a number of heterodox non-Marxian theorists speak of the financial sectors autonomous (autopoietic) capacity to create and expand value. Reuten's important book captures the moment of truth in each position or, rather, how each is one-sided and therefore inadequate. In his framework capitalist production always has a speculative financial dimension, while the appropriation of value from speculation in even the most exotic financial assets remains systematically tied to value creation in non-financial circuits of capital. Some implications of this account for value theory, the comprehension of contemporary financialized capitalism, and socialist politics will be explored.
- (4) (4) THOMAS. From Restricted to General Economy: a Hegelianism with Reverse?. This contribution will offer some critical perspectives on Reuten's conceptualization of the grounding role of the state in the process of capital accumulation. In particular, it will explore the ways in which Reuten's analysis both draws upon but also decisively rejects common understandings of Hegel's arguments for the primacy of the State in the Outlines of the Philosophy of Right.

## **Limits within the capitalist system of averting further ecosystems deterioration**

### **Geert Reuten (University Of Amsterdam, School of Economics)**

The paper presents three main limits within the capitalist system of averting further ecosystems deterioration. (1) The dynamics of capitalist competition entail continuous technical change of the production processes. This inevitably implies early scrapping of plants for economic rather than for physical reasons. Schumpeter called it creative destruction. Along it environmental resources dwindle. The type of technical change (greenhouse gas emissions mitigating) can perhaps be steered by internationally coordinated state policies at the cost of enormous regulation, however without doing away with the continuous general ecological creative destruction. (2) This destruction is exacerbated in the recession phase of the business cycle. Destruction of capital (and physical plant and equipment underlying it) together with increasing unemployment, is the within capitalism inevitable way of getting to a new economic upturn (the original insight of Marx). This cyclical extra destruction of plant and equipment is inevitable. Only its degree can be modified, that is by a structural increase of the State budget in terms of GDP structural, that is, over all phases of the cycle. (3) Merchandise international trade as percent of world GDP increased from 18% in 1960 to 44% in 2017. Transport of international trade is a too much neglected source of climate change (7% of the world-wide greenhouse gas emissions, estimated at 28% in 2050). Air and sea transport are exempted

from the 2015 Paris Agreement. This source of climate change could in principle be mitigated by state policy (stop new trade agreements). However, the necessary reduction from this source would require a gigantic international restructuring of production (it is indicated why for many countries this is possible only in the, too, long run). [The paper builds on results of the authors 2019 book *The unity of the capitalist economy and state*; a systematic-dialectical exposition of the capitalist system. Its PDF is freely available at <https://brill.com/view/title/38778>.]

## **Organizing Precarious Workers under Contractualization: Lessons and Challenges from the Philippines**

**Christine Joy Galunan (Universidade Estadual de Campinas - Brazil; Bukluran ng Manggagawang Pilipino (Solidarity of Filipino Workers)), Rafael Francisco La Via (Bukluran ng Manggagawang Pilipino (Solidarity of Filipino Workers); Ateneo de Manila University)**

Unionization in the Philippines has suffered a severe decline since the 1980s, a phenomenon strongly influenced by contractualization. This is a form of labor flexibilization that reorganizes work through triangular employment, or the emergence of manpower agencies established to dissemble the legal relationship between employer and workers, upending possibilities of collective bargaining and direct confrontation with capital. This challenge is augmented by firms where workers performing the same functions are separately hired via two channels directly and through agencies creating a schism that disunites their objective interests. As union organizers, we seek to explain the linked processes of union formation and consolidation under this dual employment arrangement using methods of workers inquiry and the class composition approach. The paper covers three cases with unions of contractual workers, ordered in terms of success in advancing resistance against the practice of contractualization, among other demands. The first case ended in the formation of separate unions with disaggregated demands; the second, an ongoing labor inspection by the government; and the third, with a successful labor strike. These experiences suggest that success of workers resistance is dependent on a process of discursive articulation where agency-hired workers and those directly hired are able to overcome the separation of their objective interests towards a shared articulation of precarity that forms the core of their unions demands. We aim to draw out lessons and challenges from these cases and relate them to precarity in the Global South and workers organization under the auspices of an increasingly authoritarian regime.

Stream: Workers' Inquiry



## Revisiting the Utopian Imaginary: Of Species-Being(s), the Multitude and Sympoietic Worlding in Times of Ecological Crisis

Florian Wagner (Friedrich Schiller University Jena)

In his book *Capitalist Realism*, Mark Fisher asserts that the neoliberal logic of capitalism today not only presents itself as the only viable political and economic system but that it at the same time seems impossible to imagine a coherent alternative to it (2). This is especially devastating in times of new nationalisms, religious fundamentalisms, and excessive environmental damage, which is precisely why exploring alternative realism becomes an absolute necessity in our current condition. Adding to this, McKenzie Wark asserts that any alternative realism needs to open itself toward plural narratives about how history can work otherwise (Wark xxi), which is reminiscent of Ernst Bloch's understanding of utopia and the utopian imaginary as a mood of thinking which holds closely to history and reality (Schmidt 79) and that is at the same time connected to the recognition of a collective existence (cf. Jameson 140). Taking this idea as the starting point, my contribution seeks to connect the struggle against capitalism and environmental destruction by calling for a reconfiguration of the relationship between human beings and the non-human world. To do so, I will first revisit the concept of the species-being in Marx's theory of alienation in the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* by reading the species-being not as an a priori human essence but rather as bound by and in constant intercourse with its material foundation in the natural world, as the comparison to his later writings on the metabolism in *Capital* will show. By situating my ecocentric reading of the species-being among Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri's concept of the multitude and Donna Haraway's notion of sympoietic worlding, I propose that the transcendence of capitalism is only possible by imagining and establishing conscious and free interactions with the natural world, as well as by finding ways of collectively producing in symbiotic relationships. The prime task today, thus, becomes to rewrite and reimagine our position in the natural world by deconstructing notions of human exceptionalism and reevaluating species-boundaries, by focusing on stories that foreground interdependency and kinship, and by cultivating response-ability; that is also a collective knowing and doing, an ecology of practices (Haraway 34).

## Pessimistic Hope: Insights into Eagleton's understating of hope

Yonathan Listik (University of Essex)

The formulation that entitles Terry Eagleton's *Hope without Optimism* seems paradoxical at first sight: how can one hope without expecting a better outcome? Or, in other words, how can anyone be hopeful without at the same time being an optimist? Eagleton shows instead that the only way to be hopeful is to not be an optimist. According to him, the optimist belief in a more positive future is a belief that the current system is able to provide us with a better outcome than the one we are currently experiencing. For him, optimism and its belief in progress are inherently marks of capitalism. They fundamentally imply in the belief that there is no alternative to capitalism and any possible solution can only emerge

from system internal developments. For Eagleton in this scenario the possibility of a future, in the strict sense of having another world, is locked to us so one finds oneself in a hopeless state since there is nothing which one could hope for. Moreover, within the optimist belief in progress redemption is held in the future, so all suffering lead in that direction and should be understood only as a passage towards a better future. Both in the conventional readings of Marxism and Christianity, suffering is redeemed by salvation so it should be accepted rather than avoided. Eagleton argues that such theodicy forget that salvation is not something one should expect in both theories: In the biblical account Jesus did not welcome his torture knowing his would be redeemed by his father and Marx and Engels never postulated that socialism would redeem or vindicate all the exploitation suffered by the workers. In fact, there is no such optimistic promise of progress anywhere in those two theories. On the contrary, accepting the necessity of the past blocks the possibility of a future. One should be able to hope of an alternative future without suffering since it is not in any way necessary that it should take place. For Eagleton, hope emerge only from the tragic perception that reality is tainted beyond salvation. Only from the state of desperation where no progress is possible, can one truly hope for an alternative. The optimist belief in progress is ultimately irrational since looking at the bright sides of things or expecting that despite the constant destruction imposed by capitalism, the possibility of a positive outcome remains open is nothing short of an illusion.

## **Utopia by a thousand cuts: sovereignty and surveillance**

**Kevin Rogan (Independent researcher)**

The rise of surveillance forces a total recomposition of the idea of sovereignty. Often overlooked, the role of private companies in providing surveillance technologies, and potentially even being in receipt of the data generated by these technologies, moves beyond an individualistic idea of privacy and recasts politics as operational planning. I propose that within a digital regime of surveillance, it helps to break sovereignty into two mutually exclusive aspects which dialectically comprise the whole: passive and active sovereignty. Passive sovereignty is often where liberal and bourgeois critiques of surveillance end, reproachful of impinging on individual privacy and autonomy. Active sovereignty is undertaken on the part of the power which directs surveillance, and refers to their ability to declare an exception based solely on the perceived occurrence of an 'emergency' which may require sovereign powers. Finally, I discuss the relationship of the individual to this new sovereignty. Marx provides many insights in his discussion of the role of surveillance in the factories of his day. My discussion ends with sketching out the ways that surveillance itself has become a productive activity, and asks if data is valuable, what labor process does that value come from?

## **Reproduction as Immanently Exterior to the Logic of Capital**

**Rebecca Carson (Kingston University)**

Following de Brunhoff, that which reproduces capital must supplement capital's own logic. It is from this standpoint that this paper will claim subjection to capitalist social relations, while formed on the basis of the inversion internal to the fetish character, is also produced through the mechanism of valorisation and its reproductive form money that, as the medium of reproduction of capital, is a form that is immanently exterior to the logic of capital. This paper argues that the subjection of human life to the value form and its reproduction (facilitated by its medium of circulation, the money form) reflects the dynamic of the money form as immanently exterior to the logic of capital. This is due to the correlating roles of money and human activity in facilitating the reproduction of both capitalist social relations and also relations that are not exclusively capitalist (such as the state and corresponding forms of legal social contracts as in the case of credit-money, and life as in the case of socially reproductive activity). These non-capitalist forms are developed from the standpoint of capitalism and therefore do not come from pre-capitalist forms but are non-capitalist forms produced by capitalist forms. The social practices reproductive of life that correspond to the production of value and its circulation between different forms that make up the valorisation process reflect the mechanism of money as immanently exterior to capitalist form. This is due to the corresponding roles of social activity and money as mediums that facilitate the reproduction of capitalist social relations through reproducing the variable of labour on the one hand and the valorization of capital on the other. In this way, the inversion of the fetish character that produces an explicitly capitalist form of subjection also produces non-capitalist forms of subjection that are immanently exterior to the logic of capital. The intention of this inquiry is to bring theoretical clarity to internal disputes within social reproduction theory surrounding the relationship between reproductive labour and value production. How do we interpret the interplay of the reproduction of life qua life and the reproduction of capitalist social relations as a whole? What I will show is that in order to understand the dynamic of reproduction and social reproduction within Marx's critique, we need to better understand the relationship between the fetish character and the process of valorization that, in order to be reproduced, necessarily relies on a supplement to the logic of capital. As a result, we find that in order to interpret the role of social reproduction, it is necessary to interpret reproductive activity as activity other to value producing activity.

## **Abraham Serfaty: Arab Judaism, Antizionism and Marxism-Leninism in Morocco**

**Selim Nadi (Sciences Po Paris)**

This paper aims at focusing on a particular figure of Arab Marxism: Abraham Serfaty, a Jewish Moroccan Marxist who played a key role in the Militant and Intellectual Organizing of the Arab Left after World War II. Besides his role in the Moroccan Left, Serfaty assumed a significant role by linking his anti-Zionism to his Arab-Jewishness. Hence, this paper aims

not only at presenting Serfatys lifelong dedication to anti-imperialism, but also how this engagement was deeply rooted in his Arab-Jewish heritage. Through his anticolonialism, his opposition to the King of Morocco, but also his role in the Moroccan journal *Souffles* where he worked along other Moroccan revolutionary figures, and great Moroccan writers, like Abdellatif Labi and his writings on Palestine, this presentation aims at discussing the contemporary relevance of such an important figure as Abraham Serfaty. In a time where a lot of confusion reigns around Zionism and Anti-Zionism, to revisit and discuss Serfatys legacy is of great importance and this raises a number of burning political questions, among others: what project to defend for Palestine? What will be the places of Jews and Muslims cultural traditions in a decolonized Palestine? And so on. Discussing some of Serfatys political ideas is also of great matter in order to reaffirm the fact that the issue of Palestine and of Zionism can be of great help for the workers movement not only in the so-called Arab world but also in Europe where some parts of the workers movement faces problems when it comes to discuss the contemporary relevance of Colonial issues.

## **Imperialist monopoly capital and Third World non-monopoly capital**

**Sam King (Victoria University)**

Eighty Five percent of the worlds population live in societies where average income is a fraction (on average 10%) of the core imperialist states. The latter are home to 13.5% of world population. In the neoliberal period this stark polarisation has dramatically increased. China has moved from among the lowest to among the highest income Third World countries similar now to Mexico, Malaysia, Turkey, Brazil and Russia - a change which has no impact on the vast gulf separating the two global poles or rich and poor countries. Analysis of the specific roles of China and other Third World societies within the international division of labour shows that China is not catching up to the imperialist core societies in productive technology and productivity. In the most advanced labour processes, imperialist societies have maintained their supremacy and increasingly specialise in highest-end labour while simple and ordinary labour is increasingly outsourced or mechanised. Command over the heights of the world division of labour gives imperialism overall control of the global labour process. China and some other Third World societies have achieved huge productivity gains during the neoliberal period, but not in highest end labour processes. For this reason they enter world markets as non-monopoly producers, forced to sell their commodities at or near production cost, but buy monopoly commodities from the imperialist societies at monopoly prices. Thus - via unequal exchange of surplus value in world trade - Third World societies are forced to forfeit to imperialism much of the benefit from their own productivity gains. This essential dynamic in the global division of labour and world trade the stark polar divide between technically dominant imperialist monopoly capital and Third World non-monopoly capital explains the stable reproduction to this day of the parallel polarisation between a few high income imperialist societies and many far lower income Third World societies.

## In search of race in Adorno's critique of jazz

Taneli Viitahuhta (University of Jyväskylä)

Adorno's critique of jazz is notorious. Robert W. Witkin's describes the differing opinions on his jazz essays as "at best out of sympathy with informed opinion on the subject, and at worst, [labeling him as] reactionary and possibly racist". Eric Hobsbawm calls them "some of the stupidest pages ever written about jazz, Miriam Hansen mentions the implicit issue of racism in them and Eugene Lunn condemns what he sees as Adorno's ethnocentric provincialism. Recently the case of Adorno's critique of jazz has been opened anew, especially from the point of view of race. This is welcome, because the earlier research is too entangled in postmodern debate over the value of popular culture/high art dichotomy, which is an unwieldy place to start working with Adorno. Mark Christian Thompson's *Anti-Music, Jazz and Racial Blackness in German Thought between the Wars* (2018) puts Adorno's jazz essays into the picture of German discourse of race: Aryan, Black and Jew, during both Weimar and Nazi period. He shows how the changing patterns of political identification, between German and its other, illuminate Adorno's steady denouncement of jazz and the subtle relocations he manoeuvres inside this position over time. Fumi Okiji's *Jazz as Critique, Adorno and Black Expression Revisited* (2018) brings Adorno in conversation with contemporary authors of Black Studies, Fred Moten, Jared Sexton and Frank Wilderson, as well as Jazz Studies. Highlighting Adorno's inadequate address to syncopation, as well as the critical double consciousness of black subjectivity, essential to jazz, she stipulates experience of black modern outside Adorno's conceptual grid. Okiji relies on W. E. B. Du Bois's concept of double consciousness as formative for jazz's rhythmic feel, swing, and shows how black rhythmic principle undermines the calls for rhythmic "white purity". This all is illuminating. However I argue, a conceptual confusion issues, when Adorno's critique of jazz and his unmasking of syncopation as decoration of beat (Schlag) are not followed to their origin. As Andreas Huyssen has pointed out, Adorno is one of the very few critics, who saw that theory of modern culture must address both mass culture and high art. Following Adorno's reading, "the seeds of National Socialism" in German culture took root in Wagner's absolute music, which also points the way for the "torn halves" of uncommunicating modernism and heteronomous popular culture. Furthermore, not only anti-Semitism, but negation of Marxist-utopian ideals, are in Adorno's analysis figuring in Wagner's music. The German "Wagner jazz" approach (Thompson), that Adorno is concerned with and denounces, grows from this situation of political and cultural contradiction, and resisting its consequences is pivotal for Adorno's aesthetic theory. I claim that the possibility and power of this resistance is lost, if we follow Okiji in seeing jazz mainly as rhythmic supplementation, suspension, and "displacing the distinction". Furthermore, here looms a threat of a monolithic concept of jazz, unable to differentiate it historically, nor to recognise the radical breaks. Especially outside this approach falls the 1960s constellation of radical New Thing music, anti-colonial struggles and grass root activisms, critical of jazz's role in capitalist culture of entertainment.

## Unfree in a Double Sense: Half-Breed Scrip, Primitive Accumulation, and The Emergence of an Indigenous Proletariat in Turn of the Century Canadian Prairies

Wayne Wapeemukwa Robinson (The Pennsylvania State University)

Primitive accumulation alloys capitalism and colonialism. As Marx understood, this union gave rise to a violent yet no less progressive phase of dispossession and proletarianization. Understandably, Indigenous scholars have historically responded antagonistically to this tone-deaf same old song (Means 1983) of civilizational development (Barsh 1988; Bedford 2001; Black Elk 1983; Means 1983; Nofz 1987; Tinker 1992). However, a new generation of Red Marxists seek to recover Marx (Adams 1975; Coulthard 2014; Menzies 2010; Simon 2011; Simpson 2017). At the vanguard of this new red wave is Glen Coulthard. To highlight the expropriation of Indigenous land Coulthard argues for contextually shifting Marxs theory of primitive accumulation, centring dispossession over proletarianization (2014: 11). But emphasizing the colonial- over the capital-relation focalizes settler thievery at the cost of over-shadowing the emergence of an Indigenous working class. My question, then, is how to conceive Indigenous proletarianization without reifying Marxs Eurocentric developmentalism while also upholding Coulthards contextual shift. I argue that unfettering the theory of primitive accumulation from its germane English setting yields prescient insights regarding the formation of an Indigenous proletariat out of the Mtis Peoples of the Canadian prairies. Known pejoratively as Half-breeds, the Mtis were dispossessed and proletarianized by the Canadian settler-state through the institution of Half-breed scrip. Scrip was the settler-states solution to Mtis land claims; its objective was the extinguishment of Indian title. Introduced in 1870 and proceeding well into the 1920s scrip brought individual applicants into negotiation with the government. In exchange for a meek 160 acre parcel of enclosed land-scrip or redeemable certificate of \$160 money-scrip, Mtis/Half-breed grantees relinquished all future land claims. My thesis is that analyzing Half-breed scrip as primitive accumulation comprehensively retools Marxs theory for settler-colonial contexts, opening it new interpretations beyond European horizons. I begin with a brief historical excursus on scrip. Next, I turn to Glen Coulthard (2014) in order to redress some of Marxs colonial assumptions. Following Massimo De Angelis (2001), I identify two frameworks for understanding primitive accumulation: the continual (Amin 1974; Coulthard 2014; Glassman 2006; Luxemburg [1913] 1963; Perelman 2000; Wallerstein 1979) and transitional (Dobb 1963; Lenin 1899). Pace Coulthard, I reject both, instead opting for Jason Reads (2002) Althusserian-inspired aleatory account which identifies primitive accumulation as the becoming-necessary of contingent encounters (Althusser 566). I next argue that Reads eschewal of a temporal for a modal story concerning capitalisms origins systematically interlinks with Patrick Wolfes (2006) structural analysis of settler colonialism. For both Read and Wolfe, invasion is a modal structure, not a temporal event (Wolfe 388). In my conclusion I return to Mtis scrip through my re-envisioned analytical lens of primitive accumulation in order show how capitalism co-constituted settler-colonialism through the formation of an Mtis-Indigenous proletariat in turn of the century Canadian prairies.



## **Carbon infrastructure: logistics, climate change and locking in catastrophe**

**Nicholas Beuret (University of Essex)**

Three quarters of all climate change emissions have been produced since the 1970s that is, since the emergence of the neoliberal project and globalization. Logistics the network of infrastructures, protocols, technologies, forms of work, legislations, and spaces that enables the creation of global supply chains is at the heart of not only climate change but much of the catastrophic ecological devastation of the previous 30 years. Logistical spaces bring together transportation, production, waste, energy and agricultural corridors, and consumption into a singular network responsible for a huge share of greenhouse gas emissions. Yet while much work has focused on struggles workers, community and environmental against or inside of logistical spaces, un-explored is the effects of logistical spaces for what we could call carbon infrastructure. Carbon infrastructure politically names those socio-material structures through which the vast majority of the worlds greenhouse gases are produced. Yet while the fossil fuel and agricultural industries are well known as carbon infrastructures, less explored is the globe-spanning system of logistics and supply chains. To focus on logistical spaces requires moving beyond the notion of the individual consumer responsibility and instead requires an interrogation of the political and capital fix that is globalization as a cause of climate change. This paper sets out how logistical space has produced a vast expanse of ecological devastation as part of a political project attacking workers gains and autonomy. Logistical spaces exist largely unseen as carbon infrastructures, despite their vast impacts. This invisibility means we must attend to how already-existing built environments and infrastructures with huge amounts of sunk capital will become sites of social and political conflict. This paper asks how can logistical spaces become vital loci of a workers-led just transition? What limits do the material infrastructures of logistical spaces put on struggles within them, in which ways does logistical infrastructure lock in climate change, and how do we map the contours of logistical spaces as sites of climate justice.

## **Making a killing: climate migration, surplus populations and the security-border industry**

**Nicholas Beuret (University of Essex)**

For years now media headlines, NGO briefings and military reports alike have proclaimed mass climate migration to be a grave threat to global order and stability. We are told that climate change will provoke mass displacement, floods of refugees and civil instability if not war. The climate migrant is increasingly becoming the go-to figure for social instability and fears of what climate change will mean for life in the global North. This paper sets out to explore the intersections of climate migration, legacies of colonialism and the security-border industry, focusing on how environmental displacement and fear of it are mined for profit. Border regimes have become big business, worth billions per year. Border regimes

are complex, territory-making industries, ones productive of not only value and nations but of excluded and dehumanized peoples. And it is expected that climate change will provoke a massive expansion and intensification of border controls, as evidenced by the role climate change has played in recent Syrian civil war and ensuing migration of millions. The climate migrant is not only a figure of climate change but one of human excess: as a member of an ecological surplus population, excessive to the requirements of capital, and unable to subsist on territory degraded and destroyed by the carbon pollution of industrial production. The security-border regime proclaims the racist rhetoric of overpopulation and puts it to profitable use excluding, and in the process often killing, peoples marked as excessive. This paper explores the security-border industry as a key site in the elaboration of new mode of extractivism, one becoming central to climate capitalism, where cheap life (Moore 2015) is mobilized as a basic resource for profit extraction. It is an industry built on architecture of security logistics, one that remakes the structures of territorial governance in the global North, and acts to racialize climate change as a means of producing forms of nationalism compatible with a world environment dominated by instability and scarcity.

## **A Green Industrial Revolution and the UK Labour Party**

### **Mika Minio-paluello (Labour Energy Forum)**

The Labour Party has committed to a Green Industrial Revolution, to address the climate crisis. This plan recognises the 19th industrial transformation as embodying a fundamental shift in societal, economic and productive relations - albeit one that also locked in environmental destruction, colonial theft and human exploitation. This paper will explore Labour's plans for a Green Industrial Revolution. It will answer questions like: Which parts of the energy, transport and manufacturing systems will be brought into public ownership, and how will they be restructured? Can democratic public ownership provide a basis for a renewed 21st C industrial renewal process - and what are its limitations? How do we create the structures and power shifts that place workers both those employed by the fossil fuel sector and those in adjacent sectors at the heart of this transformation? The societal shift away from carbon is a reality. The struggle is whether we have a managed transition in the interests of the public, labour and climate, or a transition driven by capital and existing power elites, that is both too slow and dumps the burden on the public.

## **A Just Transition for who? (working title)**

### **Samantha Mason (Not sure what this means?)**

The labour movement coined the phrase Just Transition several decades ago. Formed around a set of principles to protect workers and communities through economic restructuring as a result of climate change and wider environmental policies, it has however become a highly contested phrase within the labour movement. For some Just Transition is a redundancy strategy which runs against the core principle of trade unions to protect members jobs at (arguably) any cost. For others it's a concept that reinforces the

hegemony of the global north at the expense of the global south, and those more directly in the path of catastrophic climate change impacts. Yet more progressive unions view this as an opportunity for a transformative process, that challenges the inherent inequality of capitalism and the social relations between land and labour. This paper will look at the core debates within the global labour movement on Just Transition, the lack of analysis in the debate around capitalist relations and power, and if trade unions can ever be at the vanguard of a working class response to climate change.

## **Panel title: The Ecological Crisis and the Ecosocialist Response'**

**Terry Conway (activist and researcher), Alan Thornett, Sean Thompson, Pritam Singh**

Paper 1: Alan Thornett: Facing The Apocalypse Arguments For Ecosocialism. It is time to recognise that we are facing an ecological apocalypse, not just global warming serious as that is, but a multifaceted threat to the future of life on the planet. Crucial resources are running out, including fresh water and arable land. The oceans are now 30 per cent more acidic than in pre-industrial times; coral reefs are dying off at an unprecedented rate. There will soon be more plastic in the oceans than fish. We are facing the biggest extinction of species since the demise of the dinosaurs. Confronting a crisis of this scale will require will require not only major changes in the way society is organised, with a crash programme for a renewable energy system and a zero carbon energy system within a short time-scale but big changes in the way we all live our lives and organise our personal consumption. It means building the broadest possible movement in defence of the planet and its natural systems, including not only the social movements but the workers movement and the trade unions. This means not just a much stronger role for the radical left but the development of the idea of ecosocialism. Today it is no longer enough simply to define yourself a socialist (or a Marxist), given the scale of the ecological crisis and its consequences for life on the planet. It means embracing the ecological achievements of classical Marxism in the second half of the 19th century as developed and elaborated by Marx, Engels and William Morris in the second half of the nineteenth century. It means accepting that the environment is as much a working-class issue as wages, working conditions. It is not an add-on, an optional extra. The unavoidable reality is that in the end we cant defend anything, or win anything, or build a socialist (let alone an ecosocialist) society, on a dead planet.

Paper 2: Terry Conway: The contribution of Indigenous struggles and ecofeminism as a key part of the fight for ecosocialism The ecological crisis in general and climate change in particular has been pushed up the political agenda over recent months by the development of widespread militant action in many countries under the banners #youthstrike4climate and Extinction Rebellion (XR). One of the notable things about the former has been the visibly prominent role of young women in the movement. At the same time the demands and slogans of this movement do not particularly highlight specific womens demands or suggest a feminist analysis. This paper will ask to what extent young women active in the movement against ecological devastation relate to the theory and practice developed by ecofeminists. At the same time one of the challenges to some of the approach of XR comes

from organisations who feel that the question of Climate Justice, which is an needs to be a central part of what environmentalists are campaigning for, has been side-lined. I will explore to what extent XR activists in Europe and North America relate are aware of the concrete struggles many indigenous communities across the globe, the very people on the front line in defending the planet and the political concepts such as Pachamama (Mother Earth) or Buen Vivir (good life) which pose fundamental challenges to fossil fuel driven neo-liberalism and its relentless search for profit.

Paper 3: Sean Thompson : Just Transition/Green New Deal and Cognitive Dissonance - Creating a New Narrative Until the sudden explosion of awareness on the global environmental crisis, in the aftermath of the 2018 IPPC report and, more importantly, the Global Climate Strike, ecosocialists had argued for years within the Labour Movement that the gathering climate crisis is the greatest existential threat humanity has ever faced, and that it is insoluble within the constraints of capitalism - with little effect on the wider movement. This is an example of what Mark Fisher called reflexive impotence - a phenomenon where people recognise the flawed nature of capitalism, but believe there are no means of effecting change. As either Frederic Jameson or Slavoj Žižek wrote (both have been credited with the phrase) it is easier to imagine an end to the world than an end to capitalism, Until very recently, both the Labour Party (even partially in its Corbynista form) and the unions have been at best timid and at worst positively reactionary in their responses. For example, key trade unions and the bulk of the PLP were in favour of Heathrow expansion, Labour councillors on Cumberland County council voted in favour of the first new deep coal mine for thirty years and the proposed M4 relief road has split Welsh Labour. Whilst recognising the gravity of the crisis that capitals relentless need to expand causes, any future beyond its insatiable quest for new markets seems unthinkable. McDonnells Green Industrial Revolution and the TUCs Just Transition policies, while positive steps forward, still remain imprisoned within the confines of what is imaginable within capitalism. Milton Friedman famously wrote that only a crisis - real or perceived - produces real change. When that crisis occurs, the actions that are taken depend on the ideas that are around. Our basic function: to develop alternatives to existing policies, to keep them alive and available until the politically impossible becomes politically inevitable. The task of ecosocialists must now be to show the mass of trade unionists and socialists how a sustainable post capitalist future is not just desirable but necessary and possible.

## **Post-Capitalism and information technologies: exploring the relation between utopia and reality**

**Hannah Bensussan (Phd student in economics at Paris 13 University)**

This paper will discuss how information technologies feed socialist post-market imaginaries. The problem of economic efficiency in a post-market society, discussed by the socialist calculation debate (Mises 1920 ; Hayek 1935; Lange 1937), will be first presented in the first part of this paper as well as Hayeks theory of the market as a system of telecommunication (Hayek 1945). In the second part, the technological dimension of this debate will be put into scrutiny: it will be shown that at a certain point of the debate,

socialists leaned against new information technologies to maintain their conclusion in favor of a feasible system of telecommunication alternative to the market (Lange 1970 ; Cockshott & Cottrell 1993). After discussing opponents arguments against this use of new technologies in favor of socialists (Kane 2016), a third part, the relationship between new technologies and the utopian thought of socialism will be questioned. That is, firstly, the notion of consciousness of the economic process can be seen as embodied in information technologies. To this extend, information technologies are a form of materialization of an abstract utopia. But also, it could be argued, from an operational point of view, that utopia is to be rooted in reality to inspire in return the struggle for emancipation. From that point of view, existing information technologies can be seen as springboards for post-capitalism imagineries.

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## **From biopolitics to psychopolitics. Mind control and “Capital”.**

**Roberto Finelli (Department of Philosophy - University of Roma Tre - Italy)**

The development of the digital revolution and the spread of mental work is putting an end, through the irrefutability of the economic reality, to the Foucaultian conception of biopolitics. Foucault's theoretical perspective, in its distance from Marxism and dialectics, has never deepened the true biopolitical theme anticipated by Marx and dedicated in Capital to the study of how the Fordist technology of the Great Factory has shaped and disciplined bodies and workers lives. Foucault has in fact ousted the factory and economic production from his disciplinary institutions, preferring to consider other types of subjection. But, beyond Foucault's removal of biopolitics, what is interesting here is that today, at the center of the social question, it is no longer the control of bodies, but rather the control of minds. So today we can say that we have entered the age of psychopolitics: that is, that the mind put to work in contemporary capitalism can be no less dominated than was the body in Fordist capitalism. With the consequence that the passage to work so-called immaterial does not in itself represent a spontaneous process of liberation. It is indeed possible that the new mental work / information-machine system requires an adjustment on the part of the operator to the codes and programs of artificial intelligence, capable of generating a profound split between the emotional body and the calculating linguistic mind. But a humanity based only on knowing and splitting from its inner feeling is a subaltern humanity by definition and delivered to a sense that comes only from the outside. It is a humanity that risks being abstract, split, within itself, as organized according to a plan that is the univocal one of knowing and is not also that of feeling. Against the humanity of the new mental work, which risks being abstract within itself, because it is urged to interact and respond through a codified language, the Spinozian image of the body

must be re-evaluated, which contains a positive complexity well above that which was proposed by Nietzsche and which contests the idea that at the bottom of the human there is essentially a void or a lack of being, as the whole philosophy that comes from Heidegger and Lacan wants. For Spinoza the body is in fact, even before any elevated mental development, already “the synthesis of a multiple”, which only by finding its own unique and unrepeatable form of agreement and harmony can it overcome the sad affections and lead to a recognition of itself themselves. But the recognition of the Spinozian body, the recognition of one’s own emotional body by a mind, can only take place through a dense network of reciprocal recognition, solidarity and co-participation among several minds. So the psychopolitics managed by capitalism can only be opposed to a community and participatory politics of mind, in which the dimension of the development of the common can be accompanied by the equally valuable dimension of private and individual development.

## **Unions and neoliberalism in the Global South. The case of Oaxacan teachers union section against education reform in Mexico (2012-2018)**

**Mariano Casco Peebles (Universidad Autnoma Metropolitana)**

This paper examines the struggle that public education workers of Oaxaca (State located in southeast Mexico), organized in the Section 22 of the Sindicato Nacional de Trabajadores de la Educacin (SNTE) [National Union of Education Workers], undertook against the education reform that the Mexican Federal Government tried to implement during the years 2012-2018. The education reform seeks to achieve educational quality by reducing labor rights of the teachers, principally job stability, and reducing the intervention of the unions in the public education system. It was one between eleven reforms with a neoliberal point of view that approved and implemented Enrique Pea Nieto during his presidency (2012-2018). Considering factors such as number of workers involved, political impact, acts of repression and the conflict temporal extension (for six uninterrupted years) we can say that the conflict starred by Section 22 of the SNTE was one of the strongest union battles in Mexicos recent history. The most vivid example of the virulence of the conflict occurred in the city of Nochixtln (State of Oaxaca) where government repression led to the death of 7 people and 280 wounded (civilians and police officers), according to the Comisin Nacional de Derechos Humanos [National Human Rights Commission]. The strategy of the section union to fight against the education reform had three main parts: (a) the execution of extended strikes and street mobilizations; (b) the elaboration of laws; (c) and the put into practice of an alternative pedagogical proposal in the schools where union members worked. This paper is organized in three parts; first we will mention some aspects of the education reform, then we will detail the moments of the struggle against it; and finally, we will say some words about the way the Section 22 of the SNTE is organized and the union subjectivity of its active members. The central question of the paper is: How was the unionism deployed by the Section 22 of the SNTE against education reform? To answer the



question we will deepen in the debate about the scope and limitations unionism has to question social totality, a classic discussion in Marxist theories.

## **Class - what's next for sociolinguistics?**

**Christian Chun (University of Massachusetts Boston)**

Since the mid-20th century, sociolinguists have drawn upon numerous resources and perspectives in their insightful documentations and analyses of various symbols of class memberships indexed by linguistic, discursive, and other social semiotic meaning-makings and enactments (e.g., Bernstein, 1971; Block & Corona, 2014; Eckert, 1989, 2000; Heath, 1983; Labov, 1966, 1972a; Milroy, 1980; Rampton, 2006; Rickford, 1986; Snell, 2018; Trudgill, 1974). Their constructs of class identity have aligned with Goffmans (1951) notion that an important symbol of membership in a given class is displayed during informal interaction in which these observable behaviors involve matters of etiquette, dress, deportment, gesture, intonation, dialect, vocabulary, small bodily movements and automatically expressed evaluations concerning both the substance and the details of life (p. 300). However, to what extent has sociolinguistic research inadvertently perpetuated static models of class categorization in which people are consigned to a fixed membership in either the working or middle class? This classifying distinction between working and middle class is problematic because when class is understood as a social grouping (rather than as the social processes of producing, appropriating, and distributing surplus labor), class analysis involves sorting individuals into mutually exclusive class categories, often a frustrating analytical project (Gibson-Graham, Resnick, and Wolff, 2001, p. 17). This underscores that class should not be viewed as a thing in the sense of a categorical grouping, but instead as a social relational process in performative motion dynamically shaped by situational contexts. Furthermore, as this class process relates to language-in-action, rather regarding classed identity as a pre-existing source of linguistic and other semiotic practices, it is critical to recognize identity as emergent in cases where speakers language use does not conform with the social category to which they are normatively assigned (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 588). In going beyond analyzing class as static social groupings, an alternative class analytic paradigm for sociolinguistic inquiries is proposed to explore how class process and performativity emerges and circulates in local discourse contexts of interaction (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, pp. 595-586) in particular encounters. In this paper, I first discuss how class is conceptualized in this alternative paradigm within the context of the numerous scholarly debates on class. This is followed by two featured participant interviews illustrating aspects of this class analytic. These interviews and other highlighted examples draw from US contexts due to my positionality as a scholar and activist who has long engaged with issues of class inequalities in US society including being an active participant in the 2011 Occupy Movement. I then argue why this particular model of class process and performativity drawn from the interdisciplinary perspectives of economics, sociology, anthropology, and cultural studies is needed for sociolinguistics now, and how it can help us understand and engage with the current issues of nationalist and demagogic discourses often embodied in violence toward the Other with which static

models of intersectionality and identity politics have been insufficient in their analyses. I conclude with future directions and suggestions for sociolinguistics research on class.

## **A good-humoured fellow: Irony and comedy as critique in Hegel.**

**Patrick Eiden-Offe (Leibniz-Center for Literary and Cultural Studies Berlin (ZfL) and Humboldt University Berlin), Rachel Aumiller (Humanities and Social Change International Foundation Institute, Hamburg), Charlotte Szs (Freie Universitt/Free University (FU) Berlin), Frank Engster (Rosa Luxemburg Foundation Berlin)**

In his *Refugee Conversations*, Bertold Brecht remarks that Hegel is one of the greatest humourists among the philosophers, and that Hegels book *The Science of Logic* was one of greatest humorous works in world-literature. Brechts remark is, of course, not just a joke, but implies a daring interpretation of Hegel that still deserves a thorough debate, especially among his materialist friends. In Brechts reading, Hegel does not erect a system that theoretically legitimizes the functionality of the world as it is, but on the contrary Hegel demonstrates that there is no (and there cannot be any) functioning system in the world whatsoever. For Brecht, Hegels *Logic* must be read as a kind of comedy, in which the concepts embarrass one another and make fools of themselves. Thereby Hegel shows (and not just tells) his readers that all social and political circumstances are reversible: He was so humorous, he could not think of any order without disorder, and he was sure that close to any order there has to be disorder, and funny enough sometimes order and disorder find themselves at exactly the same place at the same time. Of course, Hegel stages his comedy perfectly deadpan, as Brecht remarks. Thinking dialectically for Hegel (and Brecht) means: searching for possibilities to reverse and to overthrow things. Dialectics therefore is a genuinely humorous way of thinking, it is a way of life that is fundamentally ironic. And thus, irony and comedy understood and performed in a Hegelian way for Brecht are the most rigorous way of criticizing the world as it is. In our panel we want to elaborate on the idea that dialectics has to be understood as a type of humour, and that irony and comedy can be performed and understood as strategies of critique. Re-evaluating Hegelian humour seems to be especially pertinent to us in a time when straightforward forms of critique often seem to produce deadlock situations, and in which at the same time, irony (in a non-Hegelian sense, as it were) has become the most common way of coping, but also collaborating with the ruling order of the world.

**Talk 1: Rachel Aumiller (Hamburg) Grasping Oneself by the Nothing: The Comedy of Negative Self-Reference and Resistance with Hegel and Marx** Hegel points out at the end of the *Science of Logic* that dialectic can be counted in sets of three or four stages. A traditional triadic dialectical structure stresses the first term that passes into its negative counterpart before returning to itself concretely as the third term. Counting to three renders dialectic as a waltz in which the positive term is transformed as it is spun through the mediation of its negative partner: BeingNothingBecoming. But Hegel reminds us that dialectic can also be set to the rhythm of a four-step beat. Rereading a dialectical turn through a tetradic

structure tells a new story. The focus shifts from the transformation of the first term to the comic slapstick of the negative. As Hegel states, when dialectic is counted to the beat of four, the negative term must be counted twice. One shows itself to be two: Being and Nothing. But the negative counterpart the second term is in itself already repeated. Negativity is an immediate duality: Nothing Nothing. What exactly changes when nothing is repeated? I conclude that in the dialectical repetition of nothing, nothing changes. Nothing changes in three senses: 1) There is no formal change in the process of redoubling the original double. 2) Nothing itself undergoes transformation. 3) Nothing is the agent of change and the position of the counter or subject who in counting to three counts herself as nothing. Moving from Hegel to Marx, I explore the significance of negative self-reference for acts of political resistance. It often seems that despite our tireless fights for justice and equality, nothing changes. Many of us come to sense this despair when we realize that our consent counts for nothing, when our testimonies of our own experience count for nothing, when violence that is done against our individual and communal bodies counts as nothing even before the law. The louder we insist that our lives matter, the more it feels that our existence is a farce. This presentation repeats the phrase nothing changes as a mantra until a confession of defeat becomes a battle cry for political resistance. The rise of global fascism and xenophobia, the persistence of violence against women and people of colour, the deepening of economic disparity suggest that despite our battles for justice and equality nothing changes. History tragically repeats itself. And yet, I claim that with every failed revolt and act of resistance nothing itself changes. Nothing is amplified in her repeated refusal to appear as expected. Nothing takes the form of the emancipatory event that fails to take place and the individuals who fail to appear as political subjects. Through the slapstick of history, which causes the reproduction of tragedy to stumble, nothing undergoes change as it increases in power. Nothing is both the object and agent of change. Nothing changes, but nothing really does change.

Talk 2: Charlotte Szsz (Berlin) Eternal Irony Critique as the Feminine? "By intrigue, the feminine the polity's eternal irony changes the government's universal purpose into a private purpose. In this passage from the *Phenomenology of Spirit* in which Hegel attributes the feminine to the community's eternal irony, three problematic signifiers for Hegel arise at once: eternity, irony and femininity. Is this symptomatic? At least it is suspicious. In the *Lectures on Aesthetics* irony is "the nullity of everything objective and absolutely valid ( ) Everything appears to it as null and vain, except its own subjectivity which therefore becomes hollow and empty and itself mere vanity". Irony undermines the form of truth and thereby threatens its epistemological foundation. Yet the "general irony of the world" from the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* describe a very different kind of irony than that of the subjective irony from the *Lectures on Aesthetics* a kind of objective irony. Intrigue, irony and revelation: These are all ascriptions to the feminine position that appear in different passages of Hegel's work. Especially at one other interesting point: the cunning of reason. In the context of irony I aim to examine the implications of the cunning of reason for a notion of critique in Hegel by the figure of the feminine. As we know "the honor of cunning against power" is "to make it return into itself as movement, so that it negates itself". In the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Spirit* (1805-6) Hegel proposes that "through cunning: the will becomes feminine." I examine the concepts of the cunning of reason and of irony which both are attributed to that which Hegel calls femininity in a synthetic effort to

understand the epistemological implications of a feminine position inside a larger picture of understanding the systematic consequences of a gendered logic of difference in Hegel. What does the cunning of reason reveal? Is there actually the possibility of a revelation of truth? What kind of stability of the negative movement can we link to the general irony of the world?

Talk 3 Patrick Eiden-Offe Laughing at Capital: Hegel and Marx cum Brecht Since Marx himself highlighted the importance of Hegels method for writing his Capital, and since Lenins reading of the Science of Logic during World War I, there have been numerous attempts to affirm Marx critique of capitalism by linking it back to Hegel. Among the most elaborated interpretations of this kind were the ones by the Neue Marx-Lektüre, the new Marx reading in West Germany in the 1970s and 80s. While providing us with admirable insights into the labyrinth of Marx value-form theory, these readings tend to monumentalize capitalism itself by conceptually fusing it with Hegels system, while at the same time petrifying this very system as a quasi-ahistorical scheme for understanding the structures of society. Bertold Brechts remarks about the humorous Hegel may be used here as a tool to de-fetishize the systematic approach and to re-liquefy dialectics in Marx and Hegel. If we hold on to the idea of a structural homology between Hegels and Marxs forms of representation (Darstellungsformen), Brechts interpretation of the Logic as a comedy evokes an interpretation of Capital in which the concepts on stage do not only constitute a fixed Logic of Capital, but also de-stitute it by revealing their slippery, unstable, irresponsible character (Brecht). This new reading of Capital can also be traced back to the new Marx reading of the 1920s, as it was performed by Georg Lukács and especially by Karl Korsch, who Brecht once called his teacher although both of them are notoriously un-ironic or even humourless. In my talk I will follow the different strands of a critique of the Logic of/in Capital and carve out the peculiarities of a humorous reading of Marx and Hegel in the succession of Brecht. Chair: Frank Engster (Berlin).

## The State as the Incarnation of the Permanence of Capitalist Crisis

**Siyaves Azeri (Université de Lorraine)**

Marx, in A Critique of Hegels Philosophy of Right criticizes Hegel for not fulfilling his promised unveiling of the essence of the state: Logic is not used to prove the nature of the state, but the state is used to prove the logic (1970). In other words, Hegel fails to show the logical-historical necessity of the state; he sanctifies the existing social order and arrives at the political necessity of his Logic. Marxs method in Capital and some of his formulations in the Grundrisse serve for a reconstructing of the true logic of the constitution of the capitalist state. What is the human essence of the state and why does this essence assume this particular form? In Manifesto Marx conceives of the state as the executive committee of bourgeoisie and, while tacitly criticizing Kant, considers the state as the expression of the universalized will of the capitalist class. The state is the political-legal form of existence of alienating social relations of production, i.e., self-valorizing capital. Its existence is mediating the permanence of accumulation; it is the political expression of the developed subjectivity of immediate producers, which now acts behind the back of producers (Marx

1993) and appear as a distinct, independent power that regulates social affairs. From a Marxian stance, the independence of the state enables it to function as a means of suppressing the class struggle (Bonefeld, 2010). Contrary to communist society that Marx defines as a society based on the free association of free individualities (1992), the state is the objective/external means of compulsive association of the doubly free sellers of labour-power and the owners of the means of production the negative and positive personifications of capital as a social relation and thus the form of existence of the state of unfreedom. Rather than being an expression of social equilibrium, the state is the incarnation of the permanent state of crisis of capitalist society; the state is the prerequisite and the consequence of the necessity and the political form of objectification of continuous constitution of the separation of immediate producers from the means of production accumulation of capital [as] the multiplication of the proletariat (Marx 1993). Hence, the existence of the state also signifies the possibility of human emancipation through the proletariats act of self-negation. The seizure of the state and smashing down its machinery, thus, appears as a (logico-historically) necessary aspect of human emancipation from capitalism as the expression of the permanent crisis of humanity.

## Imperialism and super-exploitation

### John Smith (Independent researcher)

A global debate on the actuality of imperialism, and the need to extend Marxs theory of value in order to account for it (and if so, how), is rapidly widening, notably in Latin America but also in Africa and Asia, where the debate never went away, and is attracting growing interest in the USA and Europe. At its centre is super-exploitation, or what Marx called Reduction of Wages Below their Value. Marx said this is one of the most important factors stemming the tendency for the rate of profit to fall, yet put study of this to one side because it disobeys an assumption required for his general analysis of capital that all commodities, including labour-power, are bought and sold at their full value. As Jaime Osorio in Mexico has noted, this is taken by some Marxist currents to be an iron law, obviating both the systematic importance of super-exploitation and the need for a theory of it. This paper argues that the globalisation of production, driven by capitalists craving for labour-power paid below its value (or, at any rate, lower than its value in imperialist countries) means that the need to develop Marxs general theory to encompass super-exploitation is acute and that resistance to this is untenable. Super-exploitation does not replace monopoly or national differences in capital intensity and labour productivity, nor does it negate their critical importance to a theory of 21st century imperialism. But all of these categories are modified by the necessary inclusion of super-exploitation. This paper contributes to the debate by exploring how super-exploitation interacts with monopoly in global production processes, and why national differences in productivity and organic composition cannot be used to obscure the actuality of super-exploitation. The paper concludes by arguing that not only is this long-needed step key to understanding contemporary crisis-bound capitalist imperialism, its focus on the reproduction of labour power in different national settings opens paths to questions at the heart of social

reproduction theory, fostering the evolution of Marxism as a unified theory of all forms of capitalist exploitation and oppression.

## **Cooperation as the Institution of the Common - On Cooperative Movement in Prewar Poland**

**Bartomiej Besznowski (Institute of Applied Social Science, University of Warsaw, institute of Philosophy and Sociology, Polish Academy of Sciences)**

The aim of the paper is twofold. First, it is to interpret the main philosophical ideas of the Polish cooperative movement from the first part of the twentieth century and how they were applied in practice, by using the conceptual vocabulary of post-structuralist and post-Operaist political philosophy; and, second, to further develop the notion of institutions of the common that Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri introduced during debates about alternatives to both capitalism and the state-form with their formulation of principles of the common, which is to say, general principles for creating democratic and popular institutions around the ideas of inclusion and solidarity, an ethos of mutual help and democratic governance over production and exchange of material wealth.

## **Small businessmen between Radicalization and Inclusion: Cycle of Mobilization and Collective Action Repertoires during the 1960s in Greece**

**nikos Potamianos (Institute for Mediterranean Studies - Foundation for Research and Technology Hellas, Greece), Spyros Dimanopoulos (University of Crete), Kostas Katsoudas (Panteion University, Athens), Christos Chadziioissif (University of Crete)**

The proposed paper sets out to examine the repertoires of collective action developed by Greek shopkeepers and master artisans amid the cycle of mobilization during the 1960s. Older studies have indicated the increase of the mobilizations of the lower middle class between 1963-1967. They were grounded on “traditional” demands, such as commercial rent regulation, alleviation of tax burden and provision of credit to small business. These demands were paired with new concerns, such as the unease regarding the impact that Greek accession to the EEC would have on small enterprise sectors. Scholarship on the field has debated whether those mobilizations could be attributed to a radicalization of the traditional petite bourgeoisie or to a reformulation of conservative class anxieties claims. However, the existing debate still lacks a thorough examination of the forms of collective action and the discursive construction of demands promoted by petite bourgeois associations. Contemporary Greek scholars have applied the theoretical perspective of collective action by referring to the 1960s as a contentious decade and a cycle of protest. Focusing mainly on labor and agricultural unionism and the emergence of new social



movements (students, youth), they have attributed the sharp increase of acts of collective contention to the radicalization of various sectors of Greek society. They have also pointed out the deployment of a repertoire of contentious practices (meetings, marches, strikes) which questioned the dominant system of corporatist arrangements, forged during the formative postwar years of the Greek “limited democracy”. Our paper places the study of master artisans and shopkeepers mobilizations within the political opportunity structure, created by the crisis of Greek limited democracy in the 1960s. We seek to understand the nature of the unrest of the traditional petite bourgeoisie by discussing the forms of collective action undertaken and by putting it against the background of radical challenges to the institutional framework of state corporatism. In addition, we will examine whether these particular choices were related to the prevalence of class self-representations of middle class collectivities or, on the contrary, they were based on the articulation of an all-encompassing national or democratic discourse.

## **The Idea of Revolution and Time in Lenin and Benjamin**

**Yunus Yucel (PhD Student at the Department of Public Administration and Political Science at METU)**

This paper aims to combine Lenin and Benjamin’s understanding of revolutions with respect to time to think on contemporary revolutionary politics after the collapse of the USSR. Even though, both of them have very different perspectives on history and revolution, I believe that combining these two radically different approaches may provide a fruitful discussion on revolution. For Marx, time has two dominant meanings in capitalism: the time of capital flow and the time of revolution which is active at the same time but in the opposite directions which led a fatalistic interpretation of history specifically by the 2nd Second International. The one who opposes this fatalistic understanding of history was Lenin by combining this structural form of flows of time with *kairos* i.e. the right time to act for revolution. Furthermore, Lenin’s vanguard party interpretation has a double meaning: the temporal gap between revolutionary and actual time; and the party as an instrument to close this temporal gap. On the other hand, while the party undertakes the vanguard role (temporally ahead of the masses), it undermines the possibility of political subjectivity which eventually led appropriation of the revolution by the party and the state through their unification. However, Benjamin offers a “state of emergency” against fascism i.e. revolution which occurs in *Jetztzeit*, time of collective experience. Benjamin’s idea of revolution as collective experience in time can also be a way to think the idea of revolution other than party and state unification. Therefore, this paper aims to offer to think the idea of revolution with time: Leninist understanding of the party for closing the temporal gap for revolution with *kairos* and Benjamin’s *Jetztzeit*.

## The Poverty of Intersectionality

**Erica Michelle Lagalisse (London School of Economics)**

This ethnographic study of social movements in North America explores how and why activist praxes surrounding the intersectionality concept are not necessarily those originally proposed by black feminist activists and theorists: Intersectionality is often operationalized to rationalize class entitlements by propertising the self with (rights-bearing) identities, and in ways that presume a symmetry of ontology and mathematics both the (governing) imaginary of statistics, and that of calculus, with its vocabulary of axes. Even anarchist activists, who aim to operate outside the logics of capital and nation-state governmentality, pre-empt the black feminist challenge of intersectionality by recuperating its praxis within the logic of neoliberal self-making projects and property relations. By studying intersectionality as an ethnographic object, social scientific developments of intersectionality also appear to be influenced by historical, culturally-specific mathematical and liberal propertising imperatives. In turn, the cultural contradictions characterizing left activism may develop in certain dialectic with social science activities.

## Economic Planning

**James Roberts (University of Auckland Economic and Social Research Aotearoa)**

We are facing a plethora of crises. Between the bees dying, unparalleled weather extremes, rising nationalism, increasing wealth concentration, and petty sectarian infighting, political organising is becoming increasingly bleak and desperate. However, these are problems we can and must move through and beyond. To this end discussions of economic planning need to be undertaken with a renewed seriousness. Political organisation, in the face of multiple adversities, needs to be paired with a long-term strategic focus that brings together social, economic, and political phenomenon in their material and abstract forms. This paper starts by considering the socialist calculation debate of the 20th Century. The debate influenced and continues to influence the technological and economic direction of many political movements. However, it is party to many false assumptions and misguided frames of analysis. Using the arguments of contemporary systematic dialectics and value-form theories, this paper questions the foundations of the debate and asks what its failings can show us. The aim is not to dismiss the debate, but, synthesize its kernels of truths with a broader project. The problem of motivation, highlighted by Hayek, was side-lined by the socialist faction of the calculation debate. This treatment, among other points, segues us to the main thrust of this paper. Our problems today are not purely economic nor technological. Neither a perfect plan nor a high-tech deus ex machina will deliver us from dystopia. Rather, it is a question of politics and social relations. The question of how we plan. We have already begun building alternatives to capitalism. From proto-communist arrangements, revolutionary experiments, and the radical potentials of projects embedded in capitalism. This is a question of form as well as content. Hence this paper does not address what the plan is, but instead how we can continue to re-orient our thinking

towards co-creating one. Beyond prescriptivism from above, in our age of crises we need a multiplicity of plans that embrace the chaos, lack, and contingency of the world from below.

## **Material Ecocriticism: The Material Turn in Arundhati Roys Non-Fiction**

**Suhasini Vincent (Universit Paris 2 - Pantho Assas)**

In her Arthur Miller Freedom to Write Lecture, Booker Prize winning novelist, Arundhati Roy muses on what it means to be an activist-writer in a world where the delicate web of interdependence of Man and Nature is dictated by Capitalism and International treaties. In the present era of surveillance capitalism where her non-fiction has often been viewed with a disdainful eye, Arundhati Roy voices dissent against repression, globalisation, economic progress, environmental exploitation and dams proposed in the name of greater common good. This paper shall study how Roys political essays constitute a discursive enterprise replete with a material mesh of meanings, properties and processes, in which human and non-human players are interlocked in networks that produce undeniable signifying forces as described by Iovino in Material Ecocriticism (1-2). This paper shall thus aim at studying how Roy explores the problems facing postcolonial India, distrusts materialistic forces that crush displaced communities, and takes part in the new emerging paradigm of making a material turn, thus considering possible ways of analysing language and reality, human and non-human life, mind and matter through eco-critical advocacy and aesthetics. I shall explore Roys environmental advocacy in her work of non-fiction entitled Capitalism: A Ghost Story where she challenges government policies, discusses varying viewpoints of global and local concerns, criticizes corporate philanthropy and proposes a new ecocritical perspective based on distinctive cultural, political and historical facts. This paper will thus consider how Roy through her essays expresses her distrust of materialistic forces that crush displaced communities in the name of Green Capitalism. We shall see how Roy takes part in the new emerging paradigm of making a material turn, thus considering possible ways of avoiding the depletion of our planets resources through eco-critical advocacy and aesthetics.

## **Revisiting Engels on the Housing Question**

**Jonas Grahn (Lund University, Sweden)**

Housing prices are going up all over the world. As a result, many have experienced widespread displacement in a process known as gentrification. How ought we to understand it? More importantly, how can it be fought? Great inspiration for answering these questions can be found in a nearly 150-year-old text, by Friedrich Engelss called On the Housing Question. Engelss text, written in 1872 as a response to a debate that was taking place in Volkstaat, a German journal, between anarchists and philanthropic bourgeois on a housing shortage, has been quoted appreciatively and referred to in passing by prominent Marxists such as David Harvey, Henri Lefebvre, and Vladimir Ilych Lenin.

However, hardly anyone has conducted a close analysis of the text or discussed what it might provide for us today. This presentation will be dedicated to this task. In *On the Housing Question* Engels does not merely describe the bad housing conditions of the poor. Rather, he is primarily interested in describing, and critiquing, the various positions on the housing question on offer at the time. He is mainly focused on those positions held by Proudhon, and the philanthropic bourgeoisie. In discussing them, he outlines his own (revolutionary) standpoint. Included in Engels's pamphlet is also discussions on topics like the nature of the state, the antithesis between town and country, and the importance for the social movement of having a clear understanding of the capitalist mode of production, in order to work out a strategy for overcoming it. All in all, it is a remarkable text because: 1) so few have studied it, and 2) that many positions critiqued in it are still with us today. Therefore, the text deserves a revisit.

## **The Financialisation of Car Dependency**

**Tom Haines-Doran (SOAS, University of London)**

New financial products to aid the purchase of cars have emerged, the aim of which has been to advance credit to consumers, whose falling income has suppressed demand for new cars. Many countries have witnessed the rise to dominance of personal contract plans' (PCPs), by which consumers finance the depreciation of the vehicle without committing to full ownership. This paper argues that the rise of PCPs has important implications for efforts to make transport systems environmentally sustainable. I use a Systems of Provision approach to understand the material cultures' of car consumption. I argue that a particular culture of consumption has been created around personal car ownership, in part reflecting the economic conditions and contradictions inherent in car manufacturing. Cars are most people's second biggest area of expenditure, and yet, in contrast to housing, their exchange value depreciates rapidly. This is partly because of a car culture that favours novelty and luxury, which maintains demand for new, high specification, vehicles. But cars also provide an 'indispensable' use value to individuals. Consumers' reliance on their car reduces the risk of them reneging on lease agreements, thus aiding securitisation within the financial sector, producing low rates of interest. In short, we are witnessing the rapid financialisation of car culture. PCPs facilitate cash-strapped individuals to participate in car culture, by allowing them access to vehicles formerly outside of their price range, and more frequently. The result is a greater ownership of new and more luxurious cars, increasing short term profitability for manufacturers and financiers, but also increased financial insecurity for consumers. This seriously mitigates efforts to address car dependency and the social and environmental damage that it brings.

# Philosophy of praxis practice of philosophy

Paula Rauhala (PhD student)

Philosophy of praxis practice of philosophy Chair: Paula Rauhala Speakers: Sauli Havu, Juha Koivisto, Mikko Lahtinen, Jussi Mtt, Simo Pieniniemi Marx's critique of the old materialism in his note ad Feuerbach, later known as Theses on Feuerbach, does not operate on the terrain of materialism in the old sense nor on that of idealism, but on a radically new terrain that is not philosophy in the older sense of the word. Though the Theses on Feuerbach, written in the spring of 1845, have the form of a philosophical fragment mostly associated with the antiquity, they lead us to a new direction. Theses on Feuerbach forms an essential background in Antonio Labriola and Antonio Gramsci's philosophy of praxis. Labriola argued convincingly against positivism, reductionism and determinism. He understood Marxism as a philosophy of praxis and stressed its theoretical self-sufficiency against different revisionist currents. In this, he was a big influence on Antonio Gramsci, who indeed borrowed the term philosophy of praxis from Labriola. Distinctive character of Gramsci's philosophy of praxis is that he emphasized not only the theoretical content of philosophy but the practical forms it takes in the reality of class struggles. Gramsci also problematizes the hegemonic understanding of a philosopher as an individual by presenting his idea of a democratic philosopher whose personality is not limited to himself as a physical individual but is an active social relationship of modification of the cultural environment. For Adorno, a possible new form of philosophy was a problem, too. He wanted not only to point out the errors of particular philosophers but to problematize philosophy as such, and to steer it towards the history and social reality. Theses on Feuerbach, philosophy of praxis or Adorno's critical understanding of philosophy will help us to create critical and also self-critical perspectives on academic philosophical practices (including academic Marxism) and to develop subversive intellectual strategies and practices for Marxist philosophy in the reality of contemporary class struggles. Presentations:

1. Juha Koivisto: On Theses on Feuerbach Docent, Tampere University, [juha.koivisto@tuni.fi](mailto:juha.koivisto@tuni.fi) Marx's critique of the old materialism in his note ad Feuerbach, later known as Theses on Feuerbach, does not operate on the terrain of materialism in the old sense of the word nor on that of idealism, but on a radically new terrain that is not philosophy in the older sense of the word. Though the Theses on Feuerbach, written in the spring of 1845, have the form of a philosophical fragment mostly associated with the antiquity, they lead us to a new direction. According to Marx, Feuerbach misunderstands both 1) practice and 2) theory. (The misunderstanding of practice contains as its double the misunderstanding of theory and vice versa.) 3) This misunderstanding of practice manifests itself in Feuerbach's understanding of the essence of man. Yet, in Marx's new view practice is the soil from which pure thinking secretly draws its resources. The secret behind the flowering of pure thinking is to be found on the terrain that pure thinking excludes from its origin, essence or telos. Leaving this behind, for Marx practice articulates together following dimensions and positions: A) activity (vs. old materialism) B) sensuous, gegenständlich (vs. idealism) C) practical, social, revolutionary (terrain of the new materialism) The new path opened by ad Feuerbach led Marx himself to new conceptions. For example, it looks like he soon finds the

use of praxis in singular inadequate. In the soon following manuscripts known under the name *The German Ideology* praxis has not a prominent place. Perhaps his striving to analyse the articulation (*Gliederung*) of various relations and practices stands in a certain inverse relation to a general talk about praxis, subsuming or leading beyond it? But wasn't this precisely Marx's perspective when using praxis in his *Thesis on Feuerbach*? And this would lead us to leave the prevailing philosophy even more decisively behind us. This is also why for serious attempts to understand and develop further Marx's and his best followers' contributions there is no way to ignore his *Theses on Feuerbach*.

2. Sauli Havu: The contradiction between politics and philosophy in Antonio Labriola  
Sauli Havu, Student, Tampere University, sauli.havu@tuni.fi  
Antonio Labriola was something of an exception amongst late 19th century Marxists. A professor of philosophy, who corresponded with Engels and dared to disagree with him on certain theoretical points. Labriola argued convincingly against positivism, reductionism and determinism. He understood Marxism as a philosophy of praxis and stressed its theoretical self-sufficiency against different revisionist currents. In this, he was a big influence on Antonio Gramsci, who indeed borrowed the term philosophy of praxis from Labriola. Labriola's three essays on historical materialism have been considered a landmark in Marxist literature. It seems that recently there has been a certain renaissance in the interest in Labriola. For example, Wolfgang Fritz Haug writes in his foreword to the new German edition of the *Essays* that because of his theoretical innovations, Labriola should be considered a co-founder of Marxism. In a similar manner, Alberto Burgio has argued that for Gramsci, Labriola's name was a synonym for the correct interpretation of historical materialism. In this respect it is interesting to note that in addition to praising Labriola, Gramsci also writes that Labriola shows tendencies of empiristic mechanism and comes close to vulgar evolutionism. Gramsci singles out especially Labriola's stance on colonialism. Indeed, Labriola supported Italian colonialism and seemed to consider it necessary for the development of socialism. According to him, the interests of socialists cannot be opposed to national interests. He also argued that colonialism is always justified in places where there are no vital nations. In addition, he wrote that nations can be divided into active and passive ones. In my presentation I explore the tension between Labriola's often ingenious and ground-breaking philosophical views and his highly problematic political practice. Through this example, I want to also reflect on the question how Marxist intellectual history should be written. In the recent discussion on Labriola by Haug and others, Labriola's problematic side has been largely forgotten while his philosophical innovations have been praised. The important question is whether such an intellectual practice fails to achieve the standards set by Marx and Engels' critique of philosophy.

3. Jussi Mänti: Gramsci's Philosophy of Praxis as a Political Project  
Jussi Mänti, Student, Tampere University, jussi.maatta@tuni.fi  
It is widely accepted nowadays that Gramsci's phrase "philosophy of praxis" was not used simply to avoid prison censorship, but rather to nominate a new, more praxis-oriented Marxism in contrast to the official Marxist dogma that was being established in the international socialist movement at the time, particularly within the Third International. Gramsci denounced this kind of Marxism, with its metaphysics of matter, as one-sided "ideologism" that ought to be superseded in a philosophy of praxis. In order to understand the crux of his criticism, it is crucial to



decipher the concept of “ideology” and to map out its various usages in the Prison Notebooks. This paper will focus on the differing interpretations of the concept of ideology, particularly with respect to the disagreement between Peter Thomas and Jan Rehmann, where Thomas emphasizes a neutral reading and Rehmann advocates an ideology-critical approach. The importance of this debate is in the practical implications that philosophy of praxis presents for any political project of marxist inclinations. On the one hand, all political struggles must be fought on the ‘terrain of ideologies’ determined by the contradictions of the current class society; on the other hand, the aim of a marxist political movement is to overcome these contradictions in a classless society, and hence to move from the realm of necessity to the realm of freedom. This contradiction poses a challenge to any revolutionary movement, and philosophy of praxis, as formulated by Gramsci, offers key insights on how it ought to be resolved.

4. Mikko Lahtinen: Louis Althusser and Antonio Gramsci's philosophy of praxis  
Senior Lecturer (Tampere University, Finland), mikko.lahtinen@tuni.fi  
The thesis of my presentation is that in developing his self-criticism (from 1966 onwards) Louis Althusser took more positive attitude towards Gramsci's philosophy of praxis than in *Reading Capital* (1965). However, Althusser never really recognized the subversive core of Gramsci's concept of philosophy or of the philosopher as an organic intellectual. Although Althusser's self-criticism increasingly emphasized the importance of the union or the interaction between theory and practice, unlike Gramsci in his *Prison Notebooks*, Althusser never put forward any concrete materialist analyses concerning the relations of philosopher-intellectuals and the masses. When it comes to questions of organization, the essential difference between Gramsci and Althusser is that for Althusser philosophy remained an institutionalized profession practiced by traditional academic intellectuals (philosophers as researchers and teachers of philosophy). For Althusser philosopher remained a solitary figure, not a democratic philosopher whose personality is not limited to herself as a physical individual but is an active social relationship of modification of the cultural environment, as Gramsci put it (*Selections from The Prison Notebooks*, p. 350-1). The distinctive character of Gramsci's philosophy of praxis is, firstly, that Gramsci emphasized not only the theoretical content of philosophy but the practical forms it takes as well in the Crocean reactive philosophy or in the Marxist philosophy of praxis in the reality of class struggles. Secondly, Gramsci's thesis that all men are philosophers sets a practical/historical task for Marxist philosophy to develop itself as a subversive materialist practice in which it could develop organic relationship between working class and intellectuals, between Marxist philosophy and common sense. Thirdly, for Gramsci Marxist philosophy is not a ready-made philosophical system that philosopher-intellectuals develop in their conventional academic practices and then spread (popularize) among the masses. On the contrary, Gramsci understood Marxist philosophy as self-reflective process where the essential problem is the relationship between Marxist philosophy and common sense. This relationship is a practical issue pointing to the struggles for hegemony in capitalist society. Gramsci asked how to develop material apparatuses of hegemony where the thesis every man is a philosopher can come true as a part of a proletarian hegemonic project. Fourthly, Gramsci problematized the prevailing understanding of a philosopher as an individual by presenting his idea of a democratic philosopher whose personality is not

limited to himself as a physical individual but is an active social relationship of modification of the cultural environment (ibid., p. 350-1).

5. Simo Pieniniemi: On Adorno's Philosophical Practice the Case of Culture Industry Doctoral Student, Faculty of Information Technology and Communication Sciences, Tampere University, simo.pieniniemi@tuni.fi It is a well-known story that Theodor W. Adorno had issues with the culture industry. Yet, Adorno's actual position is quite often misunderstood. Usually, he is seen as an elitist who deemed high culture as a locus of eternal artistic standards and as an opposite of the culture industry. However, what is not noticed is that also in his writings on culture industry he was pursuing the goals of his philosophical practice. Typically, in his philosophical practice Adorno did not defend any of the positions but put all of them under the scrutiny. This way he wanted not only to point out the errors of particular philosophers but to problematize philosophy as such, and to steer it towards the history and social reality. In my presentation, I want to argue that this is pretty much the case in Adorno's analysis of the culture industry too. In his analysis, Adorno reveals the highly problematic nature of the culture industry. Yet, he simply does not favour high art. Instead, he questions the status and value of high culture too. Most importantly, what Adorno actually claims is that, in order to understand the opposition between the culture industry and high culture, we need to abandon strictly aesthetic approach, and to read these cultural forms as responses to the contradictions of capitalist development.

## **The Importance of Brains, Nerves, and Muscles in Marx's Capital**

**Paula Rauhala (PhD student, Tampere University)**

A number of readers and interpreters of Marx's Capital find Marx's definition of the substance of value, abstract labor, as "expenditure of human labor power", irrespective of the branch of production, or as "a productive expenditure of human brains, nerves, and muscles" deeply problematic. Not only the proponents of the "monetary interpretation" of Marx's theory of value today, like Moishe Postone, or Michael Heinrich, but also many Soviet economists, and a number of important economists of the former German Democratic Republic, claim that abstract labor should rather be understood as "a social relation". Despite the fact that Marx talks about the substance of value as productive "expenditure of human labor power" more than fifty times in Capital, and in its manuscripts, numerous readers of Marx have found that his definitions of abstract labor are transhistorical and hence, naturalising what is the societal property of labor - its capacity to use value. Therefore the critics claim that these passages contradict Marx's socially and historically specific analysis of the capitalist mode of production. In this paper, I discuss why the idea of productive expenditure of human muscles, nerves, and brain is important in Capital. Marx does not only discuss the consumption of human labor power in the context of the substance of value, but also in the context of the intensity of labor, and in the context of wages. Even if wages are nominated in terms of money, this quantity has to be determined in such a way that a worker is able to reproduce her mental and bodily capacities to work. Marx writes that in the labor process, "a definite quantity of human muscle, nerve, brain, &c, is wasted, and these require to be restored." If the labor process is

intensified, “increased expenditure demands a larger income.” As these passages show, in Marx’s theory, monetary economy is necessarily connected to the human physiology. Also the capitalist mode of production is dependent on the reproduction of human body, and of the bodily and mental energies of the worker. Labor, being physiological on the one hand and social on the other hand, connects the circuits of matter and value in the economy. Therefore I propose that in his definitions of abstract labor Marx does not contradict himself, because the concept of abstract labor does not, in itself, yet explain anything. Also other concepts are necessary for the understanding of the formation of value, not to mention, the formation and the functioning of the capitalist mode of production.

## **Common Sense with/against Philosophy. A Gramscian critique of Henri De Mans Populism**

**Brecht De Smet (Ghent University)**

Between the First and Second World Wars the Belgian socialist leader Henri De Man formulated an influential critique of Marxism, moving away from the dominant structuralist, vulgar materialist, and positivist readings of Marx to the study of the everyday, lived experience and psychology of the working class. Antonio Gramsci was one of many authors who engaged with De Man’s writings. Gramsci’s appreciation of De Man, however, did not simply entail a full embrace or complete rejection of his ideas. Gramsci lauded De Man for stressing the importance of popular conceptions of the world, instinct, spontaneity, psychology, and common sense, but immediately castigated the Belgian socialist for opposing common sense to philosophy and psychology to Marxism. He argued that De Man was correct in taking spontaneous philosophy as the starting point of emancipatory politics, but wrong to essentialise this common sense as a fixed, primordial psychology, without the need for development. This paper not only retraces Gramsci’s critique of De Man, but also connects De Man’s view of common sense to contemporary debates on populism. Moreover, the paper frames Gramsci’s critical understanding of psychology and the role of philosophy through the work of Valentin Voloshinov, Lev Vygotsky, and Evald Ilyenkov. Finally, it posits that Gramsci’s distinction and organic unity between spontaneous philosophy and philosophy proper is firmly rooted in Hegel’s criticism of Kant’s dichotomy of Intuition and Reason.

## **Feminist movements challenging the rise of femonationalism: building a counter-hegemonic feminist and antiracist project in France and Great-Britain**

**Charlene Calderaro (PhD Student at the University of Lausanne, Switzerland)**

The articulation of gender and race within feminist movements raises key issues in a femonationalist context, in which nationalist and neoliberal governments use the rhetoric

of women's rights, often with the convergence of mainstream feminist movements. This paper aims at analyzing the transformations of feminist movements in France and in Great-Britain. In order to do this, I will focus on the modalities of articulating gender and race in a femonationalist context. I wish to answer to the questions of how radical feminist movements articulate gender and race to face this femonationalist context, trying to develop a counter-hegemonic project both within feminism and within neoliberal society. In the French context, femonationalism spreads out specifically around an anti-Islam prism, with the convergence of mainstream feminist organisations and femocrats of women's rights public institutions. This alliance is crystallized by the bans and polemics on the hijab, to which mainstream feminist organisations have, for some, contributed from the 2004 law banning the hijab at school and the 2010 law banning the integral veil to the more recent polemics around the burqini or the running hijab. Others, self-defined in different modalities; as feminist antiracist, decolonial or intersectional, try to oppose this feminist universalist stance by articulating gender and race in different manners and by means of diverse theoretical approaches. In Great-Britain, where racial issues are addressed differently due to socio-historical context, and where the degree of the institutionalization of women's rights is lower, the articulation of gender and race within feminist movements raises different issues. Still, femonationalism spreads out even in different ways and address political and strategic issues to feminist movements. I intend to explore how feminist movements, in France and Great-Britain, answer to this context in their articulation of gender and race in theory and practice, and how social reproduction theories represent a resource so as to deal with gender, race, capitalism and neoliberalism in these two different contexts. The objective is to focus on the use of Marxist-feminist theories of social reproduction to deal with gender and race in feminist movements: How do social reproduction theories enable to articulate gender and race addressing the femonationalist context in which feminist movements operate, specifically in France and Great-Britain? How do they provide resource to develop a counter-hegemonic project that is both feminist and antiracist? How do they give tools to oppose both nationalist and neoliberal politics tokenizing women's rights in a racist prism and mainstream feminist movements that converge with that racist and Islamophobic agenda? I propose to explore how social reproduction theories provide core theoretical tools to deal with the femonationalist context in which feminist movements operate, while departing from the theoretical and practical limits of intersectionality.

## **The political economy of labour struggles in logistics**

**Joerg Nowak (University of Nottingham)**

Various publications have identified workers in logistics as a new power centre, able to block crucial choke points, and identified logistics as a central moment of global production networks. This contribution aims to shed light on the assumptions of existing accounts of labour in logistics, and add a wider view on investments in logistics and infrastructure to understand the underpinning dynamics of labour conflict in logistics. A starting point is the dependency of economic cycles in transport and logistics on the production volumes in the sectors that hire transport and logistics. This raises questions about the significance of the

logistics sector. Another issue is the dependency of transport and logistics on larger infrastructure and energy policies. The theoretical assumptions will be elaborated with reference to the strike of truckers and petroleum platform workers in Brazil in May 2018 which put the close connection of the transport and the energy sector into focus. In this strike, it was significant that truckers remained stuck with narrow sectoral demands, while petroleum workers raised larger questions regarding the energy policy and privatisation of state oil company Petrobras.

## **Reason and the Neganthropocene: Considering Bernard Stieglers Cure for the Coming Extinction**

**Solange Vivienne Manche (The University of Cambridge, King's College)**

In *The Automatic Society*, Bernard Stiegler declares that we can escape the Anthropocene by producing negentropy. Our cure for the coming extinction would be a return to reason. Albeit building upon the much-contested commonality of declaring the Anthropocene to have started with the invention of the steam engine (1784), [1] his conviction that the most fatal aspect of our current ecological crisis is our generalised loss of knowledge avoids a simplistic accusation of the Anthropos for our current environmental disaster. On the contrary, Stiegler focusses on how capital forces everything into a rationalised and calculable system, which would fundamentally impede our self-reflexive qualities and our noetic development, a paradox that simultaneously lies at the heart of climate change denial.[2] He identifies this reduction of existence to sameness, which is accelerated by computation, automation, and platform capitalism as a form of entropy. Hence, we would need to turn the Anthropocene, or in effect the Entropocene, into a Neganthropocene.[3] This could be achieved by mobilising new digital technologies in such a way as to dis-automatize knowledge. Besides looking into how Stiegler offers a novel approach in contrast to the post-humanist argument that we should decentralise the human,[4] the aim is here to consider whether the Neganthropocene could offer a new horizon to think beyond the Anthropocene. It shall be argued, however, that Stieglers depoliticization of Marxist thought, in particular in relation to his notion of proletarianisation, and his failure to take into account the concrete conditions of exploitation that the production of digital technologies rely upon, can only lead to a contemporary revival of the Greek model where slave work (*poesis*) enables the idle activity, politics and philosophical thinking of Greek citizens (*praxis*, *theora*). [5] [1] Contested by Andreas Malm in *Fossil Capital*, (2016) by Donna Haraway in *Tentacular Thinking: Anthropocene, Capitalocene, Chthulucene*, (2016) as well as by Jason Moore in *Anthropocene or Capitalocene? Nature, History, and the Crisis of Capitalism* (2016). [2] Bernard Stiegler, *The Neganthropocene*, ed. and trans. Daniel Ross (Open Humanities Press, 2018), 192. [3] Bernard Stiegler, *Automatic Society: Volume 1, The Future of Work*, trans. Daniel Ross (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2016), 69. [4] Advocated by Patricia MacCormack in *Posthuman Ethics: Embodiment and Cultural Theory*, (2012) by Rosi Braidottis in *The Posthuman*, (2013) as well as by Donna Haraway. [5] Christian Fuchs, *Digital Labour and Karl Marx* (London: Routledge, 2014), 24.

## **`Orban and Empire: An environmental history of Bedouin communities resistance against the French colonization attempt in Egypt, 1798-1801**

**Amr Khairy Ahmed (Lund University)**

By applying the theoretical concepts of wilderness, and uneven and combined development, I provide a partial environmental history of the French invasion of Egypt (1798-1801). This history addresses how Egypts ecological settings influenced the resistance to the French colonization attempt, and how the French occupation sought to change the ecological settings of Egypt and why. By reconstructing two moments of the Bedouin communities resistance against the French invasion, the paper concludes that wilderness, which shaped the contours of uneven and combined development of sedentary and nomadic populations at that moment, granted the resistance combat technology and tactic. The French sought to change these same ecological settings by dispossessing mobile populations of their mobility, in order to create a different uneven and combined development in Egypt, more friendly to a colonial core-periphery extraction process. The study presents an attempt at an environmental historical approach to understanding Egypts history at the turn of the 19th century, and an attempt towards approaching the desert as wilderness, as a contribution to the theoretical discussion on wilderness in the sub-discipline of ecocriticism.

## **The Reproduction Schemes and the TPRF: An Agent-Based Approach**

**Marco Veronese Passarella (University of Leeds)**

My work aims at revisiting Marxs theories of crisis in the light of recent developments in heterodox macroeconomics. For Marxs formal approach shows a clear resemblance to non-neoclassical modelling techniques (notably, stock-flow consistent models and heterogeneous interacting agent-based models). More specifically, the research questions I try to address are: Does the 'tendency for the profit rate to fall' (TPRF) story hold? What is the significance of the Okishios theorem? What is the role of technical innovation at the micro vs. macro level? For this purpose, I use a dynamic model based on Marx's insights. My main finding is that there is no necessary contradiction between individual incentive to innovate (micro level) and the TPRF (macro level). On the contrary, the TPRF can be regarded as unintended consequence of the twofold class struggle marking capitalist economies.

## **Neoliberal Hobbesianism and The Mainstream Disaster Imaginary**

**Rhiannon Firth (University of Essex)**

This paper takes a critical standpoint informed by anarchist and communization theories to uncover some of the shared assumptions of dominant theories informing mainstream



disaster politics, including risk society, associationalism, social capital and resilience. These theories are founded on an understanding of human nature as self-interested, competitive, violent, and motivated by irrational passions. The paper traces this line of thought from 17th century social contract theorist Thomas Hobbes, through social Darwinism, evolutionary psychology and theories informing the New Right such as Rational Choice Theory. It is argued that neoliberalism is the contemporary institutionalization of this line of thought, whereby the state becomes the ultimate arbiter of merit and need, supposedly protecting its citizenry from the worst vicissitudes of crisis whilst shaping the environment through policy manipulations to provoke certain behaviours in individuals, whilst the agents of capital similarly mobilize nudges to manipulate people into internalizing good consumer values. Neoliberal governance thus proceeds through inner subjection, compliance and self-surveillance. It is argued that this form of governance is founded on an (erroneous) Hobbesian view of anarchy which imagines society as a battleground of competing interests to which states provide coherence or direction. Despite the seeming transformation of the state under neoliberalism from paternalistic, welfare-providing Leviathan to decentralized cybernetic governance, the vicissitudes of power are as authoritarian as ever. This dynamic is exposed during disasters where community and social movement responses are treated as either exploitable resources to be co-opted, or as dangerously unpredictable and requiring repression. It is argued these responses are two sides of the same coin. The paper draws on examples, including some primary empirical research, from social movements in the USA that mobilized around natural disasters including Occupy Sandy and Common Ground during Katrina.

## **Elena Ferrantes Neapolitan novels as feminist and working class literature**

**Marta Baradic**

This paper will analyse Elena Ferrantes Neapolitan novels in the context of feminist and working class literature, focusing on ways in which the strategies and concerns of second wave feminism, such as the material and symbolic oppression of women or the notion that capitalism and patriarchy are mutually constitutive, are articulated in the novels, with the emphasis on two currents dominant in Italy at the time: the autonomous Lotta Femminista and difference feminism of Rivolta Femminile. Among others, problem of women's unpaid work, i.e. relation between productive and reproductive labour, will be closely examined.

## **Crisis tendencies, stagnationist tendencies and the institutional regulation of capitalism**

**Matt Vidal (Loughborough University)**

In this paper I develop Marxist crisis theory in two ways. First, I distinguish crisis tendencies from stagnationist tendencies. Second, drawing from Marx and from regulation theory, I

specify how the institutional configuration of national and international accumulation regimes work to offset, mitigate or intensify the inherent crisis and stagnationist tendencies of capitalism. The primary crisis tendency of capitalism is the overaccumulation of capital. Such crises entail a wave of bankruptcies alongside large-scale devaluations of capital and widespread corporate restructuring, and are typically preceded by an extended recession and often associated with bubbles (due to speculation with surplus capital). Global crises fitting this description have occurred in 1857, 1873, 1929, 1973, and 2008. I refer to the other tendencies Marx theorized a falling profit rate and underconsumption as stagnationist tendencies. They do not lead directly to crises (as defined above) but dampen growth, intensify competition, increase fragility and instability, and exacerbate the tendencies toward overproduction and overaccumulation. Further, the profit rate may be reduced if a class compromise between capital and labor results in an increased wage share, resulting in a profit squeeze. Finally, drawing from post-Keynesian economics, a third stagnationist tendency is debt-led growth. I show that in the western world, the institutions of the Fordist accumulation regime (1945 - ~1970), offset or mitigated all the crisis and stagnationist tendencies of capitalism. In the post-Fordist regime, which began in the 1970s and continues today, the stagnationist tendencies have been unleashed and crisis tendencies exacerbated. I argue that the Fordist era was anomalous and that the current phase of stagnation and crisis is the normal state of postindustrial capitalism in a globalized economy.

## **Dialectical Materialism and the Climate Crisis: A Lacanian Perspective**

**Kai Heron (Politics and International Relations The University of Manchester)**

What would a materialism up to the task of thinking our climate crisis look like? How would it conceive of the crucial distinction between substance and subject? In his essay, *The Progress of This Storm*, Andreas Malm makes an impassioned case for dialectical materialism as the only theory capable of thinking our ongoing climate crisis. For Malm, the recent proliferation of so-called materialist theories - from post-humanism, to object orientated ontology, to actor network theory and Deleuzian inflected new materialisms undermine Marx's all-important distinction between human action and what it acts upon, between labour-power and nature. So far so good. And yet from a Lacanian perspective, Malm errs when he opts for a naive realism in which nature is out there and independent from what Lacan calls the consequences of the signifier. Thus, while trying to correct various false materialisms, Malm bends the stick too far the other way. All the way, in fact, to an idealist dialectics. This paper argues that what is missing from Malm's dialectical materialism is the category of the subject. It is the subject that mediates the distinction between nature and society as a distinction within nature itself. The paper concludes with some remarks about the repercussions of this theory for action against climate change.

## **Reading the Formation of the Islamic Bourgeoisie from an Alternative Perspective: A Comparison between Turkey and Egypt**

**Sezai Doruk Soyata (Koc University)**

The Islamists capital accumulation and the formation of the Islamic Bourgeoisie have mustered considerable scholarly attention and the subject was studied from different angles. Turkey is one of the most significant examples of this issue of the formation of the Islamic bourgeoisie, starting from 1980s with economic liberalization and restructuring and later on institutionalization of the Islamic bourgeoisie with the establishment of the MSAD (Mstakil Sanayici ve Adamlar Dernei - Independent Industrialists and Businessmen Association) in 1991, and with the intensification of the neoliberal economy policies of the AKP. Another important example of the formation of the Islamic bourgeoisie is in Egypt. After Nasser, Egypt experienced a significant liberalization process called Infitah period under Sadat and this process intensified under the Mubarak regime. Hence, an Islamic bourgeoisie emerged in Egypt with these processes as well. This paper will try to elaborate mainly on the process of the formation of the Islamic bourgeoisie in Turkey, starting from the human and economic capital that was inherited from the Ottoman State to the AKP era, and their one of the most important institutions MSAD, its significant features, and their process of embourgeoisement comparing with the process of the formation of the Islamic bourgeoisie in Egypt. It will try to show the formation and the rise of the Islamic bourgeoisie from an alternative reading of the Islamic Bourgeoisie which can be constructed following the ethnographic works on the study of the Islamic bourgeoisie in Anatolian cities and will argue that thanks to the new ethnographic studies on the issue of the Islamic bourgeoisie in Anatolia, the conservative rubric that see all the capital accumulation in Anatolia as the Islamic capital has been challenged. Secondly, although the neoliberalization process and the formation of the Islamic bourgeoisie seem similar in Turkey and Egypt, the process of the formation of the Islamic bourgeoisie experienced different routes in these countries as the neoliberalization during the zal period and its intensification during the AKP era has led to a more powerful bourgeoisie in Turkey than in Egypt. Thirdly, the existence of the landed bourgeoisie in Egypt under the Ottomans has led to the creation of certain features during the formation of the Islamic bourgeoisie after the 1950s.

## **Frontida: Towards a radical imagination of care**

**Isabel Gutierrez (UCL)**

“A decade after the international financial crash, crisis has become a pervading condition across the world and thus the new global reality. Dispossession, exclusion, suppression, loss and/or precariousness are today established normalities for the majority of the world population. Seeing our contemporary context from the lens of social reproduction enables a holistic understanding of this worldwide critical situation, for the multiple crises we face constitute different manifestations of a socioeconomic system that finds it increasingly difficult to sustain itself simply because it is doing away with the ways of sustaining life on our planet. Today, the crisis of social reproduction has acquired a global scale expanding

across all capitalist societies and enhancing those forms of organising our material and social sustenance that are grounded in long-established social inequalities. However, the current multi-faceted crisis has become also a truth regime through which the dominant powers have installed a perennial state of exception. The regime of chronic-crisis is sustained on TINA discourses, which are deployed to make us believe that there-is-no-alternative so they can continue governing us according to their extractivist interests. We propose to fight this regime of chronic-crisis by feeding an emancipatory social imagination of care that allows us to collectively envision alternative forms of organising the sustenance of our own selves, our societies and our planet. In other words, to imagine new ways of how care and reproductive needs can be provided, by whom, in which conditions and in which spaces. We invite contributors to create Frontida: Towards a radical imagination of care, a manifesto in the form of a (trans)urban utopia.” The text above was part of the invitation for a workshop held in the framework of Antiuniversity (<http://www.antiuniversity.org/>) and part of an on-going collaborative project that seeks to prompt discussion about the pressing need for a new social imagination of social reproduction its organising, structures and spaces given our contemporary times of widespread and multi-faceted crisis. It is argued that a new radical imagination of this realm, which as it stands plays a fundamental role in the continuation of capitalist exploitation, holds the potentiality of eventually overturning capitalism itself. The project takes the form of a fictional urban utopia, which develops progressively through a series of collective encounters among participants. The initial workshop served to produce the first draft of this collective speculative endeavour. I propose to present this project its outcomes and the discussions and reflections it has sparked for the 2019 HM Conference in London as part of the theme Utopia & Post-Capitalism.

## **A Class-Analysis of Contemporary Sovereignism based on Marx and Engels Critique of Reactionary Socialism**

**Manuel Disegni (Universit di Torino)**

In the Communist Manifesto Marx and Engels recognize three different forms of reactionary socialism. My hypothesis is that these three different forms of anticapitalist reaction and their possible combinations pinpoint what might be called the essence of fascism. Marx' and Engels' critique of reactionary socialism might provide us with the relevant perspective look at the souveranistic demands and movements we are witnessing nowadays. It enables us to form a historical concept of fascism. Yet fascism is not a platonic idea, not an essence eternally equal to itself. On the contrary, it is well rooted in the historic soil, the soil of relations of production. Therefore we need to analyze both the continuity and the discontinuity and specific differences between 19th century reactionary socialism, 20th century fascism and the extreme right we face nowadays. What is then the fundamental difference between contemporary and traditional fascism? The stage of development of the capitalistic production. This contribution aims to point out the actuality of the sociological and ideological characteristics of reactionary socialisms in the present relationship between labor and capital.

## **The populism of the Gilets jaunes: back to class? On populist and anti-capitalist (in)compatibilities**

**Salom letter (Queen Mary University of London)**

Liberals define it as anti-pluralist and anti-democratic, Marxists as compromising and misdirecting. Across the spectrum, populism inspires suspicions. Engaging with its radical left critique, and taking the case of the ongoing protests of the Gilets jaunes in France, I will build on recent attempts at reconciling analyses of classes and perspectives of social transformation through populism in order to approach popular protests as central instances for redefining not only who the people is, but also what social classes are. If Ernesto Laclaus later works have led to the militant concept of left populism and paralleled the dismissal of the centrality of class antagonisms, this paper will mobilise his earlier conceptualisation of populism (1977) as a political moment which radical and transformative power is conditioned by the articulation of both popular and class interpellations in contradiction to the power bloc. In line with Michael Brays recent account of populism as a symptom of repressed class antagonisms (2015), I will argue that todays lack of political and intellectual engagement with the double articulation of political discourse (people and class) has led recent initiatives on the left to miss much of what recent popular protests express: that class antagonisms (even considered in their discursive constitution) still inform the competing constructions of the people in capitalist societies. This paper posits that such double articulation of political discourse is rendered visible in the Gilets jaunes protests and, perhaps even more importantly, in the States reaction to them Emmanuel Macrons presidency epitomising Nicos Poulantzas emphasis on the capitalist State as the central site where the economic interrelate with the politico-ideological (1968), and where antagonisms ought to be repressed. As such, not only classes are the ideological raw material of todays populist moments, as Laclau suggested, but class struggle itself the struggle around the politico-ideological constitution of the economy is what informs the possibilities for redefining the people.

## **Entropic Fictions: Thermodynamics, World-Systems, World-Literature**

**Harry Pitt Scott (University of Warwick)**

Taking cues from the Energy Humanities and WReCs theorisation of world-literature as literature of the world-system, this paper will explore the usefulness of thermodynamics in considering narrative and form in the world-literary system. It will do so through the optic of entropy, broadly understood as the decline in available energy and increase in disorder in a thermodynamic system over time. The utility of thermodynamics to world-systems analysis is well-established (see Foster and Holleman 2014; Hornborg 2001; Beil 2011). To avoid entropy and maintain its dominant status, the core of the world-system extracts order (resources, energy) from and exports entropy (waste, pollution) to the periphery. Capitalisms violent attempt to stave off entropy drives uneven and combined development and relentless expansion into frontiers (Moore 2015), which saps the vital energies (Marx) of workers while exhausting nature on an ever-expanding scale. I shall argue that a

Marxist-inflected thermodynamic understanding of world-literature provides new insight into the structure of feeling or experience-system (Barnard and Shapiro) of entropic phases of protracted economic crisis, environmental degradation, and social disorder. Entropy is therefore useful in analysing analogous situations (Barnard and Shapiro) within the world-system, which will be explored through consideration of the ways in which entropy manifests in the narrative energetics (Macdonald 2013) of semiperipheral world-literature. Through a reading the unlikely likenesses (WReC 2015) found across the world-literary system, I aim to show that entropy permeates literary form. This reading will include Iain Sinclairs *Downriver* (1994), Ibrahim Abdel Meguids *The Other Place* (1994) and Mary Robisons *One D.O.A. One on the Way* (2009), each of which employs chaotic and disordered forms that I will argue register and narrativise a set of shared social, cultural and political concerns that centre on capitalisms entropic operations. In doing so, I hope to show the value of a thermodynamic framework for Marxist literary criticism and world-literature.

## **Infrastructures of internationalism: Grasping the global in the memoirs of a Punjabi communist seafarer**

**Majed Akhter (King's College London)**

Dada Amir Haider Khan (1900-1989) was a Punjabi seafarer, anti-imperialist, nationalist, and communist. His memoir, *Chains to Lose*, was first published in 1989 and was reissued in 2008 under the editorship of Hassan Gardezi. The memoir relates Khan's life story, including how he travelled the world as a seafarer working for the British and then the US merchant marine service in the first quarter of the 20th century. His work as a seafarer, along with his stints as a locomotive and automobile machinist in the US, put Khan in touch with an international network of anti-imperialists. In this paper, I examine the physical infrastructures - the boiler rooms, ports, trains, lodging houses, languages, passports, assembly lines, and presses - that enabled his mobility and his articulation of a communist internationalist identity. I also develop a literary method of reading memoirs of globally mobile figures. This Marxist-inspired method approaches global life stories not primarily for details about the past, but for a better understanding of the limits and potentials of the global, and infrastructure-led globalization more specifically, in our present and future.

## **Book launch: Towards a history of the Fourth International: The testimony of a communist against the current**

**Penelope Duggan (Fellow International Institute for Research and Education (IIRE) Amsterdam), Gregor Benton (University of Cardiff), Franco Turigliatto**

This book by Livio Maitan charts the history of the Fourth International through his direct experience as a member of the leadership alongside figures such as Ernest Mandel and Michel Pablo. Maitan was a leading member of the Fourth International from the postwar



period until his death in 2004. Panel submitted by joint publishers IIRE (Amsterdam) and Resistance Books (London).

## **Geoengineering: The wet dream of capitalism**

**Louise Wagner**

Almost every aspect of our ecosystems appears to be in a state of emergency: mass extinctions, biodiversity loss, ocean acidification, sea level rises, soil degradation, air pollution, water shortages, etc. Attempts to mitigate those crises reach from defossilizing or decoupling production processes, enforcing state interventions in order to bring about so-called environmental states, to radically changing our mode of being-in-the-world and transforming the devastating economic and political institutions, which drive these hazardous environmental changes. And there is geoengineering. Especially after the IPCCs AR5 report on the appeal of geoengineering, this intentional and large-scale anthropogenic intervention by means of capital-intensive technology into the functional mechanisms of ecosystems in order to decelerate or reverse climate change has meandered from the fringes of scientific speculation into the beating heart of policy considerations. Critics have not remained silent though; voices from civil society, critical social as well as natural scientists relentlessly continue to warn about its devastating social, geopolitical and ecological consequences. Why is it that despite its numerous uncertainties and equally numerous negative certainties, geoengineering is still treated as if it represented an actual attempt to mitigate global warming? In my contribution I argue that this is the case because the actual crisis it is set up to address is not the crisis of climate change, but rather a potential future (and partly ongoing) crisis of devaluation of fossil infrastructure and a resulting crisis of over-accumulation due to market collapse. Using the example of sulphur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>) industrial waste resulting from the combustion of fossil fuels and central actor of geoengineering Solar Radiation Management proposals I show that geoengineering can be understood as 1) fixed capital by drawing in David Harveys understanding of the Marxian concept, 2) a symptom of a crisis in the primary sector of production by drawing on the notion of capital switching, and 3) a strategy to (re-)establish the legitimacy of the extractive activities of our capitalist economy. I illustrate that geoengineering is a profitable way for the three protagonists of the growth coalition (capital owners, state authorities and consumerist subjects, cf. Allan Schnaiberg 1980) to prolong the very material and ideological circumstances that produced the very effects which it is officially set up to mitigate.

## **The City Is Not Innocent: Homelessness and the Value of Urban Parks**

**Jessie Speer (Queen Mary University of London) Eric Goldfischer (University of Minnesota)**

This paper builds on contemporary memoirs of homelessness from cities across the United States to develop a more nuanced understanding of the use value of urban parks and green

spaces. Based on analysis of more than seventy memoirs, we synthesize the writings of nine memoirists who examine their relationship to green spaces in cities. Instead of framing nature as something pristine and distinct from society or something dangerous and untamed these writings portray urban green spaces as sites of belonging and everyday life. In the US today, cities often value parks either as playgrounds for middle-class leisure or devalue them as targets of racialized anti-homeless policing. In both instances, parks are framed in relation to their impact on the exchange value of surrounding urban areas. In contrast, the memoirs of homelessness we examine portray parks and other green spaces as enabling privacy, survival, and emotional solace in an urban landscape often marked by surveillance, deprivation, and violence. These crucial values reveal a new conceptualization of urban parks as profoundly useful to those who are subject to the exclusions of capitalist property.

## **Book Launch: Beyond Liberal Egalitarianism: Marx and Normative Social Theory in the Twenty-First Century by Tony Smith (Historical Materialism Book Series; Brill 2017, Haymarket 2018)**

**Tony Smith (Iowa State University) Geert Reuten, Economics, University of Amsterdam, Patrick Murray, Philosophy, Creighton University (jpm@creighton.edu), Dan Krier, Sociology, Iowa State University (segelkrier@gmail.com)**

Progressive theorists and activists agree that contemporary capitalism is deeply flawed. However, most accept the core thesis of liberal egalitarianism: a capitalist market society can be made normatively acceptable with the proper political regulation. In *Beyond Liberal Egalitarianism* Smith argues that advocates of this thesis lack adequate concepts of capital and the capitalist state. They also fail to comprehend how recent developments in global capitalism rule out another golden age. Smith concludes that the goals of proposed liberal egalitarian reforms regarding work relations, environmental crises, political citizenship, financialization, and so on, can only be actualized within a democratic form of socialism. Geert Reuten, Patrick Murray, and Dan Krier will present critical evaluations of the books strengths and weaknesses, followed by a response from Smith. Notes of Contributions

Geert Reuten, *Beyond Liberal Egalitarianism* and the connection of ontological and normative theory The discourses of both political functionaries and of societal academics that call for minor, moderate or radical social change, move on the edge of ontological information (facts) and normative principles. This panel contribution enters into a dialogue with Smith regarding the radical normative social theory discussed in the book (next to non-radical strands). To the extent the academic discourses move in the direction of utopias (no doubt politically important against the idea of TINA, there is no alternative) normative principles seem to dominate over positive ontological information, especially when a transitional phase remains under-theorised. Patrick Murray, *Two Themes in Beyond Liberal Egalitarianism* One main theme of the book is that liberal egalitarians fail to recognize capital as a social form of production fraught with moral, social, political, and

environmental significance. Consequently, they never develop the concept of capital. This failure reaches back to classical political economy and to Hegel. As Marx wrote of David Ricardo: [B]ourgeois or capitalist production is consequently for him not a specific definite mode of production, but simply the mode of production. Hegels Philosophy of Right, which Marx regarded as the high-water mark of liberal political philosophy, recognized the social and historical specificity of civil society, but still lacked the concept of capital. Social forms matter, writes Smith. Without the concept of capital, no adequate concepts of the constitutive social forms of capitalist societythe commodity, value, money, wage labor, profit, rent, and interestcan be developed. Without the concept of capital, social theory lacks all the concepts of subsumption under capital (formal, real, ideal, hybrid, etc.). Without the concept of capital, social theory turns to three pseudo-concepts: the economic, utility, and instrumental action. Why is it so hard to recognize capital? A second theme takes up how capital frames the domain of the political in a way that depoliticizes many areas of public concern. Capital not only subsumes many aspects of social life; it first shapes social life. Capital posits two social spheres that it does not formally subsume, the domestic sphere and the state. Smith calls attention to ways in which that capital shapes the state and distorts the political. These distortions must be examined further. Dan Krier, Critical Social Theory, Capital, and the Fetishized Veil of Ignorance In Beyond Liberal Egalitarianism, Smith demonstrates that an adequate theory of capital is necessary to normative social theory. Smiths judicious deployment of Marxs critique of capital reveals that Rawls egalitarian ideals are radically incompatible with capitalist society. Affirming Smiths conclusions that liberal egalitarianism is impossible, this paper asks an additional question: why has liberal egalitarianism, a fundamentally inadequate and ineffective normative theory, proven to be so enduringly popular? Smiths book provides an opening to critical social theory to comprehend liberal egalitarianism as a fetishized fantasy construct supporting (rather than critiquing) capital. Tony Smith, Beyond Beyond Liberal Egalitarianism Based on the critical feedback of other panelists, the author will attempt to distinguish the arguments in the book that should be reaffirmed from those that need to be revised, rejected, or supplemented. Possible lines of revision and supplementation will be sketched.

## **Rabble, War and Revolution. Hegel against Marx**

**Bartosz Wjcik (Institute of Political Studies, Polish Academia of Science)**

In my paper I will examine figures of inconsistency and rupture in Hegels systematic reflections on state, which figures Marx did not fully recognizes in his reading (or misreading) of Hegel. Therefore, I will focus on three issues: (1) notion of Rabble, (2) idea of War and (3) commentary on the French Revolution. Production of rabble is paradoxical side-effect of the dialectical transition from civil society to the state the excess at the bottom of the social totality, part of no-part, non-recognizable element of the existing order. This figure is symptomatic point or aporia of his entire philosophy of right, and what is so important, Hegel fails to resolve this internal contradiction undermining the solidity of the state. Hegel was unable to perceive rabble as universal class embodiment of the deadlocks of capitalist society as Marx was, but his insight gives us important lesson about

our contemporary society (I will relay there on interpretation provided by Frank Ruda and Slavoj iek).Hegel renders controversial justification of the ethical necessity of war, which is the repeated untying of organic social links (war produces insecurity of property in result this almost divine fundament of civil society turns into something transient). iek argues that this permanent threat of abstract negativity (war) to the state order can never be fully sublated: this is the reason why Hegel rather than Marx is the thinker of radical contingency (every social edifice can contingently disintegrated at any moment). In Hegels analysis of French Revolution Terror of Jacobins is the necessary moment of abstract freedom/negativity which is then sublated in concrete freedom of post-revolutionary rational state. But, revolution without reformation is only meaningless acting out (the melancholy of Terror), and the revolution supplemented by reformation is the true mourning on the lost object (the realm of belief which was suppressed by enlightened reason). The aim of my talk is to reveal hidden emancipatory potential in Hegels social philosophy, that is mostly forgotten or even rejected in traditional interpretations of Hegel social philosophy (including the influential one presented by young Marx).References:Comay, Rebecca. 2011. Mourning Sickness. Hegel and the French Revolution, Stanford University Press: Stanford.Hardimon, Michael O. 1994. Hegel's Social Philosophy: The Project of Reconciliation. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich. 1977. Phenomenology of Spirit. Trans. A. V. Miller. Oxford University Press: London-Oxford-New York.Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich. 1978. Philosophy of Right. Trans. Tomas M. Knox. Oxford University Press: London-Oxford-New York.Marx, Karl. 1970. Critique of Hegels Philosophy of Right. Trans. Joseph OMalley. Oxford University Press: London-Oxford-New York.Ruda, Frank. 2011. Hegel's Rabble: An Investigation into Hegel's Philosophy of Right. Continuum: London-New York.iek, Slavoj. 2012. Less Than Nothing: Hegel and the Shadow of Dialectical Materialism. Verso: London-New York.

## Co-writing the Earths Poetry: Rewilding Under Socialism

**Ian J Rappel (Beyond Extinction Economics (BEE) network & Socialist Workers Party (UK))**

The poetry of the earth is not eternal, but changeable (Trotsky: Revolutionary and Socialist Art) society is the unity of being of man with nature the true resurrection of nature the naturalism of man and the humanisation of nature both brought to fulfilment (Karl Marx: Philosophical and Economic Manuscripts) In face of the disciplinary trauma derived from todays Sixth Extinction, concepts such as rewilding and Half Earth - promoted by George Monbiot and Edward O. Wilson respectively - have excited and invigorated many conservation ecologists. On first inspection, these approaches appear to offer the possibility of extensive ecological restoration being achieved despite prevailing neoliberalism. In an operational sense, however, there is a strong overlap developing between rewilding and neoliberal conservation initiatives made popular by the likes of Dieter Helm and Tony Juniper such as natural capital and payments for ecosystem services. To the extent that all these approaches accept privatisation and the role of the market, they are in danger of diverting critique away from the root causes of the biodiversity crisis that

are embedded firmly within class antagonism. In contrast, a socialist vision for rewilding places human social form and needs at the heart of the approach. In place of the developing misanthropic dichotomy between wildlife and humanity, a Marxist approach offers class-based analysis and resistance against biodiversity loss, and an ethic based on land sharing rather than land sparing. Once democratically redirected away from the profit motive and the facilitation of capitalist ecological dysfunctionality, the emerging sciences of restoration ecology, rewilding and agroecology have the potential to assist society in closing the ecological rift. In conjunction with a human creative aesthetic that has also been thus liberated, humanity and the earths biodiversity can coexist in a convivial socialist Anthropocene.

## **The Invisible Shift: The Mental Load of Mothers**

**Anna-Maria Occhiuto (Graduate Student)**

Historically, Capital has thrived on the unwaged, unseen and invisible labour of social reproduction; that is the biological, social, mental and psychological behaviours and processes required for the daily and generational maintenance of the worker. Women, slaves, immigrants and migrants have been the primary bearers of social reproductive labour and as such, have suffered the cultural, economic and political implications that evolve out of the inherent crises, contradictions and tensions between capitalist production and reproduction. Feminists-Marxists and social reproduction theorists seek to excavate, describe, understand, politicize and resist these forms of invisible work as part of the ongoing collective project of organizing around gender inequality and oppression. Research that has dealt with womens unpaid labour in particular, has systematically narrowed its attention to three dimensions: housework (i.e. cleaning, cooking, and laundry), care work (i.e. children and elderly), and more recently emotional labour. Within this corpus of research, mentions of mental and cognitive labour are only incorporated in passing or as an adjunct to the three categories listed. Rarely has mental labour been grasped in its totality, its scope and its focus and researchers concerned with womens mental labour argue the need to incorporate this fourth category to better understand its impact on womens lives in contemporary society (Ciciolla & Luthar, 2019; Robertson et al. 2019). The aim of this paper is to provoke and elicit a discussion of the mental load of motherhood and its role in contemporary capitalist social reproduction. The concept of the mental load is rooted in the physical and cognitive sciences where it has been understood as an individuals increased cognitive or mental capacity, effort and memory needed to perform any given task or process (Gaillard, 1993). Recently, the question of the mental load has been reframed by a critique of gender in which feminists are taking up the concept in the analysis of womens experiences of work, domestic life and motherhood. Through this lens, the mental load is defined as the intensification of thinking, planning, strategizing, anticipating, conceptualizing, managing, delegating, coordinating, monitoring, decision-making, and maintenance of the knowledge necessary for the day to day unfolding of life required for childrearing, housework, career obligations, social networking, and for the performance of idealized gender roles (Robertson et al. 2019). As Judith Warner (2006) states, this colonization of the mind has had a profound impact on how women engage in



the so-called work-family dialectic in an age where women are encouraged, if not expected, to have it all (p.8). While the question of women's labour, both in the public and private realm, has been a central pillar of Marxist-feminist analysis, the mental load has yet to be understood through this lens. Using social reproduction theory (SRT) as my framework, I attempt to show how the mental load as a new form of women's invisible labour, is a necessary dimension of the reproduction of the worker and connected to the inherent structures of contemporary capital relations of exploitation and oppression. References Cited Ciciolla, L., & Luthar, S. S. (2019). Invisible household labor and ramifications for adjustment: mothers as captains of households. *Sex Roles*, 1-20. Gaillard, A. W. K. (1993). Comparing the concepts of mental load and stress. *Ergonomics*, 36(9), 991-1005. Robertson, L. G., Anderson, T. L., Hall, M. E. L., & Kim, C. L. (2019). Mothers and Mental Labor: A Phenomenological Focus Group Study of Family-Related Thinking Work. *Psychology of Women Quarterly* Warner, J. (2006). *Perfect madness: Motherhood in the age of anxiety*. Penguin.

## Tracking Unofficial Strikes in the Akron Rubber Industry, 1942-1945

Charles Post (City University of New York)

There is a general consensus among historians and sociologists studying the US labor movement that the Second World War marks a crucial turning point in the history of industrial unionism. Whether viewed the outcome of a process of institutional maturation or institutional bureaucratization, the CIO leaderships embrace of the war-time no-strike pledge in exchange for the federal governments support of unionization and collective bargaining in US industry is seen as the watershed in the history of US industrial unionism. It is also well known that workers in war industries contested the no-strike pledge in practice, engaging in numerous unofficial or wildcat strikes from January 1942 through August 1945. However, there is considerable debate amongst labor historians and sociologists about the causes and goals of many of these strikes. In particular, there is considerable disagreement about the relationship of strikes over wages and working conditions and strikes aimed to exclude African-American and women workers entering jobs traditionally reserved for white men. This paper, part of a larger project on the struggle over the no-strike pledge in the United Rubber Workers (URW), will tests two hypotheses: 1. The majority of work days/hours lost due to unofficial work actions in the Akron rubber plants between January 1942 and August 1945 were the results of disputes over wage rates and working conditions (readjusting production quotas, redesigning jobs, forced over-time, etc.). Only a minority of work days/hours lost were the result of hate-strike aimed at excluding African-American and female workers. 2. Hate-strikes aimed at excluding African-American and female workers were concentrated in URW locals in Akron whose leaderships supported the no-strike pledge in particular URW Local 2 at the Goodyear plant. Hate-strikes were much less frequent and severe in URW locals in Akron whose leaderships opposed the no-strike pledge in particular URW Local 5 (BF Goodrich), 7 (Firestone) and 9 (General Tire). Both hypotheses are based on an understanding that the contradictory position of workers under capitalism shapes different types of collective action. On the one hand, workers as collective producers in conflict with employers will



take actions over common grievances like wages and working conditions. On the other hand, workers as competing sellers of their ability to work in conflict with other workers will take actions to defend or advance their position in the labor-market at the expense of other workers. The key variable determining the dominance of one form of collective action or the other is the level of collective organization among workers. When unions are able to organize workers to defend themselves against employers, workers will act as collective producers; when unions are unable to organize collective self-defense against employers, workers will tend to act as individualized sellers of their ability to work.

## **Towards a Marxism of the Feminised**

**Joni Alizah Cohen (Goldsmiths, University of London)**

Towards a Marxism of the Feminised Panel Abstract The editorial team of Invert Journal present some introductory thoughts for the formation of a dialectical queer, trans and feminist critique of the social totality. Without presenting a unified approach or theory of queer and trans marxism, the presentations will gesture towards possible entry points for a contemporary critical theory which takes as central questions of non-normative gender and sexuality. Instead, we are united by what we see as the necessity of overcoming the impasse between a non-materialist queer theory on the one hand, and a vulgar materialist feminism, which has accompanied an apparent contradiction between trans and feminist struggles in practice. The papers will draw together work on gender as a real social abstraction, Mario Mieli's gay communism, and the concept of nature in Marx, in order to gesture towards possible fruitful paths of enquiry for a Marxism of the feminised. The panel will consist of three 15 minute presentations and a 10 minute response. Joni Alizah Cohen is an MRes student in Media and Communications at Goldsmiths, UoL, and a founding editor of the forthcoming Invert Journal. Contact: [jcohe001@gold.ac.uk](mailto:jcohe001@gold.ac.uk) Laurel Uziell is a poet, independent researcher, and a founding editor of the forthcoming Invert Journal. Contact: [Laureluziell@gmail.com](mailto:Laureluziell@gmail.com) Sophie Monk is a PhD student at the Centre for Memory, Narrative and Histories, University of Brighton, and a founding editor of the forthcoming Invert Journal. Contact: [Sophiemonk0@gmail.com](mailto:Sophiemonk0@gmail.com) Jules Joanne Gleeson - Chair Paper Abstracts Gender as Real Abstraction and its Possibilities for a Trans Critique By Joni Alizah Cohen This paper will assess recent work in Marxist-Feminism (and Marxian theory more broadly) that deals with the notion of real abstraction as a way of thinking through not only the value-form but also social forms traditionally considered under the rubric of identity. Particularly, I will be focusing on the work of Maya Andrea Gonzalez, Jeanne Neton, and Amy Death, and their contributions to the theory of gender as a really abstract social form of domination. I will be teasing out the relations of these theories to the gender-theoretical work of Judith Butler as well as putting them into productive conversation with often overlooked creative Marxism of Evald Ilyenkov. Arguing that the notion of gender as a really abstract social form enables us to integrate Judith Butler's critique of the gender/sex relation and gender/sexuate dimorphism as form of social domination into a broader Marxian critical theory of society, as well as enabling a Marxian trans-feminism which is not simply a suture of trans notions of gender/sex mutability onto a vulgar materialist and sex-realist Marxist-feminism, but enables the insights of queer and trans theory to be

integrated into and transforming in the process a Marxist Feminist theory of gendered domination and exploitation. This is not an environmental theme, its a social theme: Contemporary Trans Politics and the Marxian Concept of NatureBy Laurel UziellFollowing the work of Alfred Schmidt, my paper will examine how a properly Marxist conception of nature can take us past certain impasses that seem to have arisen in contemporary articulations of trans and feminist politics. While there has been a resurgence of Marxist-Feminist thinking, in particular through the lens of social reproduction, I would argue that the concept of nature remains unexamined, despite being a central (if implicit) working category. Whereas, in recent iterations of nominally materialist feminism such as the Xenofeminist Manifesto and other new materialist feminisms, as well as in the critical feminist biology of Anne Fausto-Sterling, the understanding of nature is separated from critique of political economy. The questions I wish to address emerge against a political backdrop in which the concept of gender and its relation to nature has come under increased scrutiny, from the resurgence of a trans-exclusionary feminism which asserts the primacy of natural sex as a basis for gendered oppression, to increasing far right attacks on gender non-conformity as a deviation from nature. If, as Schmidt claims, Marx's concept of nature is a non-ontological one, does this allow for a dialectic which can overcome the apparent contradiction between gender identity on the one hand and gendered socialisation on the basis of natural sex on the other, as terms on which trans people are discursively pitted against feminists?The Horizon of Gay Communism in the Queer PresentBy Sophie Monk In his 1977 polemic, *Elements of a Homosexual Critique*, Italian gay liberationist Mario Mieli describes communism as the rediscovery of bodies and their fundamental communicative function, their polymorphous potential for love.[1] This paper takes up Mielis claim as an experiment with the possibilities of gay communism for queer marxists in the present. I begin by situating gay communism historically, within a constellation of post 68 radical tendencies on the ultra- and New Left, that register a shift away from the primacy of the worker in revolutionary politics. The general decomposition of the industrial working-class unfolding from the crisis of the early seventies accompanied a dramatic proliferation of social movements along lines of race, gender and sexual liberation, including the European gay milieu in which Mieli, of the Italian group *Fuori!* and Guy Hocquenghem, of the French *Front homosexuel d'action révolutionnaire*, surfaced as influential thinkers. Their contributions to gay communism via the concepts of de-sublimated Eros and revolutionary desire attempted to counter the temporality of the institutional left in its various social democratic, Maoist and Marxist-Leninist forms. Gay communism marked itself out as distinct from other radical left tendencies by insisting on the necessarily sexual - as well as economic - character of capitalist restructuring; and distinct from mainstream gay politics through an awareness of the creeping real domination of capital and the attendant challenges for radical sexual liberation movements. The communism of gay communism figures not as the programmatic seizure of power by an organized working-class, but a horizon immanent to modes of sexual and social relating in the immediate, derived from the very movement of desire.[2] While some liberationist current in this late sixties/early seventies conjuncture tended towards the affirmation of a historically abjected homosexual identity, the thrust of gay communism in its brief lifespan remained one of self-overcoming, towards a negation of the totality of heterosexual capitalism. There is nevertheless a certain pastness to be reckoned with in gay communism, which often reads like a relic of the seventies liberation moment, since

overshadowed by Foucauldian and post-structuralist insights into the discursive matrices of sex/power/knowledge. While this paper will primarily look for the ways in which gay communism pulls on our present moment, there are elements of Mieli and Hocquenghems homosexual critique that collide unhappily with queer marxist readings. Most notably, their seeming inability to push beyond a Freudian schematic, but also a tendency to overstate gay desire as inherently oppositional to capital, and in Mieli, in particular, a dated and unclear conception of transsexuality. This paper will nevertheless attempt to mine the output of early seventies gay communists for shards of revolutionary strategy that can pierce the present situation, in which we have bourgeois gay culture declaring love is love on one side, and queer nihilism abolishing the future on the other. Motivated by the impulses of queer temporality studies to build queer comradeship across time, via channeling the undetonated energy from past revolutions, [3] this paper asks what demands gay communism can make of the queer present.[1] Mario Mieli, *Towards a Gay Communism: Elements of Homosexual Critique*, (London: Pluto Press, 2018)[2] Guy Hocquenghem, *Homosexual Desire*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993)[3] Elizabeth Freeman, *Time Binds: Queer Temporalities, Queer Histories*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010)

## **Postmaterialism and the fetishism of the environmental consciousness: the cases of the Spanish state, The United States of America and Japan**

**Marina Requena-i-mora (University of Valencia (ERI Sostenibilitat) University of Sheffield (SIID)), Dan Brockington (Director of The Sheffield Institute for International Development (SIID) The University of Sheffield)**

This paper challenges the conventional wisdom that socioeconomic development, over history, has brought with it an improved environmental consciousness, a commonly accepted view which has also derived theoretical support from Inglehart's "postmaterialist values" thesis. We suggest that it is important to distinguish between environmental concern, and environmental impact. More concern for the environment does not necessarily lead to less harm to the environment. It is quite possible for people to love (a particular version of) Nature ardently, whilst engaging in practices which, ultimately, pollute, despoil and degrade. We analyse two types of evidence - recent cross-national opinion surveys and two sustainability indicators among two wealthy countries: The United states, Japan and Spain. Analyses of surveys suggest that environmental consciousness is a product of economic growth. That is why during recessions people prefer economic growth rather than protecting the environment. However, the analyses of sustainability indicators suggest that this rising environmental consciousness does not help the environment. Instead, that same growth results in increasing environmental impact. Hence, even though recession suppresses support for pro-environmental values, they also reduce countries Ecological and Material Footprint per capita. Conversely the periods of greatest environmental concern see the worst outcomes for indicators of environmental sustainability. We conclude by arguing that the type of environmental consciousness that is

derived from the post materialist thesis is intermeshed with the commodity fetishism. That is somewhat explains how people can isolate their consumerist lifestyles from the environmental impact of these lifestyles. And what is most important, people can alienate their environmental concern from the economic growth.

## Climate Change and Animal Capital

### Christian Stache

The greenhouse gas effect, super-exploitation of animals and the modernisation strategy of cultured meat The meat industry in the Western hemisphere is one of the main producers of greenhouse gases relevant for climate change. According to the most conservative estimates, it contributes at least 15 percent to all anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions (FAO 2006, 2013). The worlds top five meat and dairy corporations are now responsible for more annual greenhouse gas emissions than ExxonMobil, Shell or BP (Grain/IATP 2018). However, being a large part of fossil capital (Malm 2016) is not the only way in which animal capital has a destructive impact on the social relation with animate and inanimate nature. There is no faction of capital which is as based on the business of industrialised manipulating and killing of non-human animals as animal capital. The meat industry, for example, contributes its fair share to species extinction by intentionally and unintentionally depriving other animals of their livelihoods and of their habitats due to land use for livestock and feed production. Most importantly, however, it maintains a relation of economic super-exploitation with animals. For profit, meat capitalists manage whole lives of specific species from birth to death. In meat production and distribution, the relation between humans and animals is thus shaped according to the overall model of capitalist social-nature-relations: The capitalist class abstracts from specific qualities within nature while it commodifies others for economic growth. Over the past decade, the dialectical interplay between the exploitation of workers, the super-exploitation of nature and animals, and the capitalogenic greenhouse effect has been recognized increasingly by the more liberal factions of the ruling class and the left through their respective intellectual frameworks. But while large parts of the left still have a hard time to actively question the meat industry and to integrate the animal liberation movements as one of their own, animal capital and its allies are already one step ahead. They have realised the need to modernise the capitalist process of production and distribution and to develop new markets and profits beyond meat. At the same time, they work to incorporate the less radical factions of the pro-animal and ecological social movements. Avant-garde capital factions, including meat producers, begin to design the mid-term future of animal capital by investing in and promoting technological and consumer solutions that make Western capitalism appear animal-friendly and sustainable at the same time. One of its silver bullets: cultured meat (WEF 2018, 2019). In my talk, I introduce the concepts of animal capital and animal super-exploitation. I show how animal capital overlaps with fossil capital as a driver of greenhouse gas emissions and species extinction. In addition, the recent technological innovation of cultured meat is addressed as a strategy to kill two birds with one stone, combing new technologies with needs and interests of the subaltern class to create new paths for further capitalist development and canalise social opposition.

## **The fallacy of Were all going to die: archaeologies of collapse**

**Iida Kayhko (Royal Holloway, University of London)**

According to archaeological understandings, collapse the disintegration of societal, state and/or economic structures is a recurring phenomenon in the human past. This paper provides a brief introduction to archaeological evidence on the diverse processes and aftermath of societal collapse at times of natural disasters, environmental degradation, epidemics, climate change and mass extinction of species. Further, I seek to draw out the affective and political potential of imagining futures through an archaeological understanding of collapse. The present moment has proven to be fertile ground for two affective and political responses to the worsening climate crisis: one is a tendency to despair to refer to an imagined endpoint in the future by which we were all going to die. The other is a resurgence of green capitalist beliefs in purely technological solutions to environmental crisis. Archaeological evidence goes against both of these tendencies, showing us firstly that humans do survive even times of extreme changes in their environments, and secondly that collapse necessitates shifts in human behaviour and societal structuring beyond mere technological development. On the left, these theories of collapse have rarely been engaged with in any depth or beyond anarcho-primitivism. If, however, we were to understand collapse as an inevitable occurrence in human societies, and engage with past trajectories and consequences, there is potential for the development of new affective and political responses. I argue that such an archaeological engagement offers a clearer focus on social change, adaptability and resilience in the face of collapse. Further, archaeology offers examples of moments at which collapses of centralised, hegemonic power lead to surges of counter-power and transformations of social order.

## **Theatre as Praxis. Jana Sanskriti and the Redistribution of Theatres Means of Production**

**Sophie Coudray (Universit Lyon II)**

This paper aims at focusing on Jana Sanskriti, a militant theatre movement based in West Bengal rural areas, founded around 1985 and led by Sanjoy Ganguly. By drawing on a mix between Theatre of the Oppressed methodology and traditional Indian artistic practices, Jana Sanskriti formed, over years, thousands of practitioners to their method. Almost none of them are professional actors. They are peasants, employers or unemployed men and women, from different places, castes and classes, and they perform a very popular and participative form of theatre, mostly in villages, in order to address political issues: from women oppression to Monsanto, including the corruption of local elites, the political agenda of CPI(M), poverty, education, land dispossession, and so on. Jana Sanskriti leads campaigns, based on a very specific theatre methodology, in West Bengal rural areas in order to rally people around common claims and political actions, to take concrete actions to improve life in the poorest areas (notably in education), but also to recruit new members to create teams which are intended to pursue the work locally. In doing so, Jana Sanskriti, which began as a modest activist theatre group, became through years a genuine and

nonpartisan political movement. This militant theatre practice raises a number of questions, from the reconsideration of the status of artists as professionals, to their relationships with political parties, unions or NGOs in West Bengal context. The main goal of this paper is to consider Jana Sanskriti's activity as praxis (i.e., according to Pierre Macherey, as a relationship to the world that is not purely passive) which is tied to Paulo Freire's pedagogy, this latter having close connections with Theatre of the Oppressed. Hence, I will study how Jana Sanskriti being at the same time a theatre and a political movement addresses political issues onstage to raise critical consciousness and promote debates, but also organises people around similar interests and leads political actions offstage and how both sides of their activity are closely tied to each other. While doing so, I will explore to what extent Jana Sanskriti's method is based on a complete redistribution of the means of representation but also, and more fundamentally, of theatre's means of production. Thus, the example of Jana Sanskriti leads to think anew the relations between theatre, labour and activism in contemporary India.

## **Faggots and Class Struggle: Gay Liberation and Socialist Feminism at the 1976 Wolf Creek Conference**

**Ben Miller (Freie Universitt Berlin / Humboldt Universitt Berlin)**

This paper will reexamine the intellectual history of self-consciously left-wing and oppositional queer leather and kink practices and discourses in the era of the politics of gay liberation, focusing on activist-theorists in both urban and rural American nodes in the international network of scenes, spaces, and activist circles in which those politics were produced. Specifically, I will examine these scenes' adoption of the vocabulary and terminology of Boasian anthropology to engage in autoethnographic adventure aimed at breaking down the mind-body dualism central to colonial capitalist epistemology. Existing accounts of this practice, often referred to as settler homonationalism in its American context, argue that gay liberationists use of images of the other made settler claims to Native knowledge and Native land, seeking to indigenize white creators and audiences. But an expansion of the contextual frame beyond the specific American settler-colonial context and a preliminary examination of activist diaries, newspapers, books, and magazines published at the time reveal a more complicated picture: activists developed a syncretic blend of all that was not bourgeois and Protestant, seeking to use these sources to frame an autogenealogy of homoerotic culture oriented around a specifically materialist radical sexual politics. This cannot be read simply as a desire to claim Native land as part of a settler project. Rather, these exchanges point to a larger problem not satisfactorily addressed in existing literature: the use of images of the primitive and the other by western gay activists and theorists, mostly white, who struggled to define viable sexual modernities in ways that contested colonial capitalism. The paper provides a prehistory of these practices and their connection to prevailing regimes of production and consumption before closely reading two artifacts excerpts from "RFD - A Journal For Country Faggots" and Geoff Mains' book *The Urban Aborigines*, published by Gay Sunshine Press.



## **A Green Industrial Revolution and the UK Labour Party**

**Mika Minio-paluello (Labour Energy Forum)**

The Labour Party has committed to a Green Industrial Revolution, to address the climate crisis. This plan recognises the 19th industrial transformation as embodying a fundamental shift in societal, economic and productive relations - albeit one that also locked in environmental destruction, colonial theft and human exploitation. This paper will explore Labour's plans for a Green Industrial Revolution. It will answer questions like: Which parts of the energy, transport and manufacturing systems will be brought into public ownership, and how will they be restructured? Can democratic public ownership provide a basis for a renewed 21st C industrial renewal process - and what are its limitations? How do we create the structures and power shifts that place workers both those employed by the fossil fuel sector and those in adjacent sectors at the heart of this transformation? The societal shift away from carbon is a reality. The struggle is whether we have a managed transition in the interests of the public, labour and climate, or a transition driven by capital and existing power elites, that is both too slow and dumps the burden on the public. Note: This paper is intended as part of the panel titled "The transition away from fossil fuels: power, labour and technology", proposed by Simon Pirani

## **Economic efficiency and the Anthropocene: A materialist critique**

**Arunima Chakraborty (Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Kolkata, India)**

Quentin Meillassoux, one of the leading thinkers of Speculative Materialism, claims in 'After Finitude' that his move is against the linguistic turn, and towards the exploration of the contingency (or facticity) of the natural realm wherein there is no reason for necessary causality to exist or not to exist. He draws from Hume's critique of inductive reasoning to ontologize a contingent nature of natural laws. Speculative materialism, therefore, is speculative because it aims at the exploration of 'reality-as-it-is' without agreeing to its reduction to being a correlate, or a phenomenon co-constituted by language or consciousness. Friedrich Engels, in his work on dialectical materialism, observes that the natural realm is far more fluid, characterized as it is by interpenetrations of opposites amongst others, than can be captured by any sets of scientific categories. This paper aims to draw from works of Meillassoux, Engels and Sebastiano Timpanaro, to argue for a dialectical materialist exploration of what has been termed as the present epoch of the Anthropocene.

The anthropocene epoch is named so in recognition of the changes in climate and the troposphere and the ecosystems brought about by human activities such as industrialization, deforestation and excessive quantities of carbon emissions. This paper will use claims that unprecedented and unpredictable changes are being witnessed the world over - such as males of certain species of fish in the Thames River developing (female) reproductive organs, for instance - which have been caused by human activities but which do not yet form parts of any discursive construct. It is but a truism that

discourses are constructed around certain abstractions. The question arises then which discourses revolve around transcendental signifiers? In the case of the capitalist discourse, the dominant transcendental signifiers at work include the idea of a perfectly free market (as explained by Polanyi) of the economic man, and most significantly for this paper, the Lockean idea of the imperative of efficient use of resources (which furnished justifications for phenomena such as the enclosure system and other forms of primitive accumulation in earlier economic eras and for the 'accumulation by dispossession' in the neoliberal era as explained by David Harvey). The aim of this paper will be twofold: first, to delineate the transcendental nature of the signifiers, especially the idea of efficiency, in the service of late capitalism in the anthropocene epoch, and to challenge them through a certain materialist understanding of reality-in-itself as fluid, independent and beyond correlationism. To give an example, even when the discourse of green capitalism recognises a situation beyond its control in the spectre of climate change, it reduces the problem to one of efficiency or the lack of it. The paper will thus draw from speculative materialism and from dialectical materialism to develop a materialist critique of capitalism's understanding of the anthropocene.

## **Latin American Communists and Mass Culture during the Cold War**

**Marcelo Ridenti (Universidade Estadual de Campinas)**

The participation of artists in communist parties was significant throughout Latin America at least from the 1930s to the 1970s, as well as the impact of communist culture on the wider society. There are several factors involved to explain this phenomenon. One of them, perhaps still little explored, is the cultural implication of the economic and social analysis carried out by the communists at the time. They emphasized the need to develop productive forces, on the path to national and democratic revolution against imperialism, seeking to overcome pre-capitalist relations that had strong survival in the countries of the region. The communists supported the growth of national industries, including the area of culture, to encourage national production to reach the people as a whole. This was compatible with the development of national mass culture and helped establish and consolidate culture industry in several countries. Communist artists sought to excel inside national culture industry. At the same time, the Soviet system of large-scale cultural diffusion integrated them, constituting an alternative star system to that irradiated by the United States, especially during the Cold War.

## **Organizing the mess : community organizing and right to the city during the Civil Rights movement**

**Emilien Epale**

From Saul Alinsky's "shit-in" to a gang made musical, this paper will make a cross analysis of different forms of community organizing in Chicago's South Side African-American neighbourhoods during the Civil Rights Movement with Henri Lefebvre's "right to the city". It

will discuss how Chicago might be an archetype in shape and consequences of what Lefebvre call “the fragmentation of the traditional morphology of cities in parallel with the urbanization of society”, how urbanism has been used against African-American citizens, and how some gangs quickly turned into political organizations.

## **Controversies on the theories of crisis and the Great Depression in Spain**

**Juan Pablo Mateo Tom (University of Valladolid)**

In this paper I present the results of the research carried out on the analysis of the crisis in Spain, which will be published with the title “The theory of crisis and the Great Recession in Spain” by Palgrave Macmillan at the end of this year. Both theoretical and empirical issues related to the crisis are addressed, and their application to the case of the Spanish economy. First, the most outstanding methodological features of the theories of the crisis will be exposed. The particularity of the Marxist approach is that it constitutes a materialist analysis that highlights the fundamental structures of capitalism, identifying an objective logic of capital accumulation that periodically drives the system into crisis. Therefore, the Marxist theory of crisis is a theory of the necessity of crises, as they are both inevitable and inescapable. Other economic theories have elements of a humanist thought, alien to historical materialism, which is why crises are just mere possibilities, and thus avoidable. The explanatory factors of the crisis would not be fundamental structures of capitalism, but non-essential and contingent elements, in short, susceptible to correction. Secondly, the set of controversies about the explanation of the crisis in Spain will be addressed. The starting hypothesis is double. On the one hand, I consider that the residential asset bubble is explained by an underlying problem of profitability, and complementarily, fostered by aspects of the institutional framework. On the other hand, I believe that the existence of a real estate bubble implies a series of particularities that allow to explain the existence of different theories of the crisis. Briefly, it leads to the confusion of causes and consequences, that is, the essence and appearance of phenomena. Consequently, in this context the following accounts arise: i) Explanations based on imbalances between supply and demand, which are rooted in underconsumption or overproduction, including wage pressure due to the difference between the rate of increase in the price of housing and wages, which leads to emphasize the excess of surplus to the extent that higher prices enable greater profits. But also, highlighting low wages, because ultimately the impossibility to sell houses is explained because demand is not high enough to be able to pay them, in addition for the type of activities that drives the activity of residential construction (labor-intensive and based on low wages), so that the wage cost constitutes a relatively high part of the business costs; ii) the crisis as a phenomenon of a financial nature, due to the close relationship of the real estate business and the flow of credit to businesses and households. There are several possibilities: a) because of low interest rates, since a bubble normally arises in phases of reduced profitability, in which the demand for money-capital is low, and thus the level of interest rates; and the crisis explodes when interest rates increase and contribute to debt defaults; b) due to the excess of debt, since indebtedness is inherent to construction, the purchase of housing and still when housing

prices rise extraordinarily. And when the crisis erupts, the fall in income raises the relative level of debt; c) by the absence of connection between house prices with the usual macroeconomic variables, which blurs the relevance of the law of value, due to the distorting influence of the financial sphere; iii) the institutional framework, since a real estate bubble has important nexus with the economic policy, the regulatory framework of finance, as well as urban and territorial organization in general.

## **From retribution to revolution: Crisis, reaction and struggle at the time of extinction-capitalism**

**George Sotiropoulos (International School of Athens)**

This paper makes justice a focal point for looking at the multiple experiences and political trajectories that the ongoing crisis has generated. This operation requires abandoning the normative idealism of mainstream theories of justice in favor of a more critical conception that draws from historical materialism. A key insight of Marx is that disaster and emancipation are embedded potentials of the same historical conjuncture, with crisis functioning as a key mediator between the two alternatives. This mediating role, in turn, denotes that crises are not automatic processes but complex historical phenomena. Specifically, taking seriously Marx's insight that social formations foster specific anthropological types, periods of crises necessarily affect prevailing modes of subjectivity and historical consciousness. My paper builds upon this point in order to elaborate how the multifaceted, economic, social, political and environmental, crisis gradually erodes neoliberal individualism as well as the progressivist temporality in which it was indexed. In their place, feelings of mass anxiety, frustration, disappointment, precariousness and anger are gaining ground. Crowning these affects, is the widespread experience of a looming collapse of apocalyptic proportions. Justice, in this context, serves much more than acting as a prescription on how the world should look like in order to avert destruction. It is a key determination of the multilayered historical process of crisis, collapse and change. In particular, picking up Marx's own suggestions, justice will be shown to operate on a double register. On the one hand, it is operative in the attempts that derive from above at restructuring capitalist social formations, including the reactionary, far-right evocations for a return to an authoritarian nation state. On the other hand, within the social basis, justice largely emerges as a resentful anticipation of punishment, which feeds the apocalyptic mood of our times. But this does not exhaust the actuality of justice on the grassroots level. For it also emerges as a productive desire mobilizing resistance and revolt against austerity, marginalization and environmental degradation. The relevant wave of struggles has cleared the space for leftwing parties that promote social and environmental reforms in order to achieve a fairer version of capitalism. But struggles also point to a more radical potential of revolutionary change. To be consistent to historical materialism means that this prospect cannot be separated from the unfolding of the crisis. But, unlike communization theory, revolution and communism are not indexed to social collapse. Rather, I argue that the development of communist social formations is relative to the growth of a relevant regime of justice.

## **Low-paid migrant workers and class-based collective action: A partisan ethnographical account of loading bay operatives' struggles for workplace rights**

**Gabriella Cioce (University of Nottingham Business School)**

This paper presents research on low-paid migrant workers class-based collective action, with a focus on the role played by identity and collective processes of identification. The case study draws on ethnographical data collected across a multi-sited fieldwork whose featuring site was Bologna among migrants employed as loading bay operatives in logistics warehouses and enrolled in what may be defined as a militant rank and file union, named S.I. Cobas. Findings of this paper come from workers experience of the workplace and their subsequent active engagement in picket lines and union negotiations. The initial study seems to show that mobilising and organising processes have lead migrant workers to the achievement of both material and not-material goals, such as being paid fairly and treated with dignity, as well as it appears to have positively shaped their self-representation, both as migrant and worker.

## **Between the Ruins of Art and the Aesthetics of Disaster**

**Dora Longo Bahia (University of So Paulo - USP), Mauricio Ians de Moraes (University of So Paulo – USP Pontifical Catholic University of So Paulo - PUC-SP)  
Isobel Whitelegg (University of Leicester)**

This pannel proposes a critical reflection on the relations between art, capital and ecological deterioration and exploitation in the contemporary world, exploring three axes of action, being: 1. How can works of art be effective to denounce the environmental destruction and the extermination of native communities and landless workers that are their corolary? In Brazil, the policies of Jair Bolsonaro's government retake, with their irresponsible developmentalist project, aggressive and extractive positions institutionalized since the time of the military dictatorship. They authorize in a totalitarian way the exploitation of natural resources by the private initiative and encourage the expropriation and displacement of native communities. Some artists position themselves critically in relation to these policies, without however escaping the capitalist traps on which they depend and that lie at the basis of the positions assumed by the current Brazilian government. Can artists strategies defeat government policies? 2. How do companies linked to environmental destruction instrumentalize art as a palliative to erase their direct relationship with the irresponsible exploitation of natural resources? Two exemplary cases in the recent history of Brazil involved a company that is among the largest sponsors of art in Brazil: Vale do Rio Doce. The announced disaster at the cities of Mariana and Brumadinho, two sites of exploration of the company, and its silence in relation to these, made it clear that their acts of patronage of artists and the arts serve only to divert attention from their destructive actions. The Inhotim Institute of Contemporary Art, one of the largest in Brazil, acclaimed worldwide, is also linked to one of Brazil's largest

mining and steel industries, Itambé. The rupture of the dam of the Rio Doce Valley, near the city of Brumadinho, where Inhotim is located, brought back to the art world the questioning about the value and role of art in front of its financiers. Can art survive disaster capitalism?3. How can artistic practices criticize and access environmental problems effectively without reiterating the object of their criticism? Several of these practices, from the neo-avant-garde to the present day, approach environmental issues by claiming titles such as “environmental arts” in works that escape traditional spaces of art to relate to nature, whether in an epic way or symbiotically. However, although they are located outside the exhibition spaces, their circulation still depends on the marketing structures of the arts, often supported by the pharmaceutical industry, mining companies, oil companies, both private and state owned. Is an effective environmental art possible? These points raise issues of extreme relevance not only for contemporary art but also for society in general, and aim to highlight the paradoxes of the relationship between art, capital and the State, from a dialectical approach.

## **Boko Haram: Militants in Between Disaster Capitalism and Climate Change**

**Shehnoor Khurram (York University)**

The names and addresses are available for those who lead the vast and expansive multinational corporations that contribute to 71% of greenhouse gas emissions. The Western nations, to whom these individuals belong, are not adopting a serious climate change policy to hold these corporations responsible, prevent the further destruction of our ecosystem, and move towards a more sustainable way of living. While the damage is being done by the transnational elite class in the West, it is the most vulnerable in the Global South who experience the immediate dangers of the current ecological crisis. Researchers Adekunle Idowu, Simeon Ayoola, and Bolatito report that in Nigeria, climate change has resulted in extreme food and water shortages, desertification, floods, deforestation, population displacements and the emergence of ecological refugees. The state, severely weakened by neoliberal restructuring via structural adjustment programs implemented by the IMF, has been unable to effectively manage or mitigate this crisis. A large vacuum has materialized allowing a number of nonstate actors attempt to fill this role. Of the many contenders, the militant Islamist group Boko Haram has emerged as a powerful and violent response to these broad structural changes further exacerbating the resource scarcity. Building on Naomi Klein's Disaster Capitalism thesis, I examine how neoliberal globalization operates in Nigeria to generate and profit from this ecological crisis. I investigate how militant Islamism emerges and responds to disaster capitalism and climate. I argue that an overlooked and undertheorized consequence of climate change is the rise of militancy. I assert that Boko Haram is actively involved in simultaneously alleviating and exacerbating the ecological crisis in Nigeria. Expanding from these findings, I discuss and attempt to theorize the role that militant Islamism is playing in shaping the current global environmental struggle.



## **The feminist strikes between affirmation and transformation: social reorganization of works and life sustainability**

**Julia Cmara Gmez (Viento Sur)**

The experiences of feminist strikes lived around the world in the last three years are multiple and diverse, but they all have several things in common. One of them is the contribution to the practical delimitation of a new concept (feminist strike) that goes beyond the notion of classical strike, traditionally limited to the productive sphere or wage labor. A feminist strike is a strike of all the works, also and especially of the reproductive ones those that constitute one of the fundamental pillars of the meaning of female gender in capitalist societies. This has two basic implications: the first one is the popularization of a large part of the ideas produced by marxist feminism in the 70s, in a fruitful encounter with the new massive feminist movement; the second one is the finding of works that cannot be stopped usually done by women and in the basis of life sustainability. The goal of this paper is double: on the one hand, to reflect on the mobilization strategies deployed by the international feminist movement in feminist strikes, with special interest in the construction of care strikes; on the other, to think about how to transcend the merely dignifying vision of reproductive work that substantially links it to being a woman, and how to go from positive affirmation practices to emancipatory politics. To this end, I will analyse the way in which a large part of agitation and mobilization work, although very successful in involving non politicized women, takes the risk of re-mystify the female sacrifice, by idealizing female genealogies of the ones in charge of life sustainability and by consolidating the current distribution of works. Next, I will explore the different strategies deployed while feminist strikes to deal with the problem of the impossibility of stopping in certain works, showing how these experiences help us to think how to overcome dignifying but immobilizing gender discourses. And finally, I will launch a proposal: that these experiences may be a transitional way through the struggle for the reorganization of works, connected with the historical claims for the radical reduction of labor time with no cut in salaries (classic slogan of workers movement) and for the distribution of socially necessary works demand raised by marxist feminists.

## **Old Pathologies in the New Media Industry: The Case of Call Centers in Albania**

**Klejn Ngracani (Assistant professor, Mediterranean University of Albania)**

**Michalis Zotos (PhD Candidate, Department of Communication, University of Vienna Lecturer, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Tirana)**

The difficulty to integrate various industry sectors, especially those which are framed as “New Media Industries”, in the legal framework of developing countries provides the necessary space for the emergence of a self-governing way of regulating labor relations within these sectors. These industries pursuing self-regulatory practices are able to exercise their activity undisturbed for as long as they, taking the fact that their practices

are not included in the labor code of the respective countries, do not go directly against the latter. In this study we have tried to explore the activity of call centers operating in Albanian territory, more specifically those contracted by the representative companies of the New Media Industries, to understand the conditions that are produced by these practices and whether these conditions facilitate the creation of unions, improve working conditions within the sector and empower workers.

## **The plasticity of the rule of law: the Brazilian legal coup as capitalist expropriation**

**Csar Barreira (PhD student at the Rio de Janeiro State University), Guilherme Goncalves (Professor of Sociology of Law at the Rio de Janeiro State University)**

Politics and Law have not been able to pass unharmed by the worst economic crisis of the capitalist system since 1929. Authoritarian neoliberalism, great retrogression, armored, impeded or market-based democracy are some expressions that became recurrent to describe the major fractures of our time after the subprime crisis in 2008: the rise of far right movements in Europe, the election of Donald Trump, the Brazilian legal coup of 2016, Rio de Janeiro's military intervention and the election of Jair Bolsonaro as the President of Brazil are just a few examples. After a period of international prominence, the normative hypothesis of an emancipation from capitalism through legal dispute and recognition has been increasingly contradicted by reality itself, in which constant financial, food, environmental and migratory crises coexist with colossal disparities of opportunity, wealth and access to minimum social conditions for the reproduction of human life. This situation underlines the need to raise once more the question for the special connectivity that amalgamates the capitalist crises to the social forms (such as Politics and Law) responsible for securing the bourgeois class hegemony. A central aspect of this relation is the increase of the degree of repression and social control. It is a phenomenon that accompanies the course of the crisis itself, being an expression of the regulatory restructuring designed to save the financial system from the risk of a general collapse from 2008. This means that the solution of the neoliberal capitalism's crisis has occurred through capitalist expropriations. Such expropriations are responsible for disabling the overaccumulation of fictitious assets by means of commodifying spaces that are not yet exclusively commodified in order to let capital flow, expand and (re) accumulate. Nonetheless, in order for this social circuit to reproduce itself, the suitability of both the political and legal-form becomes indispensable. That is to say: they must be adequated to the fluidity of the values valorization. In this sense, the processes derived from the Brazilian legal coup can be seen as an empirical material capable of stimulating a critical reading of the "pink tide" in Latin America. The notion of plasticity of the Democratic State of Law whose manifestation in the Brazilian legal coup as capitalist expropriation is particularly gleaming constitutes an important conceptual apparatus for the Marxist theory to develop an analytical framework qualified to problematize the possibility of a "left government" to be part of a radical socialist strategy for the working class.

## **Towards a Green Populism: Ecological Breakdown and the Existential Crisis of Political Liberalism.**

**justine sachs (University of Auckland)**

This paper will approach climate change as the culmination of the Enlightenment projects inherent contradictions, taking from Adorno and Horkheimer's assessment in the *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1997) which poses that the wholly enlightened earth radiates under the sign of disaster triumphant (p.3). What better example of the irrational potential of modernity than its looming destruction through a self-created and self-imposed ecological catastrophe. Modernity's impetus to dominate both nature and labour has reached an apex, the question, therefore, is how do we move through this moment or rather how can we? This paper will argue that finding a solution to these existential issues requires not merely a rejection of modernity and the enlightenment project, instead, an emancipatory project demands a transcendent politics that builds from the limitations of what came before it. If climate change is the result of the limitations of political liberalism and the tyranny of economic liberalism, then perhaps an appropriate starting point is democracy itself. I explore the re-emergence of the populist left within the electoral sphere, assessing how populist movements challenge the instrumentalized reason of neoliberalism, creating a space for contestation and political struggle. From there, I suggest perhaps a green populism might be a political solution to the current crisis we face.

## **Marx on Ireland after 150 Years: Ethnicity, Nationalism, Class, and Revolution**

**Kevin B. Anderson (University of California), Eamonn Slater (NUI-Maynooth, Sociology, emeritus), Chandana Mathur (NUI-Maynooth, Anthropology)**

This year marks the 150th anniversary of the most significant parts of Marx's writings on Ireland, which reached their apex in the winter of 1869-70. These writings addressed the prospects for a national revolution in Ireland and its impact on the class struggle in Britain and the rest of Europe. Here, Marx also took up the ways in which ethnic chauvinism on the part of English workers, which he explicitly compared to anti-Black racism in the USA, impeded the development of class consciousness in relation to the dominant classes. Finally, these writings address how the struggle against landowning classes was connected to that against the industrial bourgeoisie. These writings need also to be seen in connection to his earlier writings on Ireland, especially in the chapter on accumulation in *Capital I*, and to his later ones in the 1879-82 ethnological notebooks.

## **Against the Technological Determinism of Fully Automated Luxury Communism**

**Cameron Lawrence (The University of Sydney's Political Economy Department)**

Predictions of an imminent third Industrial Revolution caused by the rapid development of automation technologies have captured the attention of many attempting to think through the future of work and social organisation more broadly. The technical capacities of particular recent technologies such as 3D printers, blockchains, logistics systems, and various clean energy systems have proven similarly captivating. On the left, a new group of thinkers have emerged in response to these developments, arguing that what we are witnessing is the genuine possibility for a world of abundance without work. The political and economic system advocated for by these thinkers, including the likes of Nick Srnicek, Alex Williams, Paul Mason, and Aaron Bastani, has come to be known as Fully Automated Luxury Communism (FALC). In this paper, I will argue that there are two issues within thought associated with FALC which speak to problems with many of the left's efforts to think about technology today. The first is a tendency to accept a massive reduction in work due to the heralded automation revolution as an inevitability, and the second is to treat particular technologies as if they are modular, with their emancipatory potential able to be identified and considered in isolation from both other technologies and the social world. Having detailed the faults in these logics, I propose alternative ways to think about technology, which I argue are far better suited for guiding political organisation and strategy.

## **The molecular organisation of theories and imaginaries as an emancipatory practice. Some notes at the centenary of the Factory Councils movement in Turin (1919-1920)**

**Piermarco Piu (University of Warwick)**

To what extent can the collective organisation of knowledge within social movements contribute to forming emancipatory practices of organised resistance? According to Gramsci's Prison Notebooks, an enquiry into the processes of collective will formation entails an analysis of the molecular phases of these processes. This requires an extremely minute [] capillary analysis [...] of an enormous number of books, pamphlets, newspapers and journal articles, conversations and oral debates [...] [that] represent the intense activity that gives birth to a collective will with a certain degree of homogeneity [...] necessary and sufficient to generate an action that is coordinated and simultaneous in the time and geographical space (Gramsci 2007: 346). This paper will approach the problem of how an intense ideological activity gives birth to an organised movement by discussing a specific example: the establishment of a system of Factory Councils in Turin during the occupation of the factories (September 1920), in the context of the Red Biennium (1919-1920). In particular, this paper will analyse the molecular circulation of Council theories, imaginaries and practices; thereby considering to what extent the spontaneous organisation of these

Councils was related to the ideological direction incited by Gramsci and the Ordine Nuovo group. This angle provides a reappraisal of the Gramscian-Ordinovistic theories and imaginaries of the Councils as well as their socialization through the debates, the practices and the experiences of the Turinese workers movement. Overall, the question of a molecular dialectic between spontaneity and direction underlies the conditions for hegemony and, potentially, emancipation. By testing Gramsci's philosophy of praxis against a practice of *conricerca* (co-research), this paper will attempt to trace the development of an emancipatory hegemony through the molecular processes that transform hierarchies of culture into a single cultural environment.

## **Robert Wedderburns Universal War: Primitive accumulation and universalism from below**

**Ajmal Waqif**

Robert Wedderburn (1762-1835) was born in Kingston, Jamaica to an African slave mother. He lived the majority of his life in London where he became a leading member of the Spencean Philanthropists, a proto-communist radical group at the turn of the nineteenth century which agitated for a programme of universal suffrage and the abolition of private property. Wedderburn combined the Spencean programme with a fiery commitment to the abolition of slavery and anti-colonialism indeed seeing them as essential to the programme. Through a study of Wedderburn's journals, speeches and political projects I will present two interrelated arguments. Firstly, that Wedderburn contemporaneously identified a global process of dispossession and enslavement, believing that the great majority in every nation are dispossessed of their right to the soil throughout the world. He saw land enclosure in Europe, colonialism in the New World, and the trans-Atlantic slave system as part of the same dark process one which Marx would later dub primitive accumulation. Secondly, that Wedderburn drew from his experience as both a colonised subject and a London proletarian, as well as his deep engagement with the history of the Maroon Wars, debates around the Haitian Revolution, and reports of everyday slave resistance, to develop a powerful critique of the limitations of European bourgeois universalism, specifically for its sanctioning of colonialism and slavery. In its place Wedderburn suggests a theory of universalism which finds its basis in Universal War, that is the waves of resistance and revolution against tyranny that reverberated on a transnational scale during this period, with a particular emphasis on slave revolt in the colonial periphery. Wedderburn's ideas and political projects inform contemporary debates in Marxist theory. Wedderburn provides us with an account of primitive accumulation as it unfolded, one where the interconnections of slavery, colonialism, and the rise of capitalism are taken as given. Consequently, Wedderburn's political programme, which placed decolonisation as a requisite for the abolition of private property, may provide Marxists with a powerful radical precedent. Finally, Wedderburn presents a compelling case for the existence of a non-European discourse of universalism during this historical phase, one based on the common revolt of oppressed and dispossessed people. A study of this universalism will allow Marxists to better contextualise socialism's relationship to anti-

colonialism and anti-racism, and hopefully be constructive in renewing contemporary understanding and commitment to solidarity and liberation.

## **Humanitarianism, the workfare regime and the limits of liberal capitalism: The example of the governing of EU migrant workers in Munich and the struggles against it**

**Jonathan Schmidt-Domin (Goethe University Frankfurt / LMU Munich / Gruppe Workers Center Mnchen (Initiative Zivilcourage))**

Drawing from the experiences of a worker center in Munich in the organising of precarious EU migrant workers, especially from Bulgaria and especially day labourers, assuming an exemplary multi-level (local, national, EU) perspective, this paper tries to sketch some theses reconsidering the relations of humanitarian government (situating the fruitful post-foucauldian and ethical approaches of Didier Fassin within the contemporary governing of surplus population) to the workfare paradigm within the EU border and migration regime and to historic limits of liberal capitalism. This consideration leads to an estimation of the conditions for articulating a common struggle against capitalist exploitation in its contemporary form heavily structured by a multiplication of labour (Mezzadra & Neilson) through border regimes (regarding both EU citizens and non-citizens) and of both the necessity and the limits of a political recourse to humanitarian objectives. While the anti-racist struggles challenging the EU border regime and public attention on it in the last decade in Germany have been focussed on the asylum system and external borders in Munich it culminated in the occupation of public places by the Non-Citizen-Movement in 2014ff. preceding the massive repressive backlash from Summer 2016 onwards based on a political perpetuation of a state of crisis, the social contradictions of migration within the EU and the struggles of precarious workers remained relatively unnoticed. The ideological narrative of a progressive European integration based on common and individual formal EU-citizenship which has rightly been confronted as being founded on an exclusion, as it is seen for example in the Schengen system, in the intertwining of internal freedom of movement and brutal walling-off at the external borders disguises that European integration in itself is based on continued differentiation transforming the very notion of citizenship: Contrary to a classical liberal model of a universal (within national bounds) citizenship as a foundation for general exploitability of labour power civil and social rights (like freedom of movement and social benefits) become immediately subordinated to economic conditions (like being actually employed), rights of residence are integrated into the workfare system, in the case of refugees in Germany even the restrictions on the freedom of residence (one of the few achievements of national-liberal movements in Germany in the 19th century) have been reinforced and reshaped as workfare measures especially since 2016. While this shift marks a general limit of the realisation of liberal, civil rights within liberal capitalism and has its precedents, the governing of EU labour migration in Germany in the last two decades introduces a historically new mode of the generation and containment of surplus populations within post-fordism. While the legal and institutional framework of EU asylum systems conceals the character of the surplus



population of global capitalism either by mere violent exclusion of refugees from all rights or by their subjection to mere humanitarian criteria, in EU citizenship a post-liberal double structure of functional integration and exclusion as a condition of the reproduction of overexploitability becomes directly visible. In this historical situation the narrative of EU-citizenship as a step towards a realisation of humanity beyond the nation states can be countered by analysing that to the contrary EU-citizenship is incorporating traits of the precarious status of world citizenship marked by their lack of institutionalisation as described by Kant and Arendt within the European institutional framework. By its internal contradictions universal capitalist economic rationality fails to express itself in an equally universal position of an (exploitable) citizen encompassing the surplus population, not only by (sometimes even economically irrational) exclusions at the exterior borders, but also within the EU. No wonder that humanitarian objectives, characteristic of the asylum system, at the same time being a narrowing and a deprivation of civil/political rights and pointing beyond the limiting of those rights by their merely national institutionalisation, increasingly reenter the governing of EU migrant workers. The interplay of the workfare regime and humanitarian government manifests itself in the individual experiences where a precarious status is perpetuated by a dynamics where humanitarian reasons are sometimes the only way to maintain the right to stay in cases of an inability to find (documented) employment or an inability to work because of health issues, while at the same time even social benefits for migrants being physically unable to work and their right to stay are depending on further circumstances either completely put into question or again made dependent on at least minor employment. City-based policies and administrative practices are particularly crucial in this process not only directly through their decision-making on permanent residence permits (after five years of legal residence, implying an equal legal status with German citizens in many areas), but also by their responsibility for housing/shelter of the homeless and registrations of residence. While humanitarian government perpetuates precarious statuses, humanitarian objectives can at the same time be politicised particularly by intertwining them with demand for equality as a political idea, as it has been pointed out by Fassin and as it is practiced for example in struggles of homeless migrant workers for housing in Munich with aims for equality, which at the same time operate within and surpass the narrow humanitarian confinements directed merely on the prevention of people freezing to death and not on individual social rights. However, the limits of a political recourse to humanitarian logic have become particularly apparent in winter 2018/19 when the city of Munich according to our records for the first time in decades systematically evicted the camps of migrant and non-migrant homeless under bridges and in tunnels, aiming at their permanent dissolution. This action has been legitimised as a humanitarian intervention preventing the homeless imagined to be mentally ill from taking the risk of sleeping in illegal camps, without considering whether there are any real alternatives for safer shelter for the specific individuals. This development had been structurally anticipated by the discourse legitimising the EU's sabotage of search-and-rescue operations in the Mediterranean throughout 2018 by no longer defining humanitarian action as rescue of individuals from drowning, but as collective deterrence from risking one's life. Within those forms of humanitarian discourse any references to equality and social rights are foreclosed. Their current predominance makes political struggle beyond humanitarianism ever more necessary, even for the defense of basic humanitarian standards established as a result of struggles of the past.

## **Mapping the Late Marx: On Colonialism, Gender, Development, and Multilinear Concepts of Revolution**

**Kevin B. Anderson (University of California)**

In his Late Writings, mainly from the last fourteen years of his life, 1869-83, Marx develops a more multicultural, anticolonial, and gender-centered worldview, during the same years that he fails to complete vols. 2 and 3 of Capital. Especially in his research notebooks from 1879-82, up to one year before his death, one can observe a deep concern with societies outside the core industrializing areas of Western Europe, such as India, North Africa, Latin America, classical Rome, and a number of pastoral and hunter-gatherer societies like Native Americans or Australian aborigines. In addition to these notebooks, I will be taking account of the 1872-75 French edition of Capital, vol. 1, his 1869-70 writings on Ireland, and his 1877-82 ones on Russia. This will result in a more systematic interpretation of Marx as a thinker whose work was by no means limited to the study of the working classes of Western Europe and North America.

## **Thinking with environmental justice movements in the face of today's ecological crises**

**Terry Moon (News and Letters Committees)**

Those movements that have truly challenged the plunge toward climate chaos and related ecological crises stoked by contemporary capitalism have sprung up from below, rather than being dreamed up by Marxists, the Left, or intellectuals in general. This paper challenges assumptions that these problems can be solved without centering such movements as thought as well as activity, or that these movements can be regarded as helpmates. The paper explores how they emerged from the grassroots, usually started by women. Examples include the struggle over Love Canal led by Lois Gibbs, the role of African American women in initiating and leading the struggles around the toxic pollution of the Defense Depot of Memphis Tennessee, the pollution of the Black community of Memphis around the Velsicol chemical plant, the hazardous waste surrounding the Black neighborhood of Altgeld Gardens in Chicago, the protection of the waters from the Dakota Access Pipeline, and the creation of the Youth Climate Strikes by Greta Thunberg. In many cases working-class women and other community members of necessity educated themselves to know more than the officials, including scientists, they had to fight against. They have challenged the mainstream environmental movement and the Left as well as capitalist bureaucracies and enterprises. Any real challenge to capitalism and its ecological crises needs to begin by acknowledging these kinds of activities and working out a new relationship between Marxism and these movements from below.

## Marxism and Eurocentrism

Ken Olende (University of Brighton)

There is currently a call to decolonise academia. This movement sets out to end the dominance of white European men as the repositories of wisdom. However, for some in the movement it is now common sense to reject Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels seeing their outlook as similar to that of the colonialists. Current left positions critical of Marx largely evolved from earlier arguments that tended to accuse Marxism of Orientalism and Eurocentrism. The first term was popularised by Edward Said (1978) in *Orientalism*, a key text in the development of Postcolonial studies. The term Eurocentric was coined by the Egyptian Marxist Samir Amin in the 1970s and detailed in his 1988 book *Eurocentrism*. I also engage with ideas raised in Cedric Robinson's influential *Black Marxism* (1983), which criticises Marxism as Eurocentric from a viewpoint closer to black nationalism, which has influenced current thinkers such as Kehinde Andrews. I will argue against accepting Robinson's argument that black people abandoned Marxism because its Eurocentrism shielded their fellow socialists from the recognition of racialism's influence on the development and structures of the capitalist system. I will argue, drawing on authors including Kevin B Anderson (2010), Vivek Chibber (2013) and Lucia Pradella (2015), that for people aiming to counter racism, not only are the ideas of Marx and his political heirs still relevant, but to effectively challenge racism and imperialism today, activists should build on his insights.

## Rhythm of Capital, Rhythm of the Common: Notes on Abstraction, Collapse and Agency in and around Hans Richters Interwar Films.

Tobias Dias (Aarhus University)

In this paper, I follow the scope and implications of the phrase conveyed by Walter Benjamin that what determines the rhythm of production on a conveyor belt is the same thing that underlines the rhythm of reception in film. Taking this assumed continuum of the rhythm of capital and cinema as my point of departure, I analyze how such politics of rhythm was expressed in the German avant-garde artist Hans Richter's writings and films through the 1920s. In close connection to other prevalent contemporary discourses and practices of rhythm from the German and Soviet context, Richter regarded rhythm as an operative force of sensory and social organization. In the paper, I analyze this rhythmic operativeness in a twofold manner: On the one hand, according to Richter, rhythm tends to naturalize things whether in the autonomous process of the conveyor belt or the illusory continuity of movement in the apparatus of film by imposing successive repetition. According to this view, rhythm can even be said to force such naturalization, as in a primal rhythm making it impossible to move one's eyes from the moving images of cinema, as the cultural critic René Fülöp-Miller described it in 1931. This function of rhythm was given paradigmatic form in the experimental essay-film *Inflation* from 1929 in which Richter analyzed the emergent financialization of capital as a moving and abstract social relation in a quintessential rhythmic flow of a counterpoint of declining people and growing zeros. On

the other hand, rhythm not only repeats and make things move but also create transitions and transformations; rhythm releases energy and new forms of commonality, an aspiration preponderant in Richters early so-called Rhythmus-films which in illusory plays of geometrical forms and lines aimed at depriving off the passive rhythmic states of commercial cinema in a purely abstract and “objective” rhythmic field disclosing kinetic and emotional energy and human power an idea of rhythm Richter to some extent shared with Sergej Eisenstein and proletarian dance practices. According to Richter, rhythm was thus to be viewed as a sensorial, emotional and abstract maybe even arch-metaphysical - force conditioning and taking part in the organization of perception of industrial capitalism. As the sister of revolution and the patriarch of capitalist exploitation, rhythm, whether at the conveyor belt, the stock market, the stage floor or through the apparatus of cinema, functioned as an operative, sensorial force of social organization anticipating and abandoning a communist future.

## **Reflections on the state and revolution in Sudan and Algeria**

**Anne Alexander (co-Editor, Middle East Solidarity magazine)**

The fall of Abdelaziz Bouteflika on 2 April, followed by the removal of Omar el Bashir on 11 April in the face of the greatest waves of mass protests seen in either Algeria or Sudan for decades has resurrected the dreams of 2011, when those magic words the people want seemed capable of changing everything. While it is still too early to say whether the tragedies of counter-revolution and war will repeat themselves, this paper aims to open a discussion about what the popular uprisings in Sudan and Algeria tell us about revolution in the 21st century within the Middle East and beyond. In particular it focusses on the questions which the mass movements in the streets and workplaces are beginning to pose: where does the regime end and the state begin? How can those who have risked their lives in the streets ensure that the end of the dictators is the beginning of a process of genuine change? What is the relationship between the social and political aspects of the uprisings? The paper will focus specifically on the impact of uneven and combined development during the neoliberal era on the form of the state, paying particularly attention to the reconfiguration of the special bodies of armed men (Lenin, 1917) through examining relationships between paramilitary and military institutions in the context of the political economy of war and military competition both within and without national borders. It will also compare the strategies pursued by reformist and revolutionary actors in the two uprisings with those which unfolded during the previous revolutionary wave of 2010-2013.

## **The Missing ‘Revolutionary Argument’ in Marxist Literary History**

**Patricia Geraldine McManus (University of Brighton)**

To deprive the bourgeoisie not of its art but of its concept of art, this is the precondition of a revolutionary argument (Machery, 1966) At the end of the second decade of the twenty-

first century, we may have neither the classic bourgeoisie nor their concept of art left to anchor the antagonistic work of a Marxist literary theory but culture remains a battlefield and literature a still important site of articulation within it. This paper will propose a return to the idea of a revolutionary argument as a way for Marxist literary theory to index its own situation in the unfolding catastrophe of the present to index where it is, and where it might need to be. It will do so by taking one aspect of the tradition of Marxist literary work and asking how adequate it is to our own moment. That aspect is the privileging of form as an object of inquiry in Marxist literary-historical work on the novel. Form is key for otherwise significantly different writers, it is the point where history enters the individual text or genre or stylistic mutation most meaningfully: it is the sediment of history and of the social in the very existence of the novel itself and of its many mutations across time and space. Why privilege form in this way? If we can agree that the historical materialist pursuit of form is the best we can do as Marxist literary historians, what do we do with forms whose iterations are dispersed geographically and unfinished historically? To enable focus and critical purchase, the paper will concentrate on the history of dystopia as a sub-genre of the novel, a sub-genre only a little over a century old, ideologically potent and popular across the residual high culture/popular culture borders. Using the shapes of dystopian fiction, the paper will test the centrality of form as a historicizing instrument for a revolutionary literary history.

## **Social Reproduction and Prison Labour: A Discussion on Abolitionist Organising in England and Wales**

**Lucy Freedman (Incarcerated Worker's Organising Committee Queen Mary University), Alva Gotby (Incarcerated Worker's Organising Committee University of West London), Callum Sunderland (Incarcerated Workers Organising Committee)**

In this panel, members of the London branch of the Incarcerated Workers Organising Committee (IWOC) will attempt to contribute to ongoing debates around privileged organisational praxis (strikes, riots, etc.), social reproduction, and prison abolition, with specific reference to the particular character of labour in prisons in England and Wales. We have been inspired by the mass prison strikes across the US over the past five or so years, while sharing ambivalence regarding conceptions of labour which in some cases accompanied these mobilisations. A tension exists in the American movement, broadly speaking, between those characterising prisons primarily as institutions for the appropriation of incarcerated labour (and consequently drawing on the discourse and tactics of the workers' movement), and those characterising them primarily as institutions for the containment of surplus populations. Although evidently these functions (appropriation and containment) are not mutually exclusive, we feel the discussions around their relative priority bear out in interesting ways on other contemporary debates in the communist movement. In particular, we're interested in the relationship between diverging characterisations of the role of prison labour and the contemporary reassessment of social reproduction theory. Many prisoners in England and Wales do not

work, and of those that do most are employed in the maintenance of the prison estate itself; cooking and cleaning and laundering their way through their sentences. The nature of this kind of “reproductive” work has long been contested, with accompanying controversies over the suitability of various strategic orientations. Recent work in particular by value-critical feminists such as Maya Gonzales, Jeanne Neton, Amy De’Ath, Marina Vishmidt and Zoe Sutherland has leveled substantive challenges to the traditional Italian Marxist-Feminist stance on socially reproductive labour. While these debates remain relatively immature in the national context, the ongoing efforts of the British state to construct four new ‘mega-prisons’ with extensive industrial workshop facilities suggests a significant shift in the national management of prison labour. We hope that in drawing together these debates we can better orient ourselves to where we find ourselves now, and what is yet to come.

## **Anarchism and Marxism in Spain from the Russian Revolution to the New Left**

**Danny Evans (Liverpool Hope University)**

This panel will consider the historical relations between the anarchist and Marxist movements in Spain, from the Russian Revolution through the period of the civil war to the impact of the New Left on the prisoner solidarity movement under Franco.

Maggie Torres: Anarchism and Marxism in Spain. Maggie Torres [m.torres471@btinternet.com](mailto:m.torres471@btinternet.com) This paper seeks to explore the relationship between anarchism and Marxism in Spain from the 1870s, but with particular reference to the period from the First World War, when anarchism in its anarcho-syndicalist guise, the Confederación Nacional del Trabajo became a mass movement. The enormous growth in its union strength brought about dramatic changes within the CNT, changes which were exacerbated by the successful Bolshevik revolution in 1917, reflected in the approval of the dictatorship of the proletariat at the 1919 Congress. The disillusionment at the growing dictatorial nature of the new Soviet state, felt within the CNT from 1920, was profound, and led, in the 1920s and 1930s, to various theoretical schemas from CNT thinkers, in an attempt to explore the possibilities of maintaining the democratic content of revolutionary change. These schemas were highly original, and have not, I believe, been given the historical weight that they deserve, which, hopefully, I shall attempt to re-balance in this paper.

Danny Evans: To the authentic revolutionaries: the CNT and dissident communism in Spain, 1936-1937. The revolution that accompanied the outbreak of the Spanish civil war in 1936 was largely inspired by the anarcho-syndicalist union, the CNT. To preserve and extend its achievements, the CNT not only had to confront the mutinous generals that had taken arms against the Spanish Republic, but also the Republican authorities that sought to roll back the revolution. These authorities found a useful ally in the Partido Comunista de España (PCE), which, during the war, conducted a vicious and murderous campaign aimed at eliminating recalcitrant revolutionaries in the anarchist camp and, in particular, the



dissident communists organised in the Partido Obrero de Unificacin Marxista (POUM). Consequently, militants of the CNT and the POUM found themselves on the same side of the barricades when tensions came to a head during the Barcelona May days in 1937. However, in spite of this circumstantial solidarity and the shared perspective of defending the revolution, no lasting or formal alliance was established between the organisations. This paper will examine the reasons for this absence and consider its implications for the defence of the Spanish revolution.

Jess Thorne: 'Bending the Bars: Anarchism, Anti-Francoism and the Spring of the New Left, 1950-1975. Jessica.Thorne.2013@live.rhul.ac.uk In the autumn of 1967, a British iteration of the Anarchist Black Cross (ABC), a model of prisoner support born out of the revolutionary experience in Russia in 1917, was revived and reformed with the explicit purposes of organizing solidarity for anarchist prisoners inside Francos Spain. This paper maps the long evolution of the ABC, from its roots in Francos prisons to its activation in Britain, and finally, to its diffusion across Europe during the Spring of 1968. It will begin by assessing pre-existing political prisoner cultures during the gris decade of the 1950s and consider how these set in train new frontiers of resistance and political opposition to Franco throughout the 1960s and early 1970s. Historians have argued that by this time the (largely) exiled CNT faced existential crisis and decline. Its old vitality in the workplace, once the strongest in Spain, had been lost and ceded to the PCE. This paper argues that the retreat of Spanish anarchism in the workplace, much emphasised in the historiography, neglects the eruption onto the scene of new forms of anarchist resistance to the regime, and the subsequent adoption and domestication of this activity by actors external to Spain.

## Neighbourhood Inquiries and Feminist Class Politics

**Rabea Berfelde (Goldsmiths College, University of London)**

My presentation will argue that the conduct of workers inquiry in the operaist tradition is preceded by a double analytical move: an assumption about the emblematic technical class composition and its spatial organization. Historically the factory worker was assumed to be the privileged economic and political actor. Out of a Marxist feminist perspective this approach to workers inquiry and class politics alike can be criticized for privileging the male worker and marginalizing women\*, youth and migrants as well as neglecting the centrality of care and reproductive labour. Following Michael Hardt and Antonio Negris claim that [t]he metropolis is to the multitude what the factory was to the industrial working class[1] the first part of the presentation will analyse the political-economic roots of this transformation. It will be argued that the contemporary city becomes the primary site of surplus value extraction and exploitation as well as the strategic site for emancipatory political subjectivation due to the financialization of the economy and its intimate link to real-estate speculation. By focusing on the particular case of Berlin it will be argued that the spatial production of financialised capitalism caused not only a housing crisis, but also a new cycle of urban social movements where the neighbourhood emerges as an infrastructure of political subjectivation and collective agency. The second part of my presentation will analyse the work of the tenants organization Kotti&Co which since 2011

struggles against rising rents in the context of social housing. In the long-term their struggle aims towards the re-municipalisation of social housing as well as the democratic self-management of these houses through the tenants. Over the course of their struggle Kotti & Co conducted several neighbourhood inquiries. These will be presented and theorized as assembling the different experiences of precarization which result from the financialization of housing, making them visible as a common experience and as a systematic neglect to care for certain bodies and lives. It will be argued that these inquiries present an instance of subjectivation which results in the neighbourhood becoming an infrastructure for common struggle. In the last part, I will argue that by paying attention to the radical democratic practices of tenants organizations, we can gain inspiration for a feminist re-conceptualization of workers inquiries and class politics alike. By re-defining housing and the neighbourhood as an infrastructure of social reproduction and care, tenants organizations can be understood as practicing a feminist class politics that departs from the multiple experiences of everyday lives precarization and contests the bifurcation between the public and private realm which has been widely criticized by Marxist feminists. [1] Hardt, M./Negri, A. (2009). *Commonwealth*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 250.

## Ethics and revolution in Jeff Vandermeer's *Southern Reach* trilogy

**Luiz Artur Costa do Valle Junior (Birkbeck, University of London)**

This article attempts to challenge certain prevailing modern representations of ethics, identity, sexuality and ecology via a close reading of the character of the biologist in Jeff Vandermeer's novel *Annihilation*. I argue that the biologist, the book's protagonist and flawed narrator, embodies a kind of paradox that may hint at a new conception of ethics, one that may allow for a political (mis)understanding and entanglement of a number of sociological categories that have now become current and nearly inescapable in both academic and everyday parlance - sexuality, gender, species, nationality, etc. I rely on the notion of a paradox because the biologist constitutes an enigmatic ethical figure, marred in contradictory demands both self- and other-imposed, which she at once refuses and accepts. From her childhood compulsions of disentangling from sociality by immersing herself in the observation of her neglected house pool, to her refusal to see her complete her final passage into the tower/tunnels deepest maw/trap, the biologist escapes conventionally modern representations of the subject, in that she is neither a heroic figure of defiance nor can she be considered a proper subject of human sociality or rationality. In her refusal to be reduced to fundamental modern binarisms such as free/unfree, man/woman, human/non-human, rational/irrational, the biologist aptly embodies that which a thoroughly queer subject may experience through a mode of relationality that eschews even the faintest notions of mastery or knowledge in favor of proximity, co-habitation: a dissolving which escapes descriptions of the simultaneous subjugation and heroism of the Cartesian/Kantian subject of modernity. Rather than understanding this dissolution as a simplistic subjective reduction to conceptual imperatives such as necessity or survival, I argue that the biologist's thoroughly embodied ethics of closeness and dissolution can be productively understood as a kind of radical stance which renounces any

claim to strict individuation, both refusing and working through a number of imperatives immanent to that field which may be designated as the social. In this radical, object-less freedom, she finally finds that to have been come for and to have had all else cast out after that encounter leaves her no more than the emptiness of a redoubling. In this nothingness from which arises a kind of mimicry, a constant motif in Annihilation, she embodies that emptiness which assures the possibility of community, a radicalized version of that which Rancire calls the ever-present democratic possibility - a radical embodiment that puts into question the very possibility of delimiting the human and its other; the natural and the aberrant, the universal and the particular. In embodying the impossibility of strict separation, the biologist renounces any hierarchy among beings, speaking or otherwise, providing a starting point for a politics premised on the imperative of difference itself, dissociated from any necessity of strict separation, conceptual or material.

## **Origins of Modern Science: Technology, Markets, and States in the Transition to Capitalism**

**Jeremiah Dittmar (London School of Economics)**

The diffusion of printing in the post-Gutenberg era provides a canonical example of how technological change may drive broader social transformations. This paper traces hows the introduction of printing in 1400s Europe delivered a shock to markets for ideas and to labour markets. It documents that the interaction between these two markets was critical: it generated a sharp increase in the returns to and the quantity of scientific training and activity, leading to profound changes in knowledge production. Professor salaries increased significantly relative to skilled wages after printing diffused. Science professors enjoyed the largest salary increases, the share of university courses on scientific subjects increased, and graduates shifted towards scientific careers – starting in the late 1400s. Scientific activity and invention began to grow across cities, particularly where printing interacted with universities and political competition, which previously delivered limited support to science. The economic changes following the diffusion of printing carry general and more conceptual lessons for historical materialism. Printing was an archetype of capitalist industry. Printing introduced a new technology and new forms of competition, which reflected the high fixed costs in the industry and generated incentives for the introduction of new content. The emergence of printing shifted the market for ideas towards a dispensation in which ideas were partially commodified. However, the larger social effects reflected how this capitalist industry related to non-capitalist institutions and organizations. States and parastatal organizations like universities which were key purchasers and demand-side competitors in the historic markets for highly educated labour and ideas. These institutions, which previously provided minimal support for empirical research, were activated in new ways to support the production of scientific knowledge. The historical evidence on printing provides a key example of how technological innovation may drive significant social change through the interaction between different modes of production. It further highlights how technological change can generate important feedback effects on the production of knowledge. The evidence frames

larger questions about technology, the “forces of production”, and the evolution of social formations.

## **Queerness and jouissance: notes on the possibility of emancipation**

**Luiz Artur Costa do Valle Junior (Birkbeck, University of London)**

In this article, I attempt to elaborate the conditions of possibility for queerness, variously elaborated conceptually from the late 1980s, to become a revolutionary theory and practice. To many of us, the advent of queer theory promised a new avenue of revolutionary praxis, one more attuned to the vicissitudes of the subject of desire in its relation to the social totality, per Rosemary Hennessy, of capitalism. After the failure of Freudian-Marxist attempts at reconciling revolution and the irreducibility of unconscious desire as a disruptive force (Marcuse and Reich, particularly), this promise seemed urgent in the late 1980s and 90s, with the reinforcement of a sexual politics ever more watered-down by capitalist requirements of production, accumulation and consumption. Queer theory has largely failed to deliver on that promise, becoming what James Penney has called an issue and lifestyle-oriented micropolitics in lieu of wide-ranging emancipatory practice. What is to be done if we are to retain the queer theoretical promise of better pleasures and better social arrangements of production and need-satisfaction? I contend that to pose this question is inevitably to pose also the question of the possibility of (something like) the promise of communism in relation to sexuality. Here, I draw on Jacques Lacan's appropriation and elaboration of Marx, the inventor of the symptom, in order to argue that, if communism announces the subversion of the very function of discourse (a much more encompassing claim than those of theorists like Judith Butler, whose notion of subversion is strictly confined to normative articulation and citational failure), then queer theory may announce a similar subversion, not solely from the workings of History, but from the emancipation of jouissance from the bourgeois appropriation of plus-de-jouir as the commodity-form. Jouissance, the extimate (J.A. Miller) dissolution and precondition of the Freudian pleasure principle, situates itself in capitalist modernity as plus-de-jouir, understood as a representative of objet a in the field of what Lacan calls the market of the Other, such that any emancipatory politics must contend with the (structural) capitalist promise of abundance which is nevertheless structurally unattainable per the very nature of the workers splitting as the truth of capitalist discourse. What is needed is therefore nothing short of a return to Marx, insofar as his revolutionary materialism provides a new key to the generality (Badiou) of emancipation.

## **Ecotherapy and the alienation from nature debate**

**Camilla Royle (King's College London)**

This paper addresses a growing trend towards ecotherapy as a treatment for mental distress that poses interesting questions for ecological Marxists. The UK mental health charity Mind encourages visitors to its website to take up gardening or volunteer in a local

park. In 2016, the Green Care Coalition was established with the support of the UK government in order to provide ecotherapy as a cost-effective mental health intervention. It would be tempting to dismiss this as simply a cheap way of plugging the gaps in a fragile and failing healthcare system and to be sure this is part of the governments aim. However, this paper probes the more fundamental question of the role that concepts of alienation can play in understanding ecotherapy. Theorists such as Iain Ferguson (2017) have employed a Marxist understanding of human nature and alienation in order to explain the pervasiveness of mental distress in capitalist society. As Ferguson notes, Marx refers to alienation as a loss of control over the products of human labour, over the labour process itself and over our own ability to labour and finally includes alienation from other people. For Ferguson, the associated sense of powerlessness has a negative effect on mental health. In Marxist ecology, theorists tend to be divided between those who argue that capitalism also simultaneously alienates humans from nature, instituting a rift in the metabolism with nature (eg Saito, 2017) and those who assert that there is no nature external to capitalist society. For the latter, alienation from nature occurs because we confront nature as an alien force, failing to recognise our role in its production (Vogel, 2016). Marxist ecological work and theories of mental distress have seldom been brought into conversation. But the current mass extinction crisis surely demands that they should be. This paper will make use of both strands of theory to develop a critical approach to ecotherapy that moves beyond calls to embrace the vitality of nature or get back to nature.

## **A Marxist exploration of the economic basis of the Indian caste system**

**arunima Chakraborty (Centre for studies in social sciences, Calcutta, india)**

In their article titled 'Marxism and identity politics', Iyer et al. argue that the Left has failed to conceptualise how identity politics and capitalism serve and strengthen each other. They further point out, as do several other thinkers, how liberal discourses contributes towards entrenching of categories such as 'experience' of gender or race or of other marginal subject positions as being from mediation, particularly of economic status. Alain Badiou argues in the aftermath of the Charlie Hebdo massacre that when the liberal magazine defended it's cartoons demeaning Islam in the name of its right to 'freedom of expression', what it repressed under the garb of a universal right, was the French bourgeoisie's hatred of the Other, the dwellers of the banlieues who are not only racial other but also economic other, while the worker herself has no 'fatherland'. This resonates with Bakunin's argument against nation state as being a means of creating artificial distinction and hostility between people. Powerful as these arguments against identity politics (perpetuated by the Right, and the liberal left) are, yet, to understand the entrenched nature of casteism as an axis of identity politics in India, it will not be sufficient, this paper aims to argue, to assert that capitalism has a stake in fanning casteism. The caste system, it is very well known, is not just a form of divisive politics, but the system of social organisation since antiquity, way before any semblance of capitalism came into existence in the subcontinent. The critiques of Brahminism and casteism by BR Ambedkar, and in the Ambedkarite scholarship, are very powerful. This paper will, however, delve into the



institutionalisation of economic exploitation (through institutionalised appropriation of surplus value) of people of the so called lower castes in India through the caste system and the philosophical justifications provided by certain idealist schools which demeaned the material or the natural world as mere Chimera or 'maya' and thereby, also lowered the status of all work which entailed manual labour, including crafts and science. This paper will thus, aim to go beyond the contemporary co-constitution of capitalism and identity politics, to trace the philosophical and idealist justifications of the economic exploitation inherent in the caste system through an exploration of two works of the Indian Marxist philosopher, Debi Prasad Chattopadhyaya, one of which is on the ancient materialist school of philosophy and sect called the Carvakas and the other on the causes of decline of science and technology in ancient India.

## **Resistance, development and pacification in post-Intifada Jerusalem**

**Bruno Huberman (SOAS, University of London / PUC-SP (Pontifical Catholic University of So Paulo), Brazil)**

Since the end of the Second Intifada (2000-2006), Jerusalem has undergone a marked process of neoliberalization, while Israeli settler colonialism of East Jerusalem has remained steep. Through this agenda, Israeli authorities aim to expand the borders of capital accumulation, strengthen Israeli sovereignty over the entire city, combat the emigration of secular Jews and continue the expulsion of Palestinians from the city, seeking to affect the demographic balance of the urban space. Among the policies are incentives to the high technology industry, tourism and urban infrastructure reforms. This situation of continued alienation, securitization and repression of the resident Palestinian native population for the Judaization of Jerusalem in addition to the increasing exploitation of cheap labour in precarious and racially-mediated work situations between Jewish Israelis and Palestinians constituted a dangerous precariat Palestinian who has mobilized organically against the advance of Israeli settler colonial-neoliberal project in the city, as in the uprisings of 2014-2015. This kind of social outbreak is terrible for the political and economic goals of the "Global Jerusalem" project, undermining its scope and results. After the 2014-15 uprisings, we see a change in Israel's settler colonial-neoliberal project for Jerusalem, which involves more investment in certain Palestinian sectors of the city, particularly education, planning and infrastructure. These policies that are supposed to aim for "integration", "inclusion" and "development" of the Palestinian neighbourhoods and residents as a way to motivate the creation of greater "diversity" in Jerusalem, one reason the Israeli "creative" class has resisted investing and living in the city, considered dangerous and conservative by secular middle-class Jews. Integration programs for Palestinian students at Hebrew University have been encouraged by the State, while a whole new market for the qualification of the Palestinian labour force, often funded by Israeli entrepreneurs, has expanded among the Palestinian youth of Jerusalem. We argue that this project is a project of pacification of the precarious young Palestinian population in which "development" measures are established to secure a stable order for Israeli capital accumulation through exclusively economic inclusion of the Palestinian workforce, seen only as labour and consumption. We understand that these "development" and



“integration” measures would be establishing a Palestinian middle class to mediate between the State of Israel and the Palestinian precarious, and able to assist the colonial power in partially solving the problems and claims of the resident Palestinian population of the city, as in the housing and urban planning sector. Thus, the young Palestinians would be caught between supporting Israel maintain its colonial project and helping resolve the historical and urgent demands of Palestinians for a dignified life and a more promising future. Some claim to “change things from inside.” This scenario raises some crucial questions. Was there a change between coercion and consent in the fabrication of the order in Jerusalem? What does it mean to resist and integrate into a colonial frontier situation such as Jerusalem? We work with the hypothesis that this post-intifada order established by the settler colonial-neoliberal powers may consequently promote individualization of Palestinian resistance in Jerusalem, particularly among young people, since forms of collective organization are increasingly restricted.

## **Towards non-capitalist scenarios: reflections for a socio-ecological theory of value.**

**Salvo Torre (Universit degli studi di Catania)**

The current, deep, ecological crisis could drive us to a new social configuration at a global level. In this context, socio-ecological conflicts can be read as conflicts against two of the core features of the contemporary phase of capitalist accumulation: evermore deep and far-reaching extraction of value from the biosphere and the subtraction of common goods. The capillary explosion of such conflicts can be interpreted as the proper process in which the political forms of the social crisis are determined and put into practice. In this framework, socio-ecological movements are trying to build a new social space to overcome the constituent schemes of capitalism, first of all by questioning and possibly overcoming the production of value itself. The search for a way out from Capitalism starts indeed by the reconfiguration of a central node of Marxian and critical thought: value theory. Reconfiguring value theory in socio-ecological terms requires us to relocate all of the traditional elements of Marxian critique within a new theoretical landscape. One continues to critique and challenge capitalist forms of exploitation so much so as a central analytical focus remains the functioning of accumulation processes. Yet, new interpretations of the role of labour and of the ways social change happen must be developed. With my talk, I address some nodal issues faced in the collective construction of a new theory.

## **Through Hyppolites Lens: Existentialized Hegel and Dialectics of Lordship and Bondage in Merleau-Pontys Sense and Non-sense**

**Peiyu Liu (Radboud University, Hohai University)**

In his famous text *Sense and Non-sense*, Merleau-Ponty makes a distinction between the Hegel of the *Phenomenology* and the Hegel of 1827. The former Hegel is regarded as an

existentialist, while the latter one is regarded as an idealist. In fact, an existentialised Hegel can already be found in Kojves work and in that of Hyppolite. In this article, I do not primarily wish to analyze the exact meaning and importance of existentialisation of Hegel in the work of Merleau-Ponty; rather, I am looking to unearth the underlying logic that determines its place in his thinking. I will try to show how this logic has a fundamentally Hegelian or more specifically Hyppolite character. Once one accepts the fundamental presuppositions of this logic, only a limited number of theoretical options remain open. More specifically, I will argue that the central place of the notion of indirect language in Merleau-Pontys middle and later work is linked to his reading of Hyppolite, who, in turn, provides a very specific reading of Hegel. I will show this through a careful and detailed reading of Merleau-Pontys references to Hegels dialectics of Lordship and Bondage in Sense and Non-sense. While trying to make sense of Merleau-Pontys reading of lordship and bondage, anybody familiar with Hegels text would soon realize that Merleau-Pontys interpretation does not apply to the corresponding chapter in the Phenomenology of Spirit. This does not mean that it does not make sense; it means that Merleau-Ponty reads Hegel in a very peculiar French way. Or more concretely, Merleau-Ponty reads Hegel through Kojve and Hyppolites lens, especially Hyppolite who is even careful not to over-emphasize this dimension of existentialisation. Hyppolites lecture consists mainly of an interpretive account of the chapter of Hegels Phenomenology on self-consciousness. Self-consciousness is said to arise from Desire and to develop as consciousness of death (or negativity) through the struggle with the other, in which the dialectic of master and slave is created. For Hyppolites reading of Hegel, self-consciousness needs to be corporeal, and it only exists as a relation to others. Therefore, self-consciousness can only exist as itself participating in the movement of life.

## **Moralizing the market? On the absence of the critique of political economy in Axel Honneths interpretation of capitalism**

**Mozart Silvano Pereira (Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro (State University of Rio de Janeiro) - UERJ)**

The German philosopher Axel Honneth is an author who presents himself as a successor of the lineage of the critical theory of the Frankfurt School, inaugurated in the early twentieth century by thinkers like Adorno and Horkheimer, although his theoretical project is very different from the thinkers of the first generation of critical theory. Far from conducting an analysis of the forms of cultural domination promoted by capitalism, as the first-generation Frankfurters did, Honneth's work starts from the theoretical perspective established by Jrgen Habermas in the 1970s of a marked focus on the forms of rationality present in the sphere of intersubjectivity, mainly with its central concept of recognition. In his 2011 book, *Freedom's Right*, Honneth offers a comprehensive analysis of the capitalist market, in which he argues that contemporary critical theory must understand the market as an institution that enables social freedom through the cooperation among subjects, because in his view the foundation of the existence of the market is a set of moral rules shared by its participants. In this paper, I maintain not only that such an overly idealized view of the

capitalist economy does not deserve the title of critical theory, but that this position is connected with its initial methodological recourse of abandoning any structural analysis of capitalism by interpreting it as inherently deterministic or economistic. In Honneth, the refusal of Marx's critique of political economy results in a moralizing analysis of capitalism, which interprets the capitalist market as a space whose excesses can be contained by the adequate moral values of its participants. In this work, I maintain that the critique of political economy must be understood as a fundamental component of any kind of critical theory, but also that the Marxist response to this position must involve the understanding that the market is a political entity defined by a type of abstract and impersonal domination, whose mechanisms operate behind the backs of the social actors. This indicates that interpretations that resort to the field of morality as the foundation of social criticism are incapable of understanding the challenges of present capitalism.

## **Retrieving Lukcs for Today: The unity of politics and philosophy in his revolutionary period**

**Richard Donnelly (Centre for Research in Modern European Philosophy,  
Kingston University)**

The last decade has seen a marked revival of interest in the thought of Georg Lukcs, with new books published by Timothy Bewes and Timothy Hall (2011), Michael J. Thompson (2011), Janos Kelemen (2014), Konstantinos Kavoulakos (2018) and Richard Westerman (2019). Two factors underlie this re-engagement with Lukcs. The first is the work done by Andrew Feenberg, a pioneer of the critical theory of technology, to rescue Lukcs's middle period philosophy from the dominant interpretation of it as a form of Fichtean idealism fused with a messianic ultra-left politics. The second is the effort by the Hungarian far-right to extinguish Lukcs from the national memory, most provocatively by closing access to the Lukcs Archive in Budapest, which has led to a series of conferences attempting to preserve his philosophical contribution. But despite this renewed interest in Lukcs, there has been little work carried out into what tools his thought might give us to understand the salient elements of the political situation we are faced with today, such as the rise of the far-right and the collapse of the liberal centre across Europe. Given the new level of interest in Lukcs is partly driven by these very conditions, this omission is particularly striking. This paper will argue that this lacuna can be explained by some of the problems with Feenberg's retrieval of Lukcs. While Feenberg mounts an admirable defence of the Lukcs of *History and Class Consciousness* (1923) from the caricature of him as an idealist, a romantic and so on, he does so at the cost of decoupling his philosophy from his politics. By jettisoning Lukcs's belief that proletarian revolution is the solution to the philosophical and cultural problems of modernity, he introduces an arbitrary division between *History and Class Consciousness* and Lukcs's slightly later works, such as *Lenin* (1924) and the *Blum Theses* (1928). Feenberg sees Lukcs's masterwork primarily as a work of philosophy, while the later publications are understood as merely an increasingly orthodox assertion of Leninist politics. Against this account, I argue that the philosophical and political aspects of Lukcs's work constantly interpenetrate one another throughout the 1920s. Understanding the

unity of politics and philosophy in Lukcs's work in this way allows us to transcend the artificial division between History and Class Consciousness and some of his later works of the 1920s. In turn, this opens up the possibility of appropriating some of the key concepts of these later writings, both in order to gain a deeper understanding of History and Class Consciousness and to shine a light on the way in which these ideas might be relevant to today's political conjuncture. Specifically, an analysis of the way in which the Blum Theses politically concretises some of the salient themes of History and Class Consciousness can help us to map large scale developments within contemporary Western capitalism. I contend that the Theses provides us with theoretical tools for analysing phenomena such as the rise of the authoritarian far-right and the crisis of the liberal ideology, as well as the ideological debates currently taking place over rationality, populism and the technical management of society.

## **Commoning Activisms: Art and technology in resisting ethnic divisions**

**Evanthia Tselika (University of Nicosia), Thrassos Nerantzis (Future Worlds Center)**

This paper proposes a reading of how arts and technological activism have been used in the case of Nicosia, Cyprus to bridge the long-standing ethnonational division. Coming together from the fields of art activism and technological activism the presenters propose a reading of how artists and technologists came together in order to resist the social segregation that has characterised the island the last fifty years. In our times of digital realisms, bottom-up collaborative structures allow us to unpick how we think of commoning activism and how we work together to achieve social transformation. The increasing debates around makerspace/hackerspace cultures and the politics of collaboration that characterize these will be considered in relation to the developments of contemporary activist driven art practices. Of particular importance is how the idea of the maker culture phenomenon, spanning both technological and artistic discussions, contributes to debates around capitalist accumulation and what is supposedly addressed as the fourth industrial revolution. Considering the overlaps between the development of the Free and Open Software movement and the social turn of the arts (both largely shaped in the 1970s) issues of how we can work together in common become pertinent in thinking and acting on how to survive tomorrow. In an attempt to understand how people who work in technology and art came together, and made the leap into something that was a historical necessity in Cyprus, we will be reading into the collaboration of two hackerspaces from either side of the division (hack66 in South Nicosia and hackLefkosa in North Nicosia) and the work of Rooftop Theatre Group (itself as an arts collective with members from across the divide). Issues of ideology and communism will be addressed because of the trajectory of how cooperation across the division was first established, which was particularly cultivated by communist affiliated political parties and organisations. This parallel reading of technological and artistic activism, which act as forms of resistance to ethnic and military division, focuses in unpicking wider patterns of social transformation initiatives and considering how we can create common alternatives from a Marxist perspective. Considering the context of ethno-nationally divided cities as

segregated urban ecosystems the legacy of collaborating across deeply embedded ethnic forms of separation demonstrates patterns of resistance in working together towards common goals despite differences. Patterns of cooperation that are imperative to consider if we are to collectively resist the unprecedented destruction and increasing social inequalities imposed by contemporary capitalist systems.

## **Dispossession, Accumulation and Resistance in Neoliberal India: A Narrative of Land Acquisition and the Question of Transition**

**Pranav Trigunayat (PhD Candidate (Economics), Jawaharlal Nehru University, India)**

The discursive terrain of political economy is a site fraught with many disceptations and contradictions, of which the idea of capitalist transition is one of the most debated. The path of post-colonial capitalist transition (if there is one at all) in the third world has breached the classical idea of it, thereby hinting towards a path sui-generis. The persistent co-existence of capitalist and non-capitalist production in a third-world country like India has oppugned not just the teleological understanding of the capitalist development but also the nature of capitalism and the idea of dispossession (also the relationship between the two). While Marx compared primitive accumulation to the original sin in theology which engenders the pre-conditions of capitalism, the Marxist literature has seen numerous contestations over the nature and conceptual utility of it. A strand of it rescues the idea of primitive accumulation from being relegated to annals of history and accords it a status of permanence in capitalism, something indispensable for capitalist accumulation. The permanence of the sin connotes that its originality is transcended by its perennality. This perennial sin repeats itself and primitive accumulation finds its modern day avatar in dispossession. This paper treats dispossession as its entry point and proposes to study the nature of capitalist development in the third world by focussing on the case study of land acquisition in Greater Noida (lying in the periphery of National Capital Territory of Delhi, India). Greater Noida represents one of the most monumental initiatives of the post-colonial Indian state to build a planned city by mass dispossession. This paper departs from the teleological rendition of capitalist development and argues that the nature of contemporary capitalism is overdetermined by a multitude of factors including violent confrontations, resistance and struggles. These moments of confrontations, resistance and struggles challenge the hegemony of capital and shape the nature of capitalist development, not through predetermined paths but through the process of dtournement. In this sense, the idea of the capitalist transition appears to be a far too generalized an idea which can seek refuge only in teleological reasoning. It intends to do this through a primary survey of a sample of households affected by the land acquisition in Greater Noida and questioning them on the basis of the recall method about the details of acquisition, its social and economic impact (changes in employment, income, asset position etc.), role of the state and related aspects. The findings of the paper will be of crucial importance in developing theoretical reflections about dispossession in contemporary capitalism and reformulating (by questioning) the idea of transition in the local context. This provides the

first step in locating oneself in the everyday struggles against capital and cultivating the idea of resistance.

## **Irrealism in the Balance: Local Specificity and the Aesthetics of World Literature**

**Thomas Waller (University of Nottingham)**

Critical realism has a long pedigree in Marxist literary criticism. Most fully developed as an aesthetic theory by Georg Lukcs, it was conceptually limited by a narrow understanding of realism and the suggestion that only realist art could be critical of social reality. In an attempt to revise the rigidity and dogmatism of Lukcs' theory, Michael Lwy proposed the category of 'critical irrealism' which emphasised the fact that there were many non-realist works of art that contained powerful critiques of the social order (2007). In their materialist theory of world literature, the Warwick Research Collective (WReC) have recently taken up Lwy's arguments to work out the implications of critical irrealism for world-systems analysis and Trotsky's theory of combined and uneven development (2015). Proposing to read irrealist aesthetics as the determinate formal register of (semi-)peripherality in the capitalist world-system, the WReC have convincingly traced a direct correspondence between the heightening of irrealist modes of signification and the imposition of capitalist production processes on hitherto un- or only sectorally capitalised societies. In this line of argument, moments of socio-economic transformation such as the violent conversion to ecological regimes based on the extraction of natural resources are seen to give rise to a proliferation of spectral or supernatural tropes. While the WReC's reconception of critical irrealism thus opens up multiple avenues for world-literary comparison from the literature of the former Soviet bloc to that of China and post-communist postcolonial countries the discrepancy between the conceptual provenance of Lwy's term and the structures of feeling in the texts to which it is applied has as of yet gone unchallenged. As a category with its conceptual foundations rooted in the tradition of western European literary realism and modernism, how, we might ask, can critical irrealism account for textual signification in regions of the world where the non-literary is a central part of social exchange? Might not the persistence of oral traditions and non-European epistemologies within (semi-)peripheral texts render irrealism obsolete as an analytical category for literatures produced under non-European social conditions? Opening with an intellectual history of the concept of critical irrealism, this paper seeks to critically evaluate the WReC's theorisation of critical irrealism and its place within a Marxist or materialist conception of world literature, highlighting some potential blind spots in the collective's theoretical apparatus in order to gain a more balanced and located perspective on world-literary aesthetics.



## **Feminism, intersectionality and Marxism: Revisiting the Debate on Gender, Race and Class**

**Josefina Luzuriaga Martinez (Historian. Madrid)**

Intersectionality is a buzzword in academic circles, between feminist activism and social movements. "Class, race and gender" is the "holy trinity of our time" as Terry Eagleton pointed out. Does it operate in the realm of individual subjectivity or does it analyze systems of domination? What does it say about the causes of the oppressions that intersect and, above all, about the paths to emancipation? Although various reflections on the relationship between gender, race and class were already present in debates of Marxism and the left, the concept was defined in an article published in 1989 by Kimberle Crenshaw. However, its most important antecedent is found in the elaborations of black feminists of the 1970s such as the Combahee River Collective (CRC). They raised an "intersectional" critique of liberation movements, in the framework of the second feminist wave and the political radicalization of the period. They pointed to the shared experience of a simultaneity of oppressions, the trilogy of class, race and gender, to which sexual oppression was also added. From that position, they pointed to a critique of the feminist movement hegemonized by radical feminism, who gave absolute priority to one system of domination - patriarchy - over all others. In the CRC Manifesto, the struggle for the emancipation of Black women was inseparable from the struggle against the capitalist system. That is why they explicitly adhered to the struggle for socialism. Later, the idea of intersectionality experienced an "identitarian" drift with the rise of postmodernism. Within the framework of the "cultural turn" there was a split between the policies of recognition and the struggle against the capitalist system. In the trilogy of class/race/gender, the class tended to be dissolved, or converted into another identity. Finally, in the framework of the capitalist crisis opened a decade ago, the question of intersectionality is part of a renewed debate raised by social movements. How to articulate the struggles of the oppressed against the capitalist, patriarchal, racist and imperialist system? This is the question of strategy and hegemony. From this perspective, we establish a critical counterpoint from Marxism with the theories of intersectionality.

## **Student unrest and Free Education policies. Between post capitalism and a new neoliberal welfare.**

**Hector Rios Jara (PhD student of Social Science. University College of London.)**

After the significant rise of anti-neoliberal student protests around the world, policies of free education have returned to the agenda of left-wing and progressive political parties. The policies pretend to de-commodify higher education systems, to re-establish higher education as a social right and to build a postcapitalist form of welfare, following the demands of social movements. However, the instruments and the design-processes of these policies remain unclear and separated from the social movement domain, opening a significant risk for continuity or renewal of the dominant pattern of neoliberal policies in

higher education. This paper analyses the policy of free higher education announced by the Labour Party from the perspective of its political-economic mechanisms and its potential impacts on the circuits of commodification and governance that composed the neoliberal higher education system. The paper explains first the economic and political composition of the neoliberal policy regimen in the English higher education, identifying three interdependent circuits of surplus accumulation: the fee-system, the loan-system and the grant-system. Second, the paper explores the social and political relationships embedded in each system and their interactions, describing the mechanism of political and costs transferences that operate at the bottom of the regime. Thirdly, using as a counterexample the case of Chile's free education policy, the paper analysed how the implementation of free education policy could derived in a mechanism of expansion of the neoliberal policy regimen and the neutralisation of student strategic and associative power. The article suggests that the labour policy intervenes just the subsystem of fees, leaving untouched the system of indebtedness and managerial exploitation that composed the higher education regimen. Therefore, even though the benefits of this intervention could be significant, the partial intervention of the policy and the role of subsidiary mechanisms of funding do not guarantee a decommodification of the system. On the contrary, the policy has the risk to become a potentially regressive, assuming the form of renewal expression of neoliberal welfare rather than the beginning of a postcapitalist welfare. The paper finishes exploring the risk of co-option and renovation of neoliberal settlement that a policy of free education can have for anti-neoliberal struggle in the higher education field and what kind of alternatives a free education policy should consider.

## Polyphonic Intimacies and the Textual Politics of World Literature

Emma Kate Crowley (University of Bristol)

Mikhail Bakhtin argued that the intersubjective is crucial to the continuity of the literary and the novel, in all its multitudinous forms, is a measure of the plurality of the world in its indivisible singularities (*Discourse in the Novel*). Developing Bakhtin's work in the context of world literature, this paper will explore how literary polyphony fosters a textual politics of interpersonality that engages with contemporary discourses on worldliness, the pluriverse and the multitude in the aftermath of the Cold War, tapping into contemporary anxieties around the potentialities of the collective and of community in the neoliberal epoch. The poetics of the polyphonic, predicated as they are upon the antilogy of the act of cleaving (to both split apart and bring together) foregrounds a spatio-temporal pluralism, functioning as a palimpsest for the significant geographies (Laachir; Marzagora; Orsini) and multiple duress (Mbembe) of underexplored territories of the Cold War. Focusing upon *The Unwomanly Face of War* (*U voyny ne zhenskoe litso*) by Svetlana Alexievich, I examine how an ethics of interpersonal distance is collapsed through the literary polyphony of this text, sundering the barriers between public and private, personal and impersonal, to re-present in aesthetic terms the relational intelligibility of the self. Alexievich's self-curated image as a conveyor of human truth, her attention to the late Socialist individual, and her pluralistic creation of a polyphonic literary space in which differing and divergent subjectivities are exposed is co-opted, I contend, within a discourse of liberal humanism and a practise of

literary fetishization that subtends the global literary marketplace, and in particular the selection process of influential awards such as the Nobel Prize. The ambiguity of the interpersonal is consequently subsumed within the absolute space of the world literary field, feeding into the ambivalence of contemporary cultural capital and its fetishization of diversity. The polyphonic novels construction of relationality thus links into the celebration of the individual within the neoliberal epoch (Brown) while simultaneously mourning a loss of affiliation and kinship.

## **With or Without a Burning Torch? : Re-thinking Hayao Miyazaki as an eco-leftist**

**Ryota Nishi (Chuo University)**

Ecological themes have been pointed out to be vital for studying Hayao Miyazaki's works. Although it seems to be impossible to miss the ecological perspectives to analyse his works, such as *Nausica of the Valley of the Wind* (1984) and *My Neighbor Totoro* (1988), a simple question has hardly been raised: why ecology? In my presentation, I will pursue this question by scrutinising both his films and words, such as essays and interviews, in relation to his (new) leftist heart. The careful study of his works and words together with his ecological perspective and leftist ideology would, as I will show in my presentation, draw a typical trajectory of an eco-leftist in the post-war Japan.

## **A critique of geological voluntarism: the task before ecosocialists**

**Eduardo S Barreto (Universidade Federal Fluminense)**

The article sets out the difficult task of realizing a severe internal critique. Given available knowledge about climate change, the Marxist tradition has been somewhat reluctant to sound the alarm of existential threat. This paralysis translates into the reproduction of a pulverized and unambitious praxis that is satisfied with partial successes and small breakthroughs. I argue throughout the text that even this modest conception of "partial success" or "small breakthroughs" is unsustainable in the overall picture of climate challenges facing humanity. To structure the argument, I establish four points of dialogue with common ecosocialist claims. In the first section, I discuss the postulate that popular struggles have spontaneous emancipatory and ecological leaning. The second section is devoted to the critique of the notion that systematic accumulation of small advances and reforms can eventually transition into profound transformations. The third section turns to the idea (the most widely held) that small advances and reforms buy us time until we can muster conditions for the truly desired and necessary transformations. Finally, the fourth section addresses the danger of demobilizing effects from explicitly acknowledging the uncontrollable nature of ongoing climate change that will dramatically affect our generation.

## **Gigantomachia: Totality and Truth: Visions of the Whole as Truth in the Work of Fredric Jameson**

**Jack Robert Edmunds-Coopey (Durham University)**

Gigantomachia: Totality and Truth: Visions of the Whole as Truth in the Work of Fredric Jameson The paper presented here concerns the concept of totality, or self-knowledge created by the unity of thought in the work of the contemporary cultural critic Fredric Jameson (1934–), in which it shall be argued that the concept is the fundamental basis underpinning his works. Whilst Jameson studies have interpreted his works through his thought on postmodernity and cognitive mapping, their neglect of the concept of totality have resulted in misinterpretations and lacunae in scholarship. Therefore, the essence of the work presented is to examine the presence of totality throughout Jameson's Marxist theory of literature in order to elucidate his works and to present totality as a concept of contemporary relevance for both philosophical and literary studies. Chapter One shall examine Jameson's readings of Immanuel Kant and Georg Hegel demonstrating that Hegel's critique of Kant concerning the setting of a boundary to knowledge includes its overcoming, and that Hegelian totality is not closed and totalitarian. Chapter Two shall argue that Jameson's reading of totality in the works of Karl Marx and the Marxist tradition of Georg Lukács, Theodor Adorno and Walter Benjamin reinforces the centrality of the concept of totality in the Hegelian, Marxist heritage. Chapter Three shall argue that the concept of totality in Jameson's interpretation of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's novel *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* (1796) is the fundamental idea at work, and that Friedrich Schlegel's novel *Lucinde* (1799) elucidates a counterpoint to totality in its fragmentary nature which can be used to understand non-dialectical thinkers which Jameson examines such as Martin Heidegger, Jacques Derrida and Gilles Deleuze. Chapter Four shall argue that Jameson's reading of non-dialectical thinkers such as Heidegger, Derrida and Deleuze is justified in critiquing their misinterpretations of the Hegelian totality as closed and totalitarian.

## **A critique of left populism through the experience of Podemos**

**Hector Puente Sierra (International Socialism Journal)**

The political picture today is one of erosion of the neoliberal centre-ground and polarisation to the right and to the left but the extent of left advance is far from even. Frustration by the radical left in many countries has led many to seek alternatives to traditional political strategies. The renewed interest, not only in academia but among activists and political strategists, in the theory of left populism developed by Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe (1985) reflects this trend. Faced with the rise of Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan, they argued that the task facing those on the left who wanted to achieve power was to articulate an appealing narrative capable of cohere the grievances of different groups into a people, a political agent for change. Mobilising emotional symbols, antagonism and a strong leadership were some of the key elements to the strategy. More recently, Mouffe (2018) has reiterated that left populism is the type of politics needed to

seize the opportunities created by the crisis of hegemony of neoliberalism. However, the test of practice does not bear this out. The implications of the experience in government of Syriza, which Mouffe identifies as an example of left populism, and its failure to challenge austerity, are barely acknowledged in her most recent work. An even more significant indictment is the trajectory of Podemos. From its foundation in 2014, its key leaders identified their strategy as a populist one informed by the ideas of Laclau and Mouffe, and had previously served as advisers to the radical Latin American governments that Laclau and Mouffe also identified as representing the politics of populism. Yet from being a beacon of hope, Podemos has undergone a degeneration comparable to that of Syriza, without having gone through the experience of holding national government. The 2019 general election gave the Podemos-led coalition 42 seats, down from 71 in 2016, already an adjustment of expectations from leading in polls in 2015. This decrease has been accompanied by an increasing inability to shape national politics and a greater accommodation to other forces, along with destructive internal factionalism and diminishing grassroots democracy and activity. This evolution raises important questions about the viability of the left populist strategy and its claim to be the most effective method to challenge the growing threat of the rise of the radical right and grasp the opportunities available for the left. This paper will firstly explore the grounds on which the post-Marxist theorists of populism rejected Marxism and the historic context in which this rejection took place. Secondly, it will assess how their theory has been applied in the case of Podemos, whether Marxists can learn from their insights and the contradictions arising from the theory and practice; and thirdly, it will vindicate revolutionary Marxism as an alternative to its shortcomings.

## **Interactions between asylum policy and the working conditions of refugees with precarious residence permit status An investigation in gastronomic companies in Switzerland**

**Jacqueline Kalbermatter (University of Basel Department of Social Sciences Sociology)**

Asylum policy is labour market policy. However, the demarcation lines in migration policy between refugees and labour migrants seem to obscure this view. The classification of different residence permit statuses associated with this demarcation lines is linked to stratification processes of migrant's rights. And it is precisely the group of migrants who are not (yet) classified as 'true refugees' who are confronted with an extensive exclusion of their rights. At the same time, refugees with precarious residence status are facing specific processes of inclusion and exclusion in the labour market due to asylum policy. In this sense, there emerges a specific form of racism in which migrants are classified according to their geographical origin and qualifications and are put into a hierarchical order. Against this background, this contribution focuses on the interactions between asylum policy and the working conditions of refugees. In this context, the central question is how the relationship between racism - understood as a social relation - and the regulation of labour force problems is articulated at company level. This is illustrated by the example of the

situation of refugees with a precarious residence permit status working in the hotel and catering industry in Switzerland. I propose to follow the often invisible everyday struggles for rights in gastronomic enterprises in Switzerland and to conceptualize them as a place of negotiation processes of entrepreneurs and workers. The combination of different methodological approaches problem-centered interviews, participatory observation within the businesses and informal interviews allows an analysis in which the perspectives and actions of the actors are related to each other, taking into account their respective social position. I show that refugees with a precarious residence permit status are confronted with specific forms of disciplinary action, which are mainly rooted in their residence status and the exclusion of their rights. The particular quality of this labour force is characterized by its docility and flexibility in terms of time and space. But this docility should not be equated with passivity. Rather the acceptance of disciplinary actions and working conditions is a key strategy for the refugees in their struggle for stable residence and rights in Switzerland.

## **Schmitt, Protest, Acclamation and Democracy**

**Luke Collison (CRMEP (Kingston University London))**

In the 1930s Schmitt, amongst others, attempted to sever the self-evident synonymy between democracy and liberal parliamentarism (specifically, the procedural form of the individual secret ballot). Against parliamentarism, Schmitt advanced a substantive theory of the people and a correlated conception of democratic participation as acclamation: the accepting or rejecting shouts of the assembled crowd. Drawing on the historical and philosophical bases of these counterposed conceptions of democracy, I aim to demonstrate the proximate threat posed by acclamation as the alternative (largely unacknowledged) underlying naive rejections of representational democracy for a theory of community participation.

## **Bodily capital: endocrine disruption and the utopian/dystopian futures of reproductive labor**

**Andrea Lilly Ford (University of Chicago / University of Edinburgh)**

Synthetic chemicals are ubiquitous in contemporary life, from industrial and agricultural byproducts to manufactured goods to pharmaceuticals, found in people's homes and workplaces and foods. This means that we all have plastics, toxins, and pollutants in our systems, with as yet undetermined effects. Endocrine disrupting chemicals alter reproductive functioning and the expression of sexual characteristics, as well as metabolism and mood, for human and non-human life. Although this shifting chemical ecology came into being alongside climate change as a result of industrial capitalist production, it is often overlooked as part of the Anthropocene. It impacts capitalist modes through resource depletion and pollution, notably the resource of human bodies and their biological reproduction, as well as through bridging the illusory separation between



productive and reproductive labor, which has a longstanding relationship with both Marxism and capitalism, as feminists have elaborated. Not only is reproducing bodies more difficult in the context of hormonal disorders and birth defects, but the work of mitigating damage through consumption falls disproportionately on women running households, and women are more susceptible to environmental health disorders of late-stage capitalism. Patriarchy and capitalism are intimately intertwined in the potential responses to changing/declining sexual and reproductive capacities, and so attracting attention to these changes has both utopic and dystopic iterations. On the one hand, environmental and reproductive justice activists have challenged the unjust distribution of health burdens, the bias inherent in institutional scientific agendas, and the way responses are generally limited to individualized, consumer-oriented, technological and pharmaceutical solutions. On the other hand, focusing on “deteriorating” reproductive capacities and atypical sexual expression can yield a regressive sex panic, as in Atwood’s *The Handmaid’s Tale*, and further stigmatize certain raced and classed groups as “damaged.” This paper analyzes ways we might account for changing reproductive possibilities, emphasizing the situation’s urgency, seriousness, and loss without doubling down on patriarchal, capitalist-colonial control of women’s sexuality and reproductive capacities.

## **Building the feminist women’s strike and the new rise of the feminist movement**

**Penelope Duggan (Institute of International Research Education, Amsterdam), Oksana Shine, Nadia De Mond (A founder of the World March of Women, active in Non Una Di Meno, in international solidarity and the Fuorimercato network.), Julia Camara, Tamara Knezevic**

Four feminist activists from Belgium, Italy, Spain and Switzerland, explain how women organised to call for and mobilize for a feminist women’s strike - inspired by the experience in Latin America they recount the first beginnings in Belgium, the longer experience in Italy, the astounding mass succes of the strike in Spain in 2018 and 2019, and the renewal in Switzerland with the history of the 1991 strike.

## **The paradoxes of legitimacy: Returning to the 1976 Uprising in South African literature**

**Christine Emmett (University of Warwick)**

The declining popularity of the governing African National Congress, a resurgence of interest in Black Consciousness, and recurrent waves of popular anger punctuate the current crisis of legitimacy in South Africa. While growing inequality and corruption drive this crisis, rival political factions have appropriated aspects of South African liberation history to bolster claims of popular legitimacy. More recently, this has crystallised in a debate about the provenance of the Soweto Uprising of 1976. For critic Xolela Mancgu, the

elision of Black Consciousness primary role in inciting the Uprising constitutes an evidentiary genocide perpetrated by the ANC, with profound effects for the empowerment of black South Africans. This paper reappraises this debate by analysing the turn towards novelisation which followed the 1976 Uprising with the injunction to write back to apartheid. These novels comprise both a distinct shift in cultural form, as well as capturing what Sumit Sarkar elsewhere terms, middle-class consciousness. In this way, the novels attempt to capture the spontaneity or popular legitimacy of the Uprising; while paradoxically also maintaining the class distinction of its protagonists and fracturing the Uprising along class divides. In this way, these novels register the limits of the post-apartheid hegemonic project and the class divisions which have come to the fore in the postcolonial South African state. In their attempt to depict the political legitimacy of spontaneity, the 76 novels effectively plot the co-ordinates of South Africa's current crisis.

## **Revolutionary Approach to the Workers Struggles**

### **Jerry Goldberg (Moratorium Now Coalition Detroit)**

Traces how revolutionary activists in Detroit have applied and updated the transitional program as a guide to bringing an anti-capitalist perspective to the day to day struggles of the workers and oppressed in this city which is the epicenter for austerity within the borders of the U.S.

## **The 1913 Mass Strike Debate in the German Social Democracy Unpublished Minutes of 2 Internal Party Meetings with Speeches of Rosa Luxemburg, Karl Kautsky and some others**

### **Ottokar Luban (International Rosa Luxemburg Society)**

During the Imperial era until the German revolution of 1918 the German Political Police tried to get the information of the internal development inside the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD). They had police men for official surveillance at the party meetings which made detailed reports or they received minutes of non public meetings even by bribery of the technical employees in the party administration. On the important mass strike discussion of 1913 we can find in the German police files 2 detailed long minutes on:

- A meeting of the SPD central executive in the beginning of August 1913 with several guest speakers of different directions including Luxemburg and Kautsky who made long contributions in the discussion
- An informal meeting in September 1913 with the party leadership and approximately 100 delegates of the 1913 SPD Congress in Jena including all international guests with detailed presentations by Luxemburg and interesting contributions of several other prominent speakers

While the mass strike debate of 1906/07 seemed to have been calmed down successfully by the party and union leadership for a long time (exception 1910) the minutes of these internal debates in 1913 show that the inner party pressure from below again forced the party leaders to give way to

discussions as much as necessary with the intention to decrease the heat out of the debate and to avoid radical resolutions. The only yet published parts of the internal 2013 debates are the 2 Rosa Luxemburg speeches which give us precious contributions to her biography: In contrast to the data in Peter Nettls biography they indicate that Luxemburg was still appreciated in 1913 as an important leader of the left wing of the SPD. The 2 speeches show also the different sides of Luxemburg: the first one is of a very polemic character; the second one is in a modestly logically arguing way adapted to the special composition of her audience.

## **Unmaking crisis to make time for change: Time displacements in the climate debates**

**Richard Staley (University of Cambridge)**

This paper takes notice of the fact that climate change denialists common strategy of downplaying crisis and alarmism to argue for the status quo stems from a sense of politics that was largely moulded by the perpetual crisis mode of World War II and the Cold War. I wish to examine how climate denialists treat time in order to gain insight into the strategies that partisans deploy when pitting their common knowledge against science, and perhaps thereby help resolve such ambivalences. My approach stems from teaching the science, history and politics of climate change in the US and being asked to bring a sceptic to class someone whose engagement with Friedrich Hayeks *The Road to Serfdom* offers a key to understanding why perpetual anti-socialist rhetoric has animated denialism. I will examine both how denialists treat the time of debate (their understanding of the history that underwrites the present) and how they debate climate periodisations (their attempt to insist that current warming is a natural fluctuation by denying the hockey stick in favour of arguing for the Medieval Warm Period). Understanding when, how and why people make such crisis may help us unravel still more important issues.

## **The forms of resistance at the workplace in contemporary Chile and the capitalist backlash. An autonomist reading**

**Gabriela Julio Medel (University of Bristol)**

This paper is based on an ongoing PhD research project which focuses on the forms of resistance at the workplace in contemporary Chile, a country which was pioneering in the implementation of a broad neoliberal restructuring. The imposed neoliberal transformation during Pinochets dictatorship, was a total project, aiming at changing the whole society and targeting and persecuting the labour movement in particular. After the return of democracy, political liberties were recovered, however the workplace and the institutional structure that regulates the employment relations remained highly authoritarian. The effect is that, almost 30 years after the reestablishment of democracy, the labour movement has not recover leverage, it is highly fragmented, making the possibilities for

collective action very costly for workers. Starting with this pessimistic diagnostic of the current position of the workers movement, this research proposes a new reading to explore the forms of resistance that appear in the workplace in Chile. Drawing from an autonomist framework this project explores the power of the workers to resist (Cleaver 1992, p.113) within a very restrictive institutional context. Adopting the paradigmatic shift proposed by Cleaver, resistance is read from the lenses of a theory of the value of labour to capital (2017, p.65) This permits a richer exploration of what constitutes resistance, it allows the examination of everyday forms of resistance, either collective or individual, that can and do appear at the workplace. Recognising that work, waged and unwaged, is still one of the main form of domination under capitalism, and that there are many terrains for contestation, this research focuses on the workplace as a key site of discipline and resistance, where we often experience the most immediate, unambiguous, and tangible relation of power on a daily basis (Weeks 2011, p.2). The research project is based in a qualitative methodology using semi-structured in-depth interviews with workers and union leaders from different productive sectors, also including non-unionised workplaces (a highly understudied group but which represents the condition of the majority of Chilean workers now-a-days). The presentation will briefly outline the context of the research and methods, to later focus on the early results from the fieldwork, to finally discuss the implications this case can have in the context of a renewed expansion of neoliberal capitalism worldwide.

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## Lenin's labour theory of monopoly and Marx's labour theory of value

Samuel Thomas King (Victoria University)

Lenin's Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism is often viewed as being principally about the violent struggle between nations for distribution of surplus value. It is seen to not address the sphere of production nor apply Marx labour theory of value. However, central features of the neoliberal period were strikingly anticipated in Lenins work. Contemporary financialisation, privatisation, free market policies, the monopolistic struggle between giant MNCs and imperialist states for control of technology in the production process as well as the importance of imperialist exploitation of the poor countries (especially China) are all foreshadowed. The prescience of Imperialism reflects the analytical power of its essential concept monopoly. Despite writing during World War One, Lenin emphasised that the competition between different imperialist monopolies must always remain capitalist in character and hence involve production of privately owned commodities for sale on the capitalist market. As can be seen from the detailed attention given to, for example, technological development of the US tobacco trust, Lenin did not view the changes in capitalist competition as negating Marx's labour theory of value, but modifying its forms of

expression. Today, the vast empirical evidence from the neoliberal period means a labour value theory of monopoly which is already indicated in Lenins work can now be more explicitly defined. In short: the degree of monopolistic supremacy of individual or national capitals is principally determined by their degree of monopolistic supremacy over the labour process itself. For this reason, the degree of their monopolistic value capture is also proportionate to their dominance over the labour process. Hence the struggle for monopoly operates in essentially the same manner as pre-monopoly capitalist competition, albeit with important modifications, and is fundamentally governed by the same essential laws Marx outlined.

## **Equality and Marxism**

**Satoshi Matsui (Senshu University)**

It is usually considered that a principle important to socialism is the idea of equality. This understanding is not wrong. Marxism, one of socialism, also respects equality. However, this does not mean that Marxism is the same as egalitarianism. Marx appealed for the socialization of resources, not for equalization. Moreover, he thought that a society in which egalitarianism was thorough was being alienated. From the Marxist point of view, the idea of equality is subordinate to that of community and does not become the highest value.

## **The historical materialism of political theology**

**Lotte List (Department of Management, Politics and Philosophy, Copenhagen Business School)**

In my paper, I discuss the dialectics between transcendence and immanence in the concept of sovereignty as developed by Carl Schmitt and taken up by Walter Benjamin. In his Political Theology (1922), Schmitt proposed his by now canonical definition of the sovereign as he who decides on the exception. Yet this exception entails a double concept of crisis, which, I argue, can only be understood in the conceptual framework of immanence and transcendence central to Schmitts political theology. To Schmitt, the sovereign decision mediates between the immanent level of crisis understood as an actual historical threat to social order and the transcendent level constituted by the juridical emergency measures employed to overcome the former. While the sovereign institution is described in decisionist terms, the underlying premise for this constitutional superstructure is thus the crisis in a very material sense, and a purely formalistic reading would miss this fundamental dialectics. A materialist view reveals Schmitts purpose as not only the development of a theory of sovereignty but also, and no less importantly, a politically motivated push for the sovereign move to transcendence. This materialist view we find in Walter Benjamin, who takes up Schmitts theological terminology, but displaces the discussion to an entirely different epistemological level. In his book on the German mourning play, he reformulates the theory of the state of exception as belonging to a

counter-reformist notion of historical time emerging from the crisis of the European Wars of Religion. According to him, the sovereign does not incorporate the constitutional overcoming of crisis, but rather he is the representation of an overstraining of the contradiction between the wish for transcendence and the experience of radical immanence comprised in the realization of the humanity as creature, i.e. as this-worldly. Sovereignty seen through this lens is a juridical fiction, which holds real political power by reference to the transcendence over crisis, but in the moment of actual crisis falls to immanence, leaving a power vacuum in its wake. Following Benjamin, I argue that we need a historical materialism of the theological implications inherent in the concept of sovereignty. This will allow us to view sovereignty, not just as a political form, but as an historical expression of an urge towards transcendence in reaction to the experience of crisis. On this foundation, we may build a critique of the calls for sovereignty (whether national or popular) taking the institution at face value.

## **Green Passive Revolution and Fascism Redux: Transition, Crisis, Degrowth and the Revenants of Racial Capitalism**

**Sourayan Mookerjea (Director Intermedia Research Studio Department of Sociology University of Alberta)**

Fredric Jameson's injunction to always historicize (1984) applies no less to our conjunctural proliferation and intensification of intermediated ecological, social, economic and political crises. Not only have these all been long in the making but the 20th century trajectories of the exhaustion of historical natures (Moore 2015) ensure that environmental crises will continue to constitute the fulcrum around which class politics and imperialist war on a planetary scale will turn. Nonetheless, such systemic path dependencies are also contorted by their emergent possibilities. This paper argues for a spatialized theory of class politics adequate to contemporary racial capitalisms twinned auto-immune reactions of green passive revolution and fascism redux. Paramilitary violence against environmental justice and anti-poverty activists and, more generally, militarized policing and (extra-)legal repression of subalternized classes and communities in the name of climate action, resilience infrastructure and national security are emerging modalities of development dispossession resulting from speculative investment opportunities provided by smart green urban renewal (Caprotti 2014), industrial corridor geopolitics (Ramachandraiah 2016) and land grabs for solar farms (Yenetti et al. 2016, Rignall 2016), wind farms (Cormack 2018), biofuels (Renzaho 2017) and carbon sinks (Fairhead et al. 2012). Drawing on research conducted through the University of Alberta's Feminist Energy Futures initiative on the class and cultural politics of renewable energy democracy and bringing together the theoretical insights of the literatures on varieties of capitalism, the multiple colonialisms framework, feminist social reproduction and subsistence perspectives as well as post-Western Marxisms account of interlocking systems of oppression, this paper examines the prospects for the Left's intervention in the speculative complex of passive revolution and fascism redux. The paper takes up the debate on the state between eco-socialists (Burkett, 2006, Lowy 2015) and the degrowth



movement (Jackson 2017, Kallis 2017, Mies 2000, de Angelis 2017, Federici 2011) through the detour of a critical engagement with Jamesons redeployment of Lenins classical transition theory of dual power. (2016) While the utopian programme of dual power could provide a provocative theorization of the degrowth strategy of interstitial commons regeneration out of the ashes of Empire, Jamesons theorization breaks off into his utopian fantasy of universal-national conscription by the repressive apparatus of the world-hegemonic nation-state. Is this notoriously depoliticized fantasy of military-economy the secondary elaboration of a dream of the collective wealth of de-carbonized communism, or, a symptom of the limits of Western Marxisms theorization of the colonial-patriarchal-racial media of capitalist proprietorial class power or a dialectical image of the degrowth movements fantasy of an economy without the history of racial capitalism? Works Cited de Angelis, M., 2017. *Omnia Sunt Communis: principles for the transition to post-capitalism*. London: Zed Books. Burkett, P. 2006. Two Stages of Ecosocialism? *International Journal of Political Economy*, 35:3, 23-45, Caprotti, F. 2014. Eco-urbanism and the eco-city, or, denying the Right to the City. *Antipode* Vol. 46 No. 5 2014 pp. 1285-1303 Cormack, Z. et al. 2018. The changing value of land in Northern Kenya: the case of Lake Turkana Wind Power. *Critical African Studies*. Vol. 10 Issue 1, 89-107. Fairhead, J. et al. 2012. Green grabbing: a new appropriation of nature? *Journal of Peasant Studies*, 39:2, 237-261 Federici, S. 2004. *Caliban and the Witch*. Autonomedia. Jackson, T. 2017. *Prosperity without Growth*. Routledge. Jameson, F. 1984. *The Political Unconscious*. Cornell University Press. Jameson, F. 2016. *An American Utopia: Dual Power and the Universal Army*. Verso Books. Kallis, G. 2017. Degrowth and the dangers of excessive economic growth. *The Sustainability Agenda*. Mies M. et al. 2000. *The Subsistence Perspective*. Spinifex Press. Lowy, M. 2015. *Ecosocialism: A radical alternative to capitalist catastrophe*. Haymarket Books. Moore, J. 2015. *Capitalism and the Web of Life*. Verso. Ramachandraiah, A., 2016. Making of Amaravati: a landscape of speculation and intimidation. *Economic and political weekly*, 60 (17), 6875. Renzaho et al. 2017. Biofuel production and its impact on food security in low and middle income countries: Implications for the post-2015 sustainable development goals. *Renewable and Sustainable Energy Reviews* 78: 5035-16. Rignall, K. E. 2016. Solar power, state power, and the politics of energy transition in pre-Saharan Morocco *Environment and Planning A*, Vol. 48(3) 540-557. Yenetti, K et al. 2016. Spatial justice and the land politics of renewables: Dispossessing vulnerable communities through solar energy mega-projects. *Geoforum* 76: 90-99.

## **Marxist Dialectics in the Times of Computational Mind**

**Keti Chukhrov (Associate professor at the Department of Cultural Studies at the Higher School of Economics (Moscow). Marie Skłodowska Curie fellow in UK (Wolverhampton Un-ty, Faculty of Art).)**

Following theoretical and technical breakthroughs in the field of natural sciences and their infiltration into the humanities, we are increasingly confronted with attempts to either “complete” philosophy, or replace it with science and technology. In contemporary modes of speculative and cognitivist post-philosophies (Parisi, Negarestani, Bratton, Metzinger)

the dialectical onvergence of body and mind, of the abstract and the concrete, of the internal and the external is considered fictitious, as 'the soft thought' (Parisi) of computational infinity acquires complete autonomy from political and social production, and from human mind and sensuousness in general. What remains from the agency of human thought and social activity in this case? The indiscreetness of Marxist dialectics can be expected to confront the discreetness and nominalism of hard sciences and algorithmic design. In this context, the critique of cybernetics and technical essentialism by means of Marxist dialectics developed by Evald Ilyenkov (in his *The Dialectics of the Abstract and the Concrete*, or the 1960s pamphlet *The Mystery of a Black Box*), seems to be of particular relevance. In his philosophic gnoseology the Soviet marxist philosopher insists on the impossibility of replacing the mind with intelligence, and of philosophy and sociality with science.

## Those who defend limits are not Malthusians

**Giorgos Kallis (ICREA Professor, ICTA)**

Socialists ever since Marx are wary of Malthus and Malthusian thinking - and for good reasons. In this presentation, I want to argue, that not all those who defend limits can be qualified as Malthusians. A defense of limits should not be confused with Malthusianism. First, contra a facile, and well-established reading of Malthus's essay, I will argue that Malthus was actually not a precursor of environmental limits, but an early apostle of limitless growth, among the first to invent the myth of scarcity - the idea that human needs are unlimited and its corollary, growth. Malthus rejected the existence of resource limits and was against any limitations on what he saw as a natural rate of population growth. Economists, and the eco-modernists who today base their thinking on economics and a presumption of scarcity, are the true heirs of Malthus. Second, I want to distinguish within modern environmentalism between a Malthusian stream that sees limits as something natural a property of our bodies or of nature out there and a romantic stream, that can be traced back to the romantics, the most fervent critics of Malthus. The emphasis there is not on limits as scarcity, but on limits as a social choice, what I call, after Castoriadis, self-limitation. According to this reading, the problem is not that the planet is running out of things indeed we have enough, and in a sense always had enough, to live a good life. To live this good life however we should put limits to our wants and share fairly what there is. Abundance and freedom are possible only when there are limits this is the thesis of self-limitation. I follow the germ of this idea of self-limitation from classical Greece and the romantics to anarchist feminists at the turn of the 20th century. Radical greens in the 70s, I argue, kept alive the plea of self-limitation, and contemporary environmentalists should reclaim it, becoming unapologetic of their desire for limits.

## **Financialization of agriculture as a spatio-temporal fix to over-accumulation: the role of the super-rich in promoting foreign direct investments and agricultural expansion in the Global South**

**Michele Graziano Ceddia (Centre for Development and Environment University of Bern)**

Agricultural expansion remains the most important proximate cause of deforestation in the Global South, particularly in tropical areas, with important consequences on carbon emissions, loss of biodiversity and other ecosystems functions. The increasing importance of flex-crops commodities (i.e., crops which are suited for both food and non-food uses, like soya, sugar cane and oil palm), is particularly significant in this respect, as it plays a crucial role in the expansion of the agricultural frontier. Over the last ten years there has also been increasing attention to the role of finance in general and foreign capital more in particular, in large scale land acquisitions in the Global South, which in turn put pressure on the remaining forests while exacerbating food security issues. These dynamics reflect the convergence of multiple crisis, namely financial, energetic, food and environmental. After the 2008 global financial crisis and the consequent decline in financial returns, investments in land have become increasingly attractive. In this context, extremely wealthy individual may have played a role by diverting their wealth from the financial sector towards land and other real assets in search for better yields. This in turn suggests a potential effect of rising inequality and wealth concentration in stimulating investments in land. Agricultural expansion appears then as a response to over-accumulation problems through spatio-temporal fixes, in order to perpetuate the process of accumulation somewhere else. As Marx already noted the driving motive and determining purpose of capitalist production is the self-valorisation of capital to the greatest possible extent. In this paper, I address these issues by looking at 21 countries in Latin America and South East Asia, two regions heavily affected by large-scale land acquisitions, flex-crops area expansion and deforestation. I deploy a number of multivariate statistical models to assess: a) whether wealth concentration and the search for yield promote foreign direct investment in agriculture towards the Global South; and b) the impact of foreign investments in agriculture on the expansion of flex-crops area. The preliminary results suggest that foreign investments in agriculture are increasing in wealth concentration and decreasing in the rate of returns of traditional financial assets (i.e., the search for yield) and that foreign investment exert a large and significant impact on the expansion of flex-crop areas in the Global South. The policy implications are then discussed.

## **Towards a decolonial, feminist approach to the Pluriverse: reflecting with convergence processes of systemic alternatives from the Global South and the Global North**

**Marta Music (Institute of Environmental Science and Technology - Autonomous University of Barcelona)**

Against the backdrop of the current civilizational crisis generated by a global societal project based on coloniality, modernity, patriarchy, capitalism, racism, anthropocentrism, state-ism and hetero-normativity the struggles for the defence of territories and life are giving rise to an increasing amount of local, radical alternatives throughout the world. These include buen vivir, radical ecological democracy, transition towns, (eco-)feminisms, Ubuntu, the commons, degrowth, environmental justice movements and social and solidarity economies, amongst many others. However, these alternatives are often articulated in isolation and too little efforts are directed towards building bridges between them in both theory and practice. Recently, many calls have been issued for what the Zapatistas call the Pluriverse or a world in which many worlds fit but the transitions towards such a political horizon remain to be explored. This project seeks to approach the Pluriverse from a decolonial feminist perspective, as a way of imagining news ways of theorizing and generating transformative collective action that can help us move beyond the current system whilst decolonizing knowledge and power within academia and activism. Unlike the currently hegemonic eurocentric knowledge structures, decolonial feminist currents highlight the intersectionality of different forms of oppression, the deep inter-relations between Nature and all living beings, the importance of situated knowledges and embodied experiences as well as the relevance of voices from the Global South. As such, decolonial feminisms can help us navigate the contradictions of the Pluriverse by fostering more horizontal inter-politico-cultural dialogues and spaces where alternatives from the Global South and the Global North can have the same opportunities to be visible, heard and implemented. This research will first put forward a decolonial, feminist critique of the current scholarship on the Pluriverse, before reflecting with and learning from existing convergence processes of alternatives from the Global South and the Global North in order to gain a better understanding of how to articulate a wide variety of systemic alternatives in intersectional, transversal and transformative ways. This project is based on both personal and collective experiences in working within spaces of convergence of alternatives such as the Global Tapestry of Alternatives, the World Social Forum of Transformative Economies and the Systemic Alternatives initiative. More specifically, it reflects on how the relations between alternatives within a same confluence space emerge, evolve and translate into action over time, what are the contradictions within these processes and how new ways of doing, thinking and feeling politics emerge out of them and how we can multiply these spaces of confluence and out-scale the ties between them on local, regional and global levels. Put differently, this project seeks to explore how decolonial feminisms can help foster alternative modes of organizing and build stronger networks of active solidarity between alternatives throughout the world in order to move beyond the current system. Finally, as a decolonial, feminist action-research project, this paper also seeks to criticise the role of Western-hegemonic academic institutions in fostering neo-

colonial, extractivist forms of individual knowledge production (rather than collective knowledge cultivation). As such, this project also represents an attempt to rethink/redo/re-feel the relations between academia and activism and to further bridge the gap between the two.

## **Uneven and Combined Modernisms: Modernity and World Literature**

**Nick Lawrence (University of Warwick)**

Perry Anderson's *Modernity and Revolution*, a talk he initially delivered in 1983 at an international conference on Marxism and the interpretation of culture, has become a touchstone for considerations of both modernity and modernism within the framework of capitalist history. In his extensive review and engagement with Marshall Berman's *All that is Solid Melts into Air* (1982), Anderson argues that the dynamic of modernity must be disentangled from that of revolution proper, and that modernism, as the cultural reflex of an intensifying modernization process, should be understood as an historically specific conjuncture comprising technological, political and institutional factors that coincide in the late nineteenth century. This paper revisits the Anderson-Berman debate and its aftermath from the standpoint of recent discussions of both the history of capitalism and that of modernism. I argue that the origins of modernism are not conjunctural but perennial, as Berman intuited, insofar as they are rooted in the history of modernity itself. Yet as neither Berman nor Anderson fully acknowledged, the sources of modernism are more precisely situated within the continuing production of combined unevenness in the modern world-system initially as it transitions from a precapitalist to a capitalist social order; then, crucially, in successive encounters with the uneven and combined development that is the hallmark of that order. Far from constituting a purely metropolitan array of aesthetic styles and movements arising from one particular historical conjuncture, modernism is better understood as a self-conscious response to the uneven and combined environments of capitalist modernity, wherever and whenever they appear. The implication is that the topoi and history of modernism need to be radically revised geographically, to encompass the characteristic emergence of (semi)peripheral modernisms in situations of underdevelopment; temporally, to include the ongoing cultural renewal of modernist impulses beyond their manifestation in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; and, not least, aesthetically, to take account of the vast repertoire of forms, procedures and models of artistic practice that continue to proliferate in a world that is not yet post-capitalist, not yet post-modern and hence not yet postmodernist.

## **From wage to land? French executives reevaluating their resources at the light of “collapse” theories**

**Cyprien Tasset (Associate researcher at the Laboratoire de Changement Social et Politique (Universit Paris 7 - Denis Diderot).)**

The idea that our societies are following a trajectory leading to a near-term major environmental breakdown, or even to a “collapse”, has been progressing lately at a fast pace in the French-speaking area. Since the mid-2010s, online forums and associations dedicated to this theme have burgeoned. Perplexed individuals (often with backgrounds in engineering and informatics) come there to socialize their distress and mutualize their watch over news and science related to resources & environmental threats. They share their experiences of tumbling into the vision of a world doomed to “collapse”, and deliberate about personal and collective actions that would be relevant in this horizon. We offer to study the social composition of these most committed fringes of the French-speaking public of collapse theories, their forms of electronic interactions, their uses of scientific literacy, and their political discussions. We will pay particular attention to the way the perspective of “collapse” redistributes priorities, for often relatively privileged individuals, between wage and land property.

## **Yakov Kronrod’s Political Economy of Socialism**

**David Mandel (Universit du Qubec Montral)**

This paper presents Soviet political economist Yakov Kronrod’s conception of the organization of a socialist economy. This conception, based on a critical analysis of the Soviet experience, combined three essential elements - democracy, plan, and market - in a highly original way. Kronrod, a Marxist, argued against the view of the classics, in affirming that the market would long play an important role under socialism, itself a long transitional period to communism, practically a separate mode of production. At the same time, he was a staunch opponent of market socialism, under which enterprises enjoy practically absolute autonomy, with the plan relegated to a role of regulation or simulation of the market. In Kronrod’s conception of socialism, the market is subordinate to the plan, which is the manifestation of national, social ownership of the means of production. Enterprise autonomy is significant but conditional. Kronrod’s political economy provides answers to basic arguments of the critics of socialist planning, namely that it inevitably leads to bureaucratic domination; that it leaves no significant room for worker self-management at the enterprise and sub-national levels; and that it stifles entrepreneurship and innovation, fostering inefficiency and obsolescence.



## The transition away from fossil fuels: power, labour and technology

Simon Pirani (Oxford Institute for Energy Studies)

The panel will reflect on the types of transitions social and political (to supercede capitalism), technological and in the labour process necessary to achieve a transition away from fossil fuels. It will include papers by Sam Mason, PCS policy officer (A just transition for who?), Mika Minio Paluello, Labour Energy Forum (A Green Industrial Revolution and the UK Labour Party) and Simon Pirani, Oxford Institute for Energy Studies (Getting away from fossil fuels: why history matters). We are hoping that Pritam Singh, University of Oxford, will be available to chair the panel; if not, due to other commitments at the HM conference, Greg Muttitt, senior researcher, Oil Change International, would be able to do so. Sam Mason, PCS policy officer: A Just Transition for who? Abstract. The labour movement coined the phrase Just Transition several decades ago. Formed around a set of principles to protect workers and communities through economic restructuring as a result of climate change and wider environmental policies, it has however become a highly contested phrase within the labour movement. For some Just Transition is a redundancy strategy which runs against the core principle of trade unions to protect members jobs at (arguably) any cost. For others it's a concept that reinforces the hegemony of the global north at the expense of the global south, and those more directly in the path of catastrophic climate change impacts. Yet more progressive unions view this as an opportunity for a transformative process, that challenges the inherent inequality of capitalism and the social relations between land and labour. This paper will look at the core debates within the global labour movement on Just Transition, the lack of analysis in the debate around capitalist relations and power, and if trade unions can ever be at the vanguard of a working class response to climate change. Mika Minio Paluello, Labour Energy Forum: A Green Industrial Revolution and the UK Labour Party Abstract. The Labour Party has committed to a Green Industrial Revolution, to address the climate crisis. This plan recognises the 19th industrial transformation as embodying a fundamental shift in societal, economic and productive relations - albeit one that also locked in environmental destruction, colonial theft and human exploitation. This paper will explore Labour's plans for a Green Industrial Revolution. It will answer questions like: Which parts of the energy, transport and manufacturing systems will be brought into public ownership, and how will they be restructured? Can democratic public ownership provide a basis for a renewed 21st C industrial renewal process - and what are its limitations? How do we create the structures and power shifts that place workers both those employed by the fossil fuel sector and those in adjacent sectors at the heart of this transformation? The societal shift away from carbon is a reality. The struggle is whether we have a managed transition in the interests of the public, labour and climate, or a transition driven by capital and existing power elites, that is both too slow and dumps the burden on the public. Simon Pirani, Senior Visiting Research Fellow, Oxford Institute for Energy Studies, Getting away from fossil fuels: why history matters Abstract. The presentation will discuss the driving-forces that determine the continuous increase in the global level of fossil fuel consumption, despite ever-more-insistent claims that we are moving to a post-fossil-fuel era. It will put that increase in the context of the expansion of capitalism and touch on the relevance of the concept of a great acceleration of human impacts on the natural world. It will look at the

technological systems that consume fossil fuels, and the relationship between these and the predominant social and economic relations. The presentation will argue that technological, social and economic systems need to be transformed in order to make possible a transition away from fossil fuels.

## **Marxism and Intersectionality**

**Ashley J. Bohrer (University of Notre Dame)**

This session is an author-meets-critics session, organized around Ashley Bohrer's 2019 book *Marxism and Intersectionality: Race, Class, Gender, and Sexuality under Contemporary Capitalism*. The author will open with a few remarks, followed by responses to the book from the other panelists and ample time for Q & A. Panelists will include: Sara Salem, Sophie Chamas, Holly Lewis, and Rafeef Ziadah.

## **Human Agency, Workers Inquiry and Hope.**

**Kieron Smith (University of Winchester)**

In the UK, the employee-owned sector has doubled in size since 2010 (Smith, 2018). All mainstream political parties have called for both increased worker participation, i.e. worker directors (or directors representing worker views) and greater employee ownership more generally (The Conservative Party, 2017:18; Labour Party, 2017:19). The Conservative Party has repeatedly stated its commitment to worker representation, asserting that listed companies will be required either to nominate a director from the workforce, create a formal employee advisory council or assign specific responsibility for employee representation to a designated non-executive director (The Conservative Party, 2017:18). The Labour Party have also stated [m]ore democratic ownership structures would help our economy deliver for the many and lead to a fairer distribution of wealth doubling the size of the co-operative sector and introducing a right to own making employees the buyer of first refusal when the company they work for is up for sale (Labour Party, 2017:19). This paper will ask questions about why industrial democracy and employee ownership are back on the contemporary UK political agenda, and what these contemporary calls for industrial democracy look like. It will focus on strategic level employee participation, rather than more limited levels of autonomy, and will discuss three principle areas, namely; why now, how does this industrial democracy manifest itself, and does this nascent discussion offer new opportunities for human agency within the organisation. In order to full explore this, a workers inquiry utilising Participatory Action Research (PAR) is underway within a company (500+ employees) that is anticipating a transition to Employee Ownership (EO). The remit of the worker-researchers is to question how effective strategic participation can be achieved post transition, and a democratic structure delivered which is not purely managerialist in nature. Learnings from the inquiry, which also spans three supporting businesses in the same sector, will be shared, along with an exploration of the challenges which have arisen from this methodological approach. Bio

Kieron Smith is a part time PhD research student at the University of Winchester, exploring contemporary industrial democracy. A professional bookseller with over 20 years book trade experience, he is interested in alternative forms of organisation, the restatement of human agency and the nature of hope. He is author of *Marxism: Finding the Maestro in Management? Philosophy of Management* 5 (2):3-16 (2005).

## **Brou, the Communist International and the Millennium**

**Gareth Jenkins (International Socialism Journal)**

Pierre Brou published his monumental history of the Third International in 1997 (*Histoire de l'Internationale communiste*, Fayard), an English translation of which should shortly be forthcoming. This being the hundredth anniversary of the founding of the Comintern, it seems appropriate to assess the contribution made by Brou to our understanding of it. The main focus of the paper will be on the context of the period of its publication, when, following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the end of history thesis that there was no alternative to capitalism seemed to sweep all before it. I will argue that Brou's history of the Comintern, in taking on and countering the way in which the record of the global communist movement had been distorted by Cold War ideologues, was an attempt to counter this pessimism. At the same time, my contention will be that he was undertaking a sober assessment of its relevance to new activists on the eve of the millennium. I will attempt to argue the strengths and weaknesses of his approach, bearing in mind the continuing importance of the work by John Riddell, for example, to an accurate understanding of the early years of the Comintern.

## **And what about post-colonial sovereignty?**

**Heide Gerstenberger (University of Bremen)**

National sovereignty became the basic principle of international law when revolutionary and post-colonial movements transferred sovereignty from its former owners to peoples, which - by this very act - were constituted as nations. While the sovereignty of any state is based on international agreement, these agreements used to confirm the results of power struggles. This linkage between force and competences was severed in 1960 when the General Assembly of the United Nations "granted" independence to colonial countries and peoples because they had "an inalienable right to complete freedom, the exercise of their sovereignty and the integrity of their national territory." (Today, even so-called failed states are considered as being part of the international order of sovereign states.) But sovereignty was only granted to the entities which used to be colonies and to the peoples which used to be governed by colonial states, and right from the beginning the sovereignty of postcolonial states was heavily circumscribed. Focusing on post-colonial states in Africa, I propose to discuss the financial gains which were reaped from the Cold War, the development of a sovereignty under the guardianship of international institutions, the commodification of

some of the competences of national sovereignty for private gains and the integration of these practices into globalized capitalism.

## **When the World is Sick: Solastalgia and the Precarity of the Body**

**Morgan Young (Simon Fraser University)**

If you're not sick now, then you will be. This is not a threat, but a forewarning. The resources required to be resilient to climate catastrophe will become increasingly scarce. Just as additional energy and effort is needed, our capacities will simultaneously be diminished. Cultures of overwork leave us unprepared to recognize or account for the precarity of the body. What is felt now as malaise, as anxiety, as grief, will be compounded by the deterioration of the physical bodies we inhabit, corporeal and environmental. The world is sick, and in our experience of this illness we embody solastalgia: the anguish engendered by environmental change. Perched upon our current existential cliff is Benjamin's angel of history, surveying catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage. While we are alarmed by enormity of scale, Benjamin's angel would have us remember that we live in catastrophe continually; that civilization is built on its midden. The utopia, typically envisioned, is meant to construct the end of catastrophe: a rehabilitation of Paradise motivated by a longing for wholeness, which is interpreted as a lack of brokenness. The emotional content of a utopian longing that emphasizes heroic overcoming leaves us anemic in the face of unrelenting devastation. Resolving the contradictory proposition of utopia within collapse includes contending with the mental and physical collapse that accompanies the stresses of the omnipresent threat of extinction. Navigating solastalgia requires that we learn to accept unbearable losses without abdication. Utopian wholeness can also be understood as wellness; as Bloch's upright gait. Taken as an objective, utopian wellness involves strategies which go beyond mythologies of self-care: developing networks of collective support that incorporate the refusal of values, including those of enforced productivity, that serve to undermine healthy approaches to the concrete organization of social and environmental adaptation and renewal.

## **Progressive uses of sovereignty: The Left, State Power and the Politics of Control in the Populist Era**

**Paolo Gerbaudo (King's College London)**

Contemporary political discussions feature debates on sovereignty and control. We are often told that we live in an era in which people want to take back control to quote a famous Leave slogan in the 2016 referendum campaign or that they want to recuperate their sovereignty. But what is the relationship between these two notions that have been frequently invoked by populist leaders especially on the right end of the political spectrum? My presentation will problematise the relationship between control and sovereignty as two connected terms that have become akin to master signifiers of the present post-neoliberal or populist era. Furthermore, it will assess the extent to which these notions can serve the

development of a progressive political agenda. I propose that control is a fundamental component of all forms of sovereignty, given that sovereignty is premised on the idea of a central and supreme power, which is able to steer (or control) reality according to its own wishes. Hence, the way in which State power has often been compared to a ship (the ship of state) that is carefully guided by the statesman. The current invocation of terms such as control and sovereignty should be understood as stemming from the perception that the ship of state is now instead caught in a tempest, where it has lost almost entirely the ability to find a path through the waters of economic uncertainty. And indeed, this diagnosis corresponds fairly well to the condition of contemporary politics, in the aftermath of a long cycle of neoliberal policies that have weakened state controls over capital and favoured multinational corporations. In this sense, some form of recuperation of state sovereignty and control may indeed contribute to developing a socialist agenda. Hence, it is necessary to develop a “politics of control” that may attend to the demand of a recuperation of control in a world that appears to many as out control. However, a purely sovereigntyist discourse, seen the recuperation of sovereignty as a good in its own right is a political mistake, as it turn a means (sovereignty) into an end, and risks aligning leftist forces with nationalist ones.

## **Workers in the Capitalocene: Lessons from French Colonial History**

### **Armel Campagne (European University Institute (EUI))**

This contribution aims to draw lessons from coal mine workers resistances in colonial Algeria and Vietnam (1889-1962), the main focus of my PhD research, to a capitalist and colonialist productivism which eventually led to climate change. It shows that absenteeism, turn-over, seasonal remigration, voluntary restriction of output and refusals to be hired, even more than strikes and collective revendications anyway prohibited in this colonial context, were the main grains of sand in the gears of coal capitalism in that context, according to capitalists and colonialists themselves. Through these micro-resistances (Foucault) and underground revolts (Bourdieu), also emphasized by workerism in the context of the 1960s-1970s class struggles in Italy (Wright 2017) colonized workers reduced significantly coal output, especially in comparison with capitalist objectives of production. This working-class under-productivism distinct from capitalist productivism and environmentalist anti-productivism might be of a peculiar importance in contemporary neoliberal societies, where workers are ever more impeded to organize and resist collectively and openly, and are thus left with little alternative but to resist as in a colonial context through informal and invisible micro-resistances. In addition, an emphasis on this informal resistance to maximize capitalist fossil production might be a way to tie together working-class and environmentalist preoccupations, as this resistance both diminishes surplus labor and CO2 emissions. Moreover, it would renew the historiography of environment struggles, often focused on activist and indigenous movements, although workers micro-resistances might have been more historically significant in downsizing greenhouse emissions than environmentalist movements per se. Finally, it could help environmentalists to take conscience of the importance of workers resistances in the fight against climate change, as resisting at work against capitalist productivism (both

individually and collectively) might be as significant as other forms of environmentalist struggles with regard to global warming.

## **Communism as Feminism: One Hundred Years of Theory and Practice**

**Judy Cox (University of Leeds)**

This paper will explore overlooked connections between approaches to the woman question in the early nineteenth-century Owenite communism and the soviet communism of early twentieth century Russia. There are discernible theoretical continuities between the communist feminism which emerged at the birth of capitalism and that which sought to overthrow it 100 years later. What do such connections tell us about the interdependence of communism and feminism? This paper will compare the works of Owenite feminists such as Anna Wheeler, Emma Martin and Frances Morrison and the theories developed by communist feminists, Koncordia Samoilova, Inessa Armand and Alexandra Kollontai to demonstrate that those seeking the radical reform of womens social position were drawn towards the universal transformations of offered by communism and male communists were receptive to the inclusion of women in their emancipatory politics. There are three key elements to this paper. Firstly, an exploration of the ways in which both Owenite and Marxist communists understood femininity as rooted not in nature but in a competitive social organisation based on private property. Secondly, a comparison of the theoretical and practical connections between the Owenite conceptualisation of the collectivisation of reproductive labour and the collectivisation of reproductive labour undertaken by the Soviet Government. Sexual freedom was an essential part of the Owenite programme for the reform of human nature and central to debates instigated by Marxist feminists in post-revolutionary Russia. This paper will analyse how communist approaches to sexual liberation developed over time. In conclusion, this paper will ask two related questions. Firstly, was Marx and Engels characterisation of the Owenites as Utopian justified. Secondly, to what extent did the collapse of Owenite communities limit the political imagination of subsequent Communist movements and how were such limitations contested.

## **On Being Migrants in Historical Time: Capital and the Temporalities of Climate in Contemporary World Literature**

**Greg Forter (Department of English University of South Carolina Columbia, SC 29208)**

Wherever we look at our changing climate, writes Andreas Malm in Fossil Capital, we find ourselves in the grip of the flow of time. The effects of the running carbon cycle are always delayed, for It takes time before a certain quantity of CO2 emissions is realized as a corresponding amount of warming, and before that warming takes its full toll on the ecosystems. Global warming is thus on one hand seriously backloaded: the present registers a rise in temperature whose genesis is in the historical past; yet on the other, such



warming is substantially deferred, inasmuch as the cumulative effects of current emissions will only fully arrive in the future. The result of this is that climate change is a messy mix-up of time scales; in an elevated sense of the term, every conjuncture now combines relics and arrows, loops and postponements that stretch from the deepest past to the most distant future, via a now that is non-contemporaneous with itself.[1] Malm marries this insight into the temporality of climate change to a thoroughgoing critique of Anthropocene models for understanding such change. He argues that recourse to the category of the Anthropocene risks naturalizing global warming as the (inevitable) product of human beings per se, rather than the historically contingent effect of a specific class of people over and against the interests of others. This is a point developed with force in relation to the triumph of steam in the nineteenth century. By the nature of the social order of things, Malm writes, steam engines could only be installed by the owners of the means of production [T]his class of people comprised an infinitesimal fraction of the population of Homo sapiens in the early nineteenth century; at no moment did the species [in toto] vote for the adoption of steam or for the development of a fully-fledged fossil economy. Rather, Steam won out because it augmented the power of some over others, of Capitalists in a small corner of the Western world over and against the rest of us.[2] My paper builds on these persuasive arguments in three ways. First, I contend that the type of materialism that Malm employs can be at once extended and illuminated through an engagement with the work of Walter Benjamin. That thinkers philosophical poetics of the heterotemporalespecially in *On the Concept of History* and the *N* convolutes of the *Arcades Project* provides a vocabulary and a method for conceptualizing the sedimentation in the present of an historically produced non-contemporaneity. Benjamin helps us grasp in particular how the pollutants that mar each present moment with the residual accelerants of its non-immediate past are conceptually related to the history of the oppressed, which equally haunts each present with the memory of a suffering that has neither been expunged nor metabolized. Second, I argue that contemporary world literature has profound things to teach us about these matters. Focusing on Mohsin Hamids *Exit West*, Amitav Ghosh's *A Hungry Tide*, and Ben Lerner's *10:04*, I show that these works not only think the fossil economy in relation to a global capitalist system and a global history of exploitation, but permit us to live through their formal textures the pressures of a past that's absent from our now yet exerts its causal powers upon it. Here I am especially interested in how each book contains a moment that conjoins Malm with Benjamin. These are moments at which an impending climate disaster retrieves from a specific commodity the aura of its historical past. The past is in each case revealed as the precipitate of a system of exploitation that's both congealed within and hidden by the commodity form of a non-human objecta past released and made spectrally present by the imminence of a climate apocalypse. Finally, my paper argues that by reading these works through Benjamin and Malm, one can glimpse in them the utopian promise of some other social order. This other order emerges with special clarity in the texts forms. By developing techniques that aim to conjure (without substantializing) the historical past embedded in our present, these forms presage an organization of human life on the other side of our reckoning with climate. They provide an idiom for utopian speculation that negates the negation of climate apocalypse, finding within intimations of disaster the spectral traces of lives and worlds where human plenty is a function of constraint: worlds where we might learn to feel a fullness indistinguishable from being emptied (Lerner), and where our economies and even our desires have been

rescaled to the finitude of nature's bounty. [1] Malm, *Fossil Capital: The Rise of Steam Power and the Roots of Global Warming* (London: Verso, 2016), 7-8. The internal quotations are from Stephen Gardiner, *A Perfect Moral Storm: The Ethical Tragedy of Climate Change*. [2] Malm, *Fossil Capital*, 267.

## **Re-Imagining Money for Postgrowth Futures**

**Tim Parrique (PhD candidate at CERDI (Université Clermont Auvergne, France) and Stockholm Resilience Centre (Stockholm University, Sweden))**

Global sustainability issues such as climate change, biodiversity loss, increasing inequality, and stalled and collapsing economies call for a systemic transformation of the present model of development centred around the unlimited pursuit of economic growth. Part of this transition involves designing monetary systems that account for ecological scarcities in a socially fair way. In recent decades, an increasing number of communities have started to engage in a diversity of alternative finance practices, challenging the manner in which money is created, circulated, and managed in society. At the theoretical level, some of those practices reflect the idea of monetary diversity or the co-existence of several monies at different scale (local, national, regional, international) and for different purposes (e.g. education, care, landscape beautification, energy, food). At the national level, countries such as the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Iceland, and Sweden recently hosted discussions on sovereign money and full reserve banking systems. Those proposals relied on theoretical advancements in monetary theories that recently gained exposure with the work of think tanks such as Positive Money. Those two approaches (monetary diversity and sovereign money) aim at the same thing: redefining the role of money as to allow the emergence of a more desirable and sustainable economy. However, there has been little attention given to the theoretical (in)compatibility of those two ideas, even less within the context of a postgrowth, post-capitalist economy. What is the role of complementary currency and sovereign money in a postgrowth economy? This paper argues that sovereign money and monetary diversity should be seen as complementary reforms that together could form the monetary backbone of a post-capitalist utopia.

## **Internationalization of Capital and the Customs Union between Turkey and the EU**

**Ekmel SAYIL (Middle East Technical University)**

Customs Union can be referred to as the culmination of a process envisaged by previous agreements signed between Turkey and EEC, EC and EU where customs duties in trade between regions have been gradually lowered. It was considered as the final step as envisaged by the Ankara Agreement in 1963 and the Additional Protocol signed in 1971. Criticisms towards the Customs Union between Turkey and EU has largely come with the argument that Turkey faces one-sided loss of economic and political sovereignty. As Turkey abides by EU's foreign trade agreement with 3rd parties with the implementation of

Common Customs Tariffs. the Customs Union have been tackled from the perspective of the statist political economy, where states are conceptualized as autonomous actors. Such statist political economy does not carry a dynamic, transformative comprehension of capitalist social relations. In these accounts, capitalism is not presented as an international relation with interlinkages in the domestic bourgeoisie. In very broad terms, this thesis will aim to problematize this kind of an understanding of the CU and will try to locate the CU in the internationalization of capital in Turkey. The economic and political connections of domestic bourgeoisie in Turkey will be brought in to the analysis as it is this connection with global capital accumulation that stands at the centre of the need to understand economic and political phenomena.

## Thermodynamics of Communism

David William Schwartzman (Howard University)

Rethinking 21st century communism requires consideration of the quality and quantity of the energy supply for global civilization, i.e., the thermodynamics of communism. In this context, we must confront the ever-narrowing window of opportunity to prevent the onset of catastrophic climate change (C3). The three critical material requirements for preventing C3 and achieving a communist future are global demilitarization, a transition of the current mode of agriculture to agroecologies, and solarization of the global energy infrastructure with a greater capacity than the present level. The science of thermodynamics demonstrates that a solar energy source is fundamental to truly green growth, industrial ecologies and phaseout of extractive mining. The ecosocialist movement should critique the misleading spectre of entropy, drawn from Georgescu-Roegen's fallacious 4th law of thermodynamics which has had strong influence on the Degrowth movement. Likewise the argument that perpetual growth on a finite planet leads inexorably to environmental calamity (Monbiot, 2019) fails to deconstruct the qualitative aspects of growth, what is growing, what should degrow, under what energy regime? The current use of fossil fuels and nuclear fission power to drive the economy can be transcended in our open Earth system by sufficient creation of a high-efficiency collection of the solar flux to Earth. Global solar power will then pay its entropic debt to space as non-incremental waste heat, without driving us to tipping points towards even more catastrophic climate change than has happened over the past few decades. Coming out of this transition, which will need to be ecosocialist, a steady-state biophysical economy can emerge in a global solar communist society (Schwartzman, 1996; Schwartzman and Schwartzman, 2019). References cited Monbiot, George. 2019. The Problem is Capitalism. <https://www.monbiot.com/2019/04/30/the-problem-is-capitalism>. Schwartzman, David. 1996. Solar Communism. *Science & Society* 60 (3): 307-331. Schwartzman, Peter. and Schwartzman, David. 2019. *The Earth is Not for Sale: A Path Out of Fossil Capitalism to the Other World That is Still Possible*. Singapore: World Scientific.

## **Unofficial labour and collective representation: a qualitative research on street vendors in Brazil**

**Beatriz Pereira dos Santos (Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro)**

In Brazil, trade unions represent workers formally employed. However, high turnover rates and unofficial jobs are very characteristic of the Brazilian labour market. Recently, unofficial work rates have raised greatly. Specifically, the number of people working on street trading went from 98,4 thousand in 2012 to 1,3 million in 2017. Due to the raise of unemployment in the past five years, reaching 12,7% in April 2019, many workers have found self-employment or unofficial jobs as a solution. In Brazil, both types of work are considered unregistered or unofficial work. In addition, unregistered workers are not legally represented by unions. So, how do they organize themselves to defend their rights? In this research, street trading workers from the city of Rio de Janeiro were interviewed in order to understand how they organize themselves to defend their interests, what are their claims, how they understand their job relations and what relations of class consciousness are produced in unofficial job networks. Following the methodology of retracing people's life paths in depth to grasp all the complexity degree of work relations, the interviews also encompass socioeconomic aspects, family, work and profession relations, educational paths and access to public policies in order to provide qualitative analysis on the relations of these workers with institutions and traditional politics, their political thinking, their understanding about their own work relations, their claims and forms of work organisation. The interviews show that there are organised movements of street vendors in dialogue with trade unions and traditional politics, with clear demands about work conditions and structural criticism to exploitation. Also, they showed important connections between their jobs and culture in producing class consciousness and the engagement of workers in these social movements.

## **Towards a Marxist Economic Policy**

**Pau Belda i Tortosa (Critical Economy Seminar - Taifa (Barcelona) International Doctorate in Economic Analysis (IDEA) - Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB) - Barcelona Graduate School of Economics (BGSE))**

Is there such thing as a Marxist Economic Policy (MEP)? The outstanding Marxist answer is simply no. This absence is an anomaly: as opposed to all the others schools of economic analysis, Marxism does not back a set of policy recommendations. That Marxist anomaly relies on two propositions: i) Economic Policy aims to reform Capitalism; ii) Marxism is for revolution to build an alternative system. As a logical result, Marxism cannot have something like reformist instruments. In these notes, I explore the alternative hypothesis: there is no Marxist anomaly: MEP is implicit in the Marxist critique of Capitalism. To do so, two things must be derived: a set of (anti-capitalist) goals and a set of instruments. The former is obtained as the anti-image of the critique: social welfare as the objective variable (as opposed to profits), economic stability (periodic crises), egalitarian distribution of

resources (inequality), small cooperative networks (private monopolies), sustainable use of natural resources (predator growth), social (re)production (market production). The latter requires to ensemble a number of pieces. First, I propose a simple dynamic macro model with heterogeneous agents that mimics Marxist predictions. Second, I define a set of policy instruments (taxes, expropriation, public expenditure, debt, price fixation). Third, a quantitative analysis is used to highlight the dynamic response of the variables to different policy arrangements. Finally, the subset of policy arrangements that better leads towards the goals would be identified as MEPs instruments. As a result, a MEP naturally emerges from the intersection of Marxist critique and standard economic techniques.

## **Building the revolution : the Soviet Ginzburg versus the Republican Le Corbusier**

**Jessica PACI (Ecole Nationale Supérieure d'Architecture de Saint Etienne  
Architecture school of Saint etienne)**

Born from a general reflection on the role of architectural spaces and therefore of the architect in society, this contribution is a research on architectural determinism. Through a reflective approach on the impact that spaces can have on ways of living and lifestyles, it aims to analyze the social reception of the Narkomfin project in Moscow designed by Milinis and Ginzburg in 1928 and the Firminy Vert Housing Unit designed by Le Corbusier in 1964. Two housing units emblematic of the 20th century's architectural thinking, from two very different contexts: Russia in the 1920s and France in the 1950s. Regarding architecture, Henri Lefebvre, writes: Being "is located in living, it is realized and can be read there"<sup>1</sup>, it crystallizes the importance of inhabiting. For the French philosopher, unlike housing which can be understood as a strictly functional notion, inhabiting, is a lived practice which must be related to the fundamental needs of human beings : beings build habitats and habitats structure beings. These examples are the basis for true projects for societies. As they intended to provide solutions to social problems and generate change through their innovations by means of their spatial responses. They suggest a modern life project for "a New Man". However, in the course of our research, we realized that the inhabitants had not been passive users. As actors in their spaces, they have learned to appreciate their forms, and to overcome them by appropriating them differently. On the one hand, architectural practice helps to shape the behavior of inhabitants in space: on the other hand, the practice of living is not fixed and it is in this relationship between the initial intentions of the project and "living in it". We will here try to draw an assessment of the experiences lived in the buildings of Ginzburg and Le Corbusier, several decades after their achievements, with the aim of helping a future emancipation of the subject, at a time when in France, housing is at the center of the debate about yellow vests. This contribution will propose a comparative reading of these projects, wanting to be communitarian, egalitarian, and educational, to reflect on the founding elements of their theories and their practices for a transformation of reality as a totality." - And everyone will live like that? - Everyone[...]. Eternal spring and summer, eternal joy for all. You know the future, it's radiant, it's wonderful. So tell everyone: this will be the future, it will be radiant and beautiful. Love

him, suck him in, work for him, bring him closer, draw from him for the present as much as you can; your life will be radiant and beautiful, fertile in joys and pleasures. Nikolai Chernyshvsky, *What is to be done*, April 4, 1863. Lefebvre H. (1970), *La révolution urbaine*, Paris, Gallimard, p. 111.

## **Ideology in the Age of Monsters: Rethinking the State in Extinction Capitalism**

**Alexander Gorman (Dept. of Philosophy, Duquesne University)**

Since the publication of Louis Althusser's 1970 essay, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses," inquiries into the nature of the contemporary capitalist state have centered the function of ideology and ideological state apparatuses in securing the reproduction of the capitalist mode of production. Pressing beyond the classical Leninist model of the repressive state, Althusser posited the existence of ideological state apparatuses that 'run' on ideology rather than coercion. From schools and the family, to the communicative and cultural apparatuses, and ultimately to the parliamentary and representative institutions of the state themselves, Althusser helped to clarify the extensive role of the state in reproducing the relations of production characteristic of capitalism. Ideology functions to secure the consent of the people, enshrining relations of domination and legitimating the violence and coercion that are a necessary function of any social formation predicated upon the exploitation of one class by another. Althusser's contributions to Marxist State Theory notwithstanding, today we face a new set of questions concerning the State in the conjuncture that motivates a rethinking of the relationship between the repressive and ideological apparatuses. As the liberal-technocratic ruling bloc undergoes legitimization crisis and an extreme right appears that is prepared to contest state power, the new modes of surveillance and border control regimes that ordo-liberalism raised to serve intensified exploitation appear as readymade tools for a new mode of fascism. We must therefore reconsider the intensified function of the repressive apparatuses as an effect of the breakdown of the ideological hegemony of the neoliberal order. Taking the reorganizations of the capitalist state in the 20th century as a guide to thinking our current crisis, we must consider how the form of the contemporary alliance between the far-right and liberal-technocrats is driven by the intensifying ecological consequences of persistent capitalist exploitation on a warming planet. An analysis of contemporary neo-fascism that centers upon renewed nationalist and patriarchal discourses that fails to recognize its emergence as a means of resolving the crises brought on by climate change necessarily fails. As warming renders the objective conditions of reproduction increasingly tenuous across large swaths of the planet (particularly in regions destabilized by contemporary imperialisms), we must examine the rise of neo-fascism represents an ideological effect of climate crisis and examine how this crisis has driven the re-configuration of the State Apparatuses in the epoch of Extinction Capitalism. The central question which I seek to address concerns how climate crisis induces changes in the relative dynamics between ideological and repressive apparatuses, how ideology facilitates transitions in the repressive apparatuses, and how examining these relations provides us with a more adequate theory of contemporary fascisms.



## **The emotional dimension of social change: Reclaiming collective psychological empowerment through the social identity approach**

**John Drury (University of Sussex)**

In one of the earliest and most influential works of crowd psychology, the subjective sense of power that people experience on being part of crowds is described as illusory. That tradition of psychology, which linked emotionality with primitive drives and separated it from cognition, is now discredited, creating space for different ways of talking about emotion and empowerment in crowds. In this presentation I will first briefly trace the development and recuperation of the empowerment concept, which began as an activist category for social change, and was then co-opted as a tool of management and social stability. I will describe an elaborated social identity model (ESIM) of empowerment in collective action. This model grew from research on riots to explain the transition from a peaceful crowd to widespread conflict, and has been applied to events as diverse as urban rioting, demonstration marches, nonviolent direct action, and football crowd disorder. I will show how the ESIM concept of collective self-objectification, based on Marx's theory of labour, helps explain the subjective and objective importance of tangible collective action to groups seeking social change. Action which objectifies (subordinate) identity in relation to outgroups evidences the capacity of the ingroup to change the world. I will relate this model to the confidence taken by racists and xenophobes from recent election results and street actions, based on the observation that many of these right-wing groups position themselves as disadvantaged (by what they see as a liberal establishment). Their expectations of support (from enhanced consensus perceptions) and objectification of identity are crucial in this process. Finally, I will suggest what all this means for counter-mobilization, including the problems with understanding politics as essentially a battle of ideas.

## **Turning Crisis into Capital: Investigating the Rising Fame of Leuser Ecosystem**

**Nadya Karimasari (Wageningen University and Research)**

This paper will investigate how conservation organisations around the Leuser Ecosystem in Sumatra, Indonesia capitalize on crisis (Roitman, 2014). The Leuser Ecosystem is promoted on a global scale as the last place on earth where four critically endangered megafauna still co-exist in the wild. The exceptionality of this habitat is being threatened by multiple activities, such as road and energy-plant construction, extractive industries, agricultural encroachment, and illegal hunting. Instead of dwelling in argumentation of whether such crisis is an objective condition or a constructed narrative, this paper looks at crisis as a context that conservation acts upon and relies on. This paper argues that conservation regime needs crisis to be kept alive to make crisis feasible to act as capital, while also controls the framework of solution in such a way that can only be provided through the intervention of conservation itself. Conservation organisations utilise the

notion of crisis and exceptionality to elevate the ecological value of Leuser as a top priority ecosystem to be saved in the dying planet, while also endowing some of their activists to win competitive global environmental awards, which in turn garnered unprecedented skyrocketing financial support and media coverage. However, this attained state of urgency has triggered the impulse of distance and partially-informed public to pressure action to be taken and unwittingly bring about a situation of crisis as a self-perpetuating mechanism, in which it matters less whether or not conservation intervention necessarily translates into lower ecological crisis, as long as something, anything, is being done at all. This paper looks at interrelated conservation project of ecosystem restoration, heroic ecotourism, and green finance to provide more information from the ground on what comes out of the support of unrecognized public and local inhabitants who are expected to make personal sacrifice for a global good.

## **Book Launch - Lukcs: Praxis and the Absolute**

**Daniel Andrs Lpez (La Trobe University), Konstantinos Kavoulakos (University of Crete/University of Thessaloniki), Stathis Kouvelakis (King's College London), Esther Leslie (Birbeck University of London)**

Lukcs: Praxis and the Absolute (Brill, October 2019) is a comprehensive and critical reconstruction of the philosophy of praxis that Georg Lukcs penned in the 1920s. Approaching Lukcs's most radical decade using a methodology both internal to his thought and derived from Hegel, Daniel Andrs Lpez produces a novel, deeply historicised and conceptually totalising reading. Lpez both defends Lukcs against his many detractors, contributing to the international re-evaluation of his work, while producing a novel, immanent critique of Lukcs's philosophy. By opening a door from Lukcs back to Hegel, Lpez's argument raises important questions for the Marxist understanding of politics and the October Revolution, as well as for Marxist philosophy as a whole. This new book will be launched by Konstantinos Kavoulakos (author of Lukcs's Philosophy of Praxis, Bloomsbury, 2018), Stathis Kouvlakis (author of Philosophy and Revolution, Verso, 2003) and Esther Leslie, author of numerous works on critical and aesthetic theory and translator of Lukcs's lost 1925-6 manuscript, "Tailism and the Dialectic."

## **How capitalist planning contributes to our understanding of capitalism**

**Cecilia Rikap (CEPED, IRD/Universit Paris Descartes)**

In Marx's (1867, 1894) theory, planning relationships were found inside the factory or among national states responsibilities (Levn, 2008). Contrary to the circumscribed validity of this planning relation, commodity was conceived as capitalism's general social relation, linking worlds production in a growing process of capitals accumulation (Marx, 1867). However, by the XXth century, Hilferding and Lenin inaugurated a Marxist tradition,

continued by Baran and Sweezy (1966), that recognizes the emergence and expansion of monopolistic market forms. This tradition raised strong critics within Marxism. Among them, Shaikh (1990, 2016) and Dumenil and Levy (1987, 2016) consider that rivalry and worldwide competition was actually reinforced due to the increase in capitals concentration and centralization. These explanations seem to be suggesting an unbridgeable dichotomy: how is it possible to conciliate the growing appearance of monopolies with an ever fiercer competition? Without downplaying their differences, we will try to save that dichotomy by actually challenging a common aspect of both approaches: the absence of planning relations in the market. We will explore the genesis of planning between capital enterprises as a result of innovations monopoly. The resulting wide gap between capitals innovation capacity left those non-innovative with no better choice but to accept being dominated and planned. Under this framework, planning becomes a global relationship where some capitals plan portions of the general system. By explaining the source of a planning relation between capitals, we expect to shed light on short and long term dynamics of current capital accumulation.

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## **From connected food to microbial rift; A qualitative inquiry into multispecies stories of food**

**Sevgi Mutlu Sirakova (Doctoral candidate at the Rachel Carson Center (LMU-Munich))**

The findings from recent microbiome studies reveal the importance of traditional foodstuffs for our microbial diversity and urge us to rethink food practices with respect to the “companion species” living within us. Drawing inspiration from these studies, this article uses the notion of connected food to describe interdependent multispecies worlds of food while embracing the essential role of microbial agency in this connectivity. In doing so, it concerns itself with informal food transfers among relatives that link rural and urban places, with a specific focus on fermented products. These informal food movements are

still widely practiced in developing countries and have central importance to the survivability of poor urban dwellers. The foodstuffs which are transferred to cities are prepared and preserved through multispecies collaboration in rural areas to be consumed later in urban settlements. In this ethnographic inquiry, sensory and multispecies approaches are employed to understand how individuals perceive and interact with multispecies assemblages of food in case studies from Bulgaria and Turkey. Thus, it provides insights from traditional daily food practices to reveal hidden multispecies stories of food. On the other hand, while adapting to urban lifestyles, it seems that we have gradually lost and so far become alienated from our fundamental relations with other beings. It is therefore important to ask, what is left after the loss of these relations? Building on the concept of ecological rift, I introduce the notion of microbial rift to draw attention to the widening microbial gap. I see microbial rift as a framework for raising questions around food alienation to reflect upon what I feel to be a deep-rooted problem in our current multispecies relations. Finally, the article explores the cultivation of collaborative survival possibilities with other species by tracing the lost interspecies relationships of food.

## **FROZEN POLITICS ON A THAWING CONTINENT: A Political Ecology Approach to Understanding Science and its Relationship to Neocolonial and Capitalist Processes in Antarctica**

**Manon Katrina Burbidge (Lund University)**

Despite possessing a unique relationship between humankind and the environment, and its occupation of a large proportion of the planet's surface area, Antarctica is markedly absent from literature produced within the disciplines of human and political ecology. With no states or indigenous peoples, Antarctica is instead governed by a conglomeration of states as part of the Antarctic Treaty System, which places high values upon scientific research, peace and conservation. By connecting political ecology with neocolonial, world-systems and politically-situated science perspectives, this research addressed the question of how neocolonialism and the prospects of capital accumulation are legitimised by scientific research in Antarctica, as a result of science's privileged position in the Treaty. Three methods were applied, namely GIS, critical-political content analysis and semi-structured interviews, which were then triangulated to create an overall case study. These methods explored the intersections between Antarctic power structures, the spatial patterns of the built environment and the discourses of six national scientific programmes, complemented by insights from eight expert interviews. This research constitutes an important contribution to the fields of human and political ecology, firstly by intersecting it with critical Antarctic studies, something which has not previously been attempted, but also by expanding the application of a world-systems perspective to a continent very rarely included in this field's academia. It also highlights the importance of conducting interdisciplinary research, demonstrating the utility of applying and connecting multiple theories and methods to an individual context to draw out nuance within a case study. Results showed that science is used to legitimise a neocolonial present on the

continent, as well as acting as a facilitator for states to act upon future capital accumulation interests. It was found that the emphasis placed on scientific governance and leadership means that powerful states are able to consolidate political power through the Antarctic Treaty, reifying Western scientific knowledge hegemonies to the exclusion of developing nations. Furthermore, narratives of managerial necessity and environmental stewardship were also used as mechanisms of exclusion, creating a dichotomy between environmentally responsible states and those perceived to have resource-focussed intentions. This is despite all nations analysed being found to have resource interests, albeit to differing degrees. The enabling of this neocolonial order and foot-holding for future resources is facilitated by a cognitive disconnect between nations politically motivated Antarctic programs and the self-professed neutrality of scientists, which quells potential resistance to these insidious interests on the ground. Parallels with the rapidly melting Arctic are also drawn, where resources are poised to be extracted, raising questions of whether a similar scenario will play out in the Antarctic in the future, should the Treaty dissolve under the pressures of a climate-strained world.

## **Can postwork finally liberate men? Theorising the imperialist white-supremacist capitalist patriarchal masculinity, productive work and the environment: Alienation, the far right, and ecological breakdown.**

**Halliki Kreinin (Institute for Ecological Economics, Vienna University of Economics and Business)**

The current capitalist growth paradigm is creating the conditions for the global environmental catastrophe and the crisis of societal reproduction, while perpetuating hegemonic patriarchy. Since the 1970s, many brilliant Marxist and Ecofeminist writers have brought our attention to how capitalism destroys both the biophysical and social base of societal reproduction and sustainability, undervaluing reproduction, overvaluing production, and devalorising the feminine. Yet as bell hooks explains, the imperialist white-supremacist capitalist patriarchal masculinity while valorising the masculine ideal, also enacts psychological (and physical) violence against young boys and men. The hegemonic capitalist ideal of masculinity mutilates men, who must become alienated from self, society and nature, through psychological compartmentalisation and the repression of natural, human emotions (deemed as feminine). This creation of a split self allows men and boys to become soldiers that kill when needed, as well as efficient productive workers for capitalist ends. The main option for meaning and fulfilment left for men (and some women who wish to succeed under hegemonic patriarchal capitalism) through the process of compartmentalisation, becomes work and productive labour. With this option increasingly threatened by the multiple crises of capitalism, men are left with only violence, anger and rage against the other as outlets against existential dread. Anger and violence is directed against real or imaginary job-stealers: women and immigrant others, robbing men of the promised chance of self-fulfillment and power. (How) Can postwork and degrowth critiques of work liberate men and destroy capitalism? How can postwork and degrowth

utopias envision new masculinities, allowing men relational recovery and reconnection to self, society and nature?

## **Gramsci: fundamentos de una teora marxista de la subjetivacin poltica**

**Massimo Modonesi (Universidad Nacional Autnoma de Mxico)**

Si bien es indiscutible que la obra de Antonio Gramsci atribuye desde una perspectiva marxista clsica, aunque heterodoxa, un lugar fundamental al sujeto, poltico e histrico -en el entrecruzamiento entre la clase y el partido- su obra no ha sido leda sistemticamente como una contribucin a la reflexin marxista sobre el sujeto sino como una teorizacin de la hegemonía, las superestructuras y, en particular, del lugar y el papel de la cultura en la disputa poltica. Existen en la obra de Gramsci, entre sus escritos precarcelarios (1917-1926) y los Cuadernos de la Crcel (1926-1937), una serie de reflexiones que vislumbran los contornos de una teora de la subjetivacin poltica que en parte hereda las coordenadas clsicas marxistas y, por otra parte, las desarrolla de manera original asentando el permetro y un punto de partida de una sociología neomarxista de la subjetivacin y la accin poltica. En este sentido, sugerimos una lectura de la obra de Gramsci que intervenga tanto en el debate de interpretacin de la obra de Gramsci como en relacin con el desarrollo de una teorizacin sociológica original y de mayor alcance.

## **Dystopia and Anti-Utopia: A Hegemonic Struggle**

**Peter Milonas (York University)**

Much ink has been spilled on the concept of utopia, but modern-day scholars appear to be in disagreement on the social and political preconditions that help bring forth important works of utopian fiction. Fredric Jameson, a well-known utopian studies scholar and Marxist social theorist, argues that contemporary utopian literature, for the most part, appears in intervals that are characterized by a sense of tranquillity before a seemingly unpredictable revolutionary upheaval occurs. However, British historian and political essayist Perry Anderson rejects this explanation. He extends the production of utopian fiction to periods that are defined by civil unrest as well. However, are these hypotheses still relevant in our late capitalist societies? Is utopian fiction even being produced today? The short answer regarding both questions is no. Furthermore, these contradicting views fail to give a sufficient explanation relating to the large number of dystopian and anti-utopian works of fiction that are currently very popular. This raises a series of important questions: When do these works of fiction appear? What is their main function? And, finally, what is their social and political impact? I believe that these two subgenres are in a struggle. Anti-utopian fiction maintains that there is no alternative to our current socioeconomic system and supports the ruling-class hegemony, whereas dystopian fiction hints at the potential of a better future and, in spite of its outwardly pessimistic character, is in reality counter hegemonic in nature. Consequently, Italian political theorist, journalist,



and politician Antonio Gramsci can provide a much-needed clarification with his concept of hegemony and its function within civil society.

## **World Literature and Transformation of the Peripheral Novel**

**Kfir Cohen Lustig (The Van Leer Jerusalem Institute)**

I offer here a concept of modern world literature based on the development of capitalism both in Western Europe/US and the periphery. I first discuss the strengths and limits of Franco Moretti and Pascale Casanovas models and then offer a new approach based on Jameson and Moishe Postone that can take into account globalization and the neoliberal shift. I argue that in order to understand the political valence of literary artworks on the periphery, specifically the novel, as well as periodize their transformation over time, we need work with a two tier model: the first tier historicizes the broad historical structures of capitalist development and conceives of them as a limit that shapes political responses in the literary field. The second tier attends to the transformations within the literary field and accounts for the history of dominant forms within a given historical period. Following Moretti, Jameson and Schwarz, the conception here agrees that the forms of the novel on the periphery, prior to the 1980s, stem from the imbalance between the imported European/American literary forms and local materials but it makes two additional claims: first, the imbalance has to do with the intersection of two different concepts of freedom and autonomy one imported, the other local through which novels try to think local political questions. Second, such imbalances disappear with the neoliberal shift. Examples will be given from Israeli and Palestinian literatures.

## **Subaltern Sounds: Music, Racism, and Reclamation of the Commons**

**Alexander Billet (Locust Arts & Letters Collective (LALC); Critical Irrealism Group (CIG))**

How do the exploited and oppressed grasp the tension between Being and Becoming? Is it possible, in the geographic confines of slowly unfolding apocalypse, to map a freer and more democratic future in urban space? What practical role, if any, is there for the arts in mediating this gap? This paper will build upon research and writing previously presented at Historical Materialism on the role of music in the reclamation of the commons, while focusing in particular on how colonialism, forced migration, and racial segregation have forged this role. Using the work of Mark Abel as a starting point, contemporary musical expression will be understood first as aestheticization of time and therefore as a product of the temporal experience specifically generated by industrial capitalism. The paper will interrogate Abels thesis, however, in asking how shifts in work and cultural production over the past forty years (casualization of employment, do what you love, etc.) have further shaped the musical expression in the context of everyday struggles against dispossession. Focusing primarily on the height of the Movement for Black Lives in the United States, songs examined will include Run the Jewels Early, Moor Mothers Creation Myth, Alright by

Kendrick Lamar, and Knees On the Ground by experimental rap group clipping. Sources will include, in addition to Abels Groove: An Aesthetic of Measured Time, Amiri Barakas Blues People, David Harveys The Condition of Postmodernity, Frances Straceys Constructed Situations and others.

## **“Yeh toh aam baat hai”: Migrant construction workers, informality and the right to the city in Delhi**

**Debolina Majumder (University of Cambridge)**

This paper discusses the preliminary findings from five months of fieldwork conducted with informally-employed migrant construction workers of varying skill levels living in different settlements in Delhi, India between February to July 2019. The data, which relies on oral history methods and in-depth interviews with workers to trace their experiences of (dis)settlement and (un)employment alongside Delhis contemporary urban history, not only reveals living narratives of internal migration, wage theft, debt, homelessness, and eviction in the megacity, but also speaks more broadly to the ways in which informality in living and working conditions materially coincide. This is felt for instance in the subjectification of unskilled migrant workers as largely disposable and replaceable elements in the production process and in the abstract devaluation of the work they perform, as well the resulting sense of overwhelming powerlessness they voice when faced with the question of self-organisation within building-sites and spaces of daily recruitment such as labourhawks. Alternately, it is also showcased in the practices of labour organizing and in the mainstream labour rights campaigns which emerged in the early days of the construction workers struggle in Delhi and began drawing attention to the social composition of migrant workers within the city by focusing on matters of housing and welfare alongside struggles for employment security.

## **The Corporation, Law and Capitalism**

**Grietje Baars (City, University of London) Honor Brabazon (University of Toronto) Tor Krever (Warwick University) Maa Pal (Oxford Brookes University) Robert Knox (University of Liverpool)**

Book Presentation by Grietje Baars with as discussants: Maia Pal, Honor Brabazon, Tor Krever and hopefully also Rob Knox (tbc).<https://brill.com/view/title/31854?lang=en>In The Corporation, Law and Capitalism, Baars offers a radical Marxist perspective on the role of law in the global political economy. Closing a major gap in historical-materialist scholarship, they demonstrate how the corporation, capitalisms main engine from city-state and colonial times to the present multinational, is a masterpiece of legal technology. The symbiosis between law and capital becomes acutely apparent in the question of corporate accountability. Baars provides a detailed analysis of corporate human rights and war crimes trials, from the Nuremberg industrialists trials to current efforts. The book

shows that precisely because of laws relationship to capital, law cannot prevent or remedy the externalities produced by corporate capitalism. This realisation will generate the space required to formulate a different answer to the question of the corporation, and to global corporate capitalism more broadly, outside of the law.

## **The Political Economy of Social Movements**

**Jeff Goodwin (New York University)**

This paper reviews the myriad ways in which capitalism matters for labor and other social movements. First, the dynamics of capitalism and its political effects matter enormously for what mainstream social movement theorists call political opportunities and indigenous organization as well as for cultural factors (framing, repertoires, ideology, emotions, etc.). Class struggle and class formation also matter crucially both for and within social movement organizations, all of which necessarily have a class politics or class habitus, including not just labor movements but also movements based on nationalism, race and ethnicity, sexual orientation, and gender identity and expression. The ways in which specific movements alternately engage in or eschew class conflict is central to their historical evolution.

## **Marx, Species Being and Ecology: Building an Environmentally Sustainable Post-Capitalist Society**

**Heather Brown (Westfield State University)**

Marx notes that to have one basis for life and another for science is a priori a lie. This, as we clearly see today is one of the bases for capitalist accumulation the expropriation of the communal activity of science for the purposes of capital. While many aspects of the eco-socialist movement have pointed to exactly this point, there has been less discussion on how to overcome this type of alienation. In fact, when post-capitalist society is discussed, it is often in terms of this same alienation, albeit with the needs of nature rightly given much greater emphasis. This, however, remains problematic as nature and humanity are still viewed abstractly as separate entities in conflict with each other. There is no ground for living in harmony than by sacrificing the needs of one to support the other. This is certainly the reality of today's capitalist world, but a post-capitalist society, if it is to be ecologically sustainable, this must fundamentally change. I argue that a return to Marx's concept of species being and his emphasis on reuniting nature, science, and humanity to serve the needs not only of human life, but all life, is an important element of theorizing any post-capitalist society.

## **Avoiding Climate Catastrophe: Discussing Deep Adaptation Agenda and Other Climate Solutions**

**Shandor Medeiros Tighe, Ren Casallas**

As we head towards an increasingly warming world, continued disasters will arise due to climate change. Marxist thought on the environment, focuses on the constant conflict between man and nature that capitalist social relations produce and reproduce. This conflict has led us to an almost certain climate collapse. Studies like the Hothouse Earth paper have alerted people to the magnitude of the current climate crisis. We will discuss a different form of thinking about climate collapse mapped out in Jim Bendells Deep Adaptation Agenda paper that can help mitigate damage caused by climate change. We will discuss the strengths and limitations of the Deep Adaptation Agenda and compare it to the different proposed solutions such as, the Green New Deal, Disaster Communism, and Eco-Socialism.

## **Treaty and the Critique of Political Economy**

**Rob Jackson (University of Alberta), Corey Snelgrove (University of British Columbia)**

On December 18, 2012 Idle No More activists held a Flash Mob Round Dance in the West Edmonton Mall. This celebratory tactic mobilized Indigenous and non-Indigenous people around calls to honour Indigenous sovereignty and protect the lands and water under threat by the Canadian governments environmental deregulation. Throughout the Idle No More Movement, the language of Treaty was central - accounting for the inherent rights of Indigenous nations to their lands and resources, while drawing attention to how the uneven developments of settler colonial capitalism undercut the possibility for meaningful Treaty recognition. Idle No Mores mobilization of Treaty discourse was soon taken up by the Liberal Party of Canada in its return to power in 2015. We see this as marking a shift in Canadian political and social thought away from the language of diversity, inclusion, and multiculturalism toward a recognition of Canada as a multinational federation. Yet, this shift is circumscribed in practice as treaty comes to be articulated to settler federalism and settler capitalism, and so the critique of both observable in the Idle No Mores articulation of treaty drops out: Indigenous nations are downgraded to the political status of municipalities, while their claims to nationhood are translated into distributive claims to rent from resource extraction rather than demands for decolonization. If theyre not commending this articulation, approaches to the study of treaty in Canadian political and social thought explain it away as just one more example of failed understanding. This is because settler colonial reification is theorized vertically rather than horizontally, where reification names a wrong relation to self disconnected from wrong social relations. Unable to explain the persistence of such misunderstandings where treaty can only be read transactionally as a contract to dispossession, suggests the need for a departure with existing approaches to the study of treaty, one that would connect settler colonial

reification to social relations. In this paper, we argue that a Marxian approach to settler colonialism allows just such a break with these transactional accounts of treaty in favour of one that understands treaty as expressing the need for a total transformation of settler colonial political economy. The first move of our paper will think with Indigenous critiques of the capitalist mode of production alongside Marx's characterization of the Trinity Formula in Volume III of Capital. Marx's writings at the end of Capital advance a nuanced theory of commodity fetishism that we argue poses a challenge to contemporary politics that reduces the severity of settler colonialism to a critique of its distributive results. Here we mobilize the Trinity Formula in our analysis of a 2018 Ontario Court decision, *Restoule v. Canada* (Attorney General) which dealt with the meaning of the Robinson-Huron Treaties in Ontario and ultimately, because of its mystification and naturalization of the capitalist mode of production, disfigured treaty visions of relationality into a claim to rent. In our second move we will turn to value-form theory to argue that the problem of land in settler colonial conditions provides an opportunity to think the grounded, racial dynamics of capital's mediation more precisely. In the context of intensifying bureaucratic, legal, and militant confrontations surrounding resource extraction in Canada, contemporary struggles over Indigenous sovereignty require an analytical shift away from the figuration of the worker-capitalist, a shift that re-opens analysis of the dynamic of the landlord relation. We are curious how this analytical shift might advance the insights of settler colonial studies focus on land while stretching value-form theory towards a more capacious account of the role of landed property and ground rent in an era of fictitious capital.

## **Thinking with Delinking: Race in Samir Amin's Global Revolutionary Framework**

**Edmund Hardy (Independent Researcher)**

This paper will draw out from Samir Amin's work a critique of race as it historically relates to global capitalism. It will piece together the ways in which Amin relates race to the polarisations of a global market entailing accumulation on a global scale. Amin directly addresses contemporary racialisation as a construction of Eurocentrism, and before this, as a result of subjective value produced by long distance trade in which production is out of sight and unseen labour is given a special character. Then it will outline how this understanding of race works in Amin's concept of decolonisation and socialist revolution which he terms delinking - pulling apart global capitalism and finding solidarity in a true universal. It will build on, question and develop Amin's ideas about the future here by relating them to the global theories of race found in the work of Denise Ferreira da Silva, Achille Mbembe and Patrick Wolfe.

## The Dialectics of Nature and Popular Consciousness Raising

Graham Jones

The original philosophical 'science' of dialectical materialism has been widely discredited in the west, largely due to its dogmatic application under the Soviet Union and its dismissal by Lukcs. This has left Marxism with a philosophical gap that makes dialogue with the natural sciences extremely limited. This is increasingly untenable where one of the primary struggles of our time centres around the environment. A number of thinkers on the left are calling for a re-evaluation. John Bellamy Foster has called for a return to the 'dialectics of nature'; Bertell Ollman and Helena Sheehan have stressed the scientific realist ontology that undergirds both Marx and Engel's work; and Richard Lewontin and Richard Levins have continued to take a dialectical approach to biology. Beyond improving dialogue with the natural sciences, bringing back a dialectical ontology can also open up possibilities for popular consciousness raising. Althusser's late work on 'philosophy for non-philosophers' and Mark Fisher's on 'acid communism' will be brought into dialogue to argue that philosophy can play a part both in puncturing neoliberal ideology to help to bring about revolution, and in the subsequent reproduction of a post-capitalist society. We do this not through a totalising philosophical system, but through accessible philosophical tools, that can allow philosophy to emerge out of workers' organising itself rather than being imposed by bourgeois intellectuals from above. Engels four 'laws of dialectics' provide a useful starting point for developing these popular tools. They are however problematic, and are in certain ways out of step with the contemporary sciences. However, the typical dismissal of 'bourgeois science' tends not to take into account the advances in complexity, chaos, and embodied cognitive sciences of the 20th and 21st century. These have enabled cross-disciplinary perspectives with an increasingly dialectical character, and which are creating their own forms of antagonism with classical reductionist ontology within scientific institutions. We can look to these comparatively dialectical sciences, and reframe Engels 'laws of dialectics' through their concepts such as emergence, entropy and autopoiesis. Where these sciences do acknowledge the political implications of their approach such as in climate crisis their responses tend towards the liberal, the reformist, and the ahistorical. Some key concepts of historical materialism will therefore be looked at through these updated laws of dialectics to show how they can bridge the remaining gap, and open up the potential for better Marxist dialogue with scientists.

## Co-research as a style of militancy

Gigi Roggero (Commonware)

Workers' inquiry is a very suggestive word. In the last 15-20 years it has been widely used, but we must note a disproportion between its evocation and its concrete realization. Therefore, it should be useful to retrace genealogy and method of workers' inquiry and co-research. Particularly, we'll begin from its contextualization in the experience of Italian operaismo in the Sixties, and the divergent practices between the workers' inquiry of the Panzieri's group and the co-research of the Alquati's group, intimately linked to the concept



of class composition. Following the experience and analysis by Alquati, we'll illustrate the different or misleading interpretations of the prefix co before the word research: it does not indicate a populist idea of horizontal equality between the conditions of workers and researchers, nor a sociological approach; instead, it emphasizes the militant practice, and the counter-use of scientific means. On this base, we can show the co-research as a political method, or it's better to say as a style of militancy. The question is: how is it possible to rethink the co-research after the end of the specific class composition of the Sixties, and in the deep changing of the space-time coordinates of work and production? In order to outline some answers, or at least traces, we will refer to concrete experiences of militant inquiry (for example, with the migrant workers of the logistic sector in the area of Emilia). To conclude, we will hypothesize some strategic political fields of co-research, following again the last elaborations by Alquati: particularly, the macro-field of the reproduction of human capacity.

## **The Partisan State: a gramscian theory for ecological transformation**

**Gicomo D'Alisa (Center of Social Study, University of Coimbra)**

This paper addresses a gap in degrowth scholarship: the lack of a theory of the state. Those who write about degrowth advocate radical policy and social change, but have no model to explain how, why and under what conditions such change could come about and what role the state would play in it. This is because they have no theory of what the state is, or when and why it changes. We review for the first time the Anglophone and Francophone literatures on state and degrowth and find both wanting. We propose a Gramscian theory of the state suitable for thinking about radical ecological transformation degrowthers propose, and show how this suits the degrowth literatures emphasis on both grassroots and institutional actions.

## **Post-Capitalist Politics and the Dying Away of Authority**

**Dan Swain (Czech University of Life Sciences and Czech Academy of Sciences)**

In Karl Marx's Theory of Revolution Vol. IV, Hal Draper suggests that "the dying away of the state can be viewed as one stage of the dying away of authority per se." Developing his criticism of Bakunin, Draper follows Engels in arguing first that revolutions are by definition authoritarian acts, even if they exercise a democratic authority from below, and that nature itself imposes a despotic kind of authority on production that cannot simply be wished away. Yet Draper also anticipates that this despotic authority can be democratised, restricted to the sphere in which it is required, and, as production itself is revolutionised, caused to die away. There is thus a striking ambivalence in Draper's account we must distinguish between different forms of authority and there is nothing wrong with authority in general; but we might nonetheless anticipate its disappearance in the long term. This paper takes Draper's formulation as a starting point to reflect on questions of the nature of post-capitalist politics and post-revolutionary politics, focusing on two broad themes: First,

the relationship between political and technical authority suggested by this formulation. If the democratisation of authority is a stage in its dying away, then does this entail the dying away of democracy too? If so, how do we imagine its replacement? Second, the notion of revolution as an authoritarian act that sets in train the dissolution of authority. In what sense is revolution authoritarian, and how might it be organised so as to undermine even the authority it claims? What attitudes and practices are necessary to instantiate and realise this authority in disappearance (both before, after and during revolution(s))? Might, in this context, Drapers ambivalence be productive, rather than contradictory? These questions connect to broader debates about the nature of democratic and revolutionary politics, and the form a post-capitalist society might take. While Draper is correct to suggest that in some respects we are “peering into a dimmer future than we can possibly see”, some of these questions matter for the present, as well as the future.

## **Dada ist politisch: Afterlives of Dada**

**Paul Ingram (Birkbeck College, University of London)**

This paper traces the political afterlives of Dada in contemporary configurations of ideology. The political orientation of this historical avant-garde movement is first established through an overview covering manifestations in Zurich, Berlin, Cologne, Paris and New York. This reveals how Dadas political commitment varies in prominence, intensity and character, depending on the context and the individuals involved. It can nevertheless be situated broadly on the radical left, in the main vacillating between communist and anarchist tendencies. There is the occasional outlier, like the proto-fascist Julius Evola, who briefly operated under the banner of Dada in Italy, and has since been taken up as an intellectual figurehead by some sections of the far-right. Drawing on recent work by Theresa Papanikolas and David Ashford, I instead focus on the influence of Stirnerean anarcho-individualism on Dada, while noting the use of Friedrich Engels drawing of Max Stirner in memes originating on the anti-identity politics imageboard /leftypol/ on 8chan. In addition to these echoes in neofascist culture and related online communities, Dadas radical reconceptualization of aesthetic value arguably anticipates aspects of neoliberal economic theory. The extreme subjectivism implied by many of its experiments, displacing authorial control with an expanded role for the audience in the formation of meaning, may perhaps be read as analogous to the determination of marginal utility by the consumer. Further, Dadas self-reflexive critique of the institutionality of art discloses how this exchange is necessarily regulated by institutional mechanisms, just as the free market requires governmental and legal structures to guarantee its transactions. The movement consciously manipulates this dimension of art, and it is through these anti-artistic interventions that it enacts its most emphatic attacks on the status quo. The paper closes by considering whether, in the light of the continuities and correspondences with the current moment identified here, any critical potential now remains in Dadaist anti-art.

## **The Gig Worker and the Growth Machine: How Uber came to Toronto and why its still there**

**Fabian Namberger (Goldsmiths, University of London)**

In September 2014, Uber launched its UberX services in Toronto. Two months later, in November 2014, the city filed a suit against the tech-powered business giant, aiming to stop Ubers services until it obtained an official taxi licence. In July 2015, the Ontario Supreme Court decided against the city and in favour of Uber. Finally, on 3 May 2016, and in a remarkable turnaround from the citys earlier law suit efforts, Toronto city council legalised Ubers app-powered transport operations in what critical commentators named an outstandingly sweet deal for the enterprise (Valverde 2016). Since then Uber has not only opened one of its Advanced Technology Groups tech and research hubs in Toronto, it also held out a further \$200 million investment that would amount to 300 additional engineering and management jobs in the city. Building on in-depth empirical inquiry and drawing from long-existing research on urban growth machines and regime theory (Brenner 2019; Logan/Molotch 1987; Stone 1993), the question that this paper aims to answer is, how these fast and, in part, rather contradictory events can be accounted for. As I argue, more than the result of considerations having to do with Ubers transport operations as such, Uber-friendly regulations in Toronto and the companys continued presence in town must be seen in the context of local (but also multi-scalar) ambitions by political and economic elites to attract highly valued tech start-ups to the region and to foster the global visibility of an emerging, yet far from uncontested, smart city of Toronto (Keil 2017).

## **The two faces of uneven and combined development and the possibility for solidarity**

**Miris Meryem Kurtulmus (Marmara University, Visiting Researcher Sussex University)**

The Uneven and combined development theoretical framework can be used for both understanding the relocation -more generally internationalization- of production and, on the other hand, international labour migration. So the mobility process of both capital and labour can be analyzed as the two faces of the same process which creates competition between the workers. It is very important to put the material base of these two faces of uneven and combined development. By considering this we can make sounder conclusions to whether there is a possibility for solidarity between the workers of different countries in the case of relocation and/or between native and migrant workers in the case of international migration. Differing material conditions and priorities of workers suggest that solidarity between workers will not happen spontaneously. So we must ask what role Trade Unions play in nurturing solidarity between the workers, within and across the borders. Can Trade Unions make a contribution to realize workers of all nations unite? In this study we are going to ask this question and search for possible answers.

## World-Famines and World-Literature

**Sourit Bhattacharya (Indian Institute of Technology Roorkee, India)**

The nineteenth and twentieth centuries witnessed a number of devastating famines in the colonies of Ireland, India, South Africa, and Indonesia. These colonies were ruled by major European imperialist powers such as Britain and Holland. Historians such as Immanuel Wallerstein (1989) and Mike Davis (2000) have shown that many of these famines occurred because of the above-mentioned core European countries aggressive attempts to weaken the economic and interstate system of the peripheral colonies and to incorporate them into a capitalist world-system. Read as world-famines here, these disasters resulted in a rich and diverse body of literary and cultural works. These works, influenced strongly by mid-20thC Marxism, have registered in their content, style, and form the forceful imprints of the colonial and capitalist world-system as well as the politics and aesthetics of anti-colonial and anti-imperialist resistance. Part of a larger project that attempts to understand world-famines, world-ecology, and world-literature in the periphery, this paper will offer a brief reading from Bhabani Bhattacharyas novel, *So Many Hungers!* (1947). It will argue that the prescriptive nature of the content, the deeply analytical and didactic social realist style of writing, the melodramatic elements, and the stylistic inconsistencies in the work, for which it was heavily criticized after its publication, are integral parts of a disaster narrative that attempts to make sense of the fragmentary, traumatic, and cataclysmic reality of the immediate disastrous times. Drawing upon the recent works on world-literature, world-ecology, postcolonial studies, and cultural studies of disaster (Moore, 2003; Niblett, 2012; WReC, 2015; Carrigan 2015), I will contend that literary works of world-famines are world-literary in content and evince a heterogeneous realist form that may be read as disaster realism.

## Proletarian Ecology: Building an Environmental Politics for the Working Class

**Matt Huber (Department of Geography, Syracuse University)**

The classical definition of the proletariat is the mass of the population deprived of the means of production and forced to sell their labor for money to survive. In this paper, I argue the environmental movement has lacked a politics that can appeal to this classic proletarian class position. First, I argue a form of lifestyle environmentalism assumes commodity consumption causes ecological degradation because of its ecological or carbon footprint. Thus, a traditional working class politics of fighting for higher wages would become associated with higher footprints and ecological degradation. Lifestyle environmentalism is thus expressly anti-working class and calls for a politics of less consumption and austerity. Second, in more radical academic scholarship, a material interest in the environment has become associated with not lifestyle but livelihood environmentalism those communities who struggle with a direct, material (use-value) relationship with the environment (e.g. struggles over land, environmental justice struggles over contaminated water or air, etc.). A key finding of this research is that such

communities are often highly marginalized from capitalism as a whole through a variety of historically based class and racialized forms of oppression (e.g. peasant, indigenous, low-income racialized communities). Since a proletarian class position derives its livelihood mostly from money and commodities (exchange values), the mass of the population does not experience this kind of direct or use-value form of environmental struggle. Therefore, while livelihood environmentalism is a very important form of working class environmental politics it only has a narrow indeed, marginal political base. Building a working class environmental politics would require creating a political program that appeals to the great majority of society who especially under neoliberalism struggle to afford the very basics of existence like transport, food, energy and housing. Since the ecological and climate crisis is produced by the very industries that control working class needs (e.g. fossil fuels, automobiles, agribusiness, private electric utilities), a proletarian ecology could be built upon struggles over decommodification of these sectors. This politics would not only aim to give the working class more secure access to these basic needs, but also seek to take these industries under public ownership so that the production of can be oriented away from profit and toward ecological sanity.

## **Black ecology on the MOVE: towards a dialectic of revolutionary black environmentalism**

**Namara Burki**

On May 13th, 1985, a Pennsylvania State Police helicopter dropped two one-pound bombs unto the headquarters of the MOVE organization, killing eleven people, including five children and destroying over sixty houses in the inferno that ensued. This unique organization, constituted mainly by African-Americans, mixed revolutionary ideology of black liberation with a care for nature and the environment. With their slogan ON THE MOVE, members of the organization advocated for the love of Life and opposed the world system the government, the military, industry and big business. Due to their unconventional way of living, the organization was branded as a terrorist organization, its members were repeatedly harassed and imprisoned by the police, ultimately leading to the tragic events of May 13th. The object of this paper will thus be to analyze the strands of revolutionary thought that constituted MOVE, grounded in black ecology and the revolutionary fervor of black liberation movements of the 1970s, and to question the ways in which their resistance inscribed itself within a dialectic of revolutionary black environmentalism.

## **Trade war trade peace ?**

**Benjamin Brbaumer (Universit Paris 13)**

For more than one year the US and China are said to be involved in a trade war. This conflict caused considerable concern for firms and led to important debates on free trade and tariffs in times of global value chains. The Financial Times reports on the issue on a

daily basis. This paper offers to analyze the underlying conceptual framework that fundamentally suggests an opposition between public intervention and market mechanisms as the regulator of international trade flows. However, as will be underlined by referring to the deep economic integration debate (Bhagwati, 1992; Bhagwati et al., 1995; Lawrence, 1996), this opposition only provides only limited insight on contemporary world trade. In fact, even though higher tariff levels unquestionably represent bad news for free trade, low tariff levels nonetheless don't ensure the allegedly smooth circulation of commodities throughout national borders. In other words, before the trade war there was no trade peace. The absence of trade peace will be illustrated by drawing on the recent history of trade relations among two particularly close allies. Through a reading of transatlantic trade (1990-2016) informed by Joachim Hirschs contribution to state theory this paper argues that despite low tariff levels the trade relations between the EU and the US have been consistently conflict-ridden. This stems from the fact that once tariffs are removed from bilateral trade, other trade costs, so-called behind the border barriers such as diverging technical standards, remain and are likely to imply significant trade costs mediated by national institutions (OECD, 2005; UNCTAD, 2005). The removal of these trade costs is supposed to boost international trade flows but it also implies a distributional conflict. In the light of this contradiction the US and the EU have repeatedly attempted and failed to remove behind the border barriers. Bhagwati, J., 1992. Regionalism versus Multilateralism. *World Econ.* 15, 535-556. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9701.1992.tb00536.x> Bhagwati, J.N., Krueger, A.O., Research, A.E.I. for P.P., 1995. The dangerous drift to preferential trade agreements. AEI Press, Washington D. C. Lawrence, R.Z., 1996. Regionalism, Multilateralism, and Deeper Integration. Brookings Institution Press, Washington, D.C. OECD, 2005. Looking Beyond Tariffs (OECD Trade Policy Studies). UNCTAD, 2005. Methodologies, Classifications, Quantification and Development Impacts of Non-Tariff Barriers. UNCTAD, Geneva.

## **Karol Modzelewski, 1937-2019: a Marxist theorist for today**

### **Tomas Tengely-Evans (International Socialism Journal (ISJ))**

The Polish socialist Karol Modzelewski, who died in April, was a key figure in the opposition to the country's Communist regime. An appraisal of his theoretical contributions is important for Marxists and the left in Eastern Europe. Modzelewski was first radicalised by the Poznan Workers Uprising of 1956 when he was a student in Warsaw and played an important role in the 1980-81 rebellion led by the Solidarity union. And, unlike many of Solidarity's leaders, Modzelewski didn't become an advocate of free market shock therapy after the regimes fell in 1989. Not looking to the free market as an alternative flowed from his analysis of the old regime. Alongside Jacek Kuron, Modzelewski wrote in 1966 one of the best Marxist analyses of Stalinism to come out of the Eastern Bloc. Their Open Letter to the Party identified the Poland as a class society, where the class goal of its rulers was production for production sake, as Marx had identified in capitalism. The Open Letter also saw no alternative in Western class society to Polish Stalinist class society. This remains relevant for a left critique of society. The disintegration of the centre and polarisation doesn't just affect Western capitalism in North America and Europe. The former communist



states in Eastern Europe are in the throes of the same political crisis; however, the way this plays out is shaped under the shadow of Stalinism, by its overthrow in 1989, and the neoliberalism that followed. Alongside the growth of far right parties there have also been movements, for instance over abortion rights or corruption. Often missing is a Marxist critique of the old regimes, often labelled with the unsatisfactory term post-socialism. This can lead to being caught between defending elements of the old system or looking to the free market (for instance, the liberal Momentum movement, which has organised opposition to the Hungarian government). Modzelewskis contributions provides a way out of this trap.

## **Finding Utopian Hope in Late Capitalist Cynicism: a case for a 'Warm stream' of Marxism**

**Carlos Velasquez (PhD Student Social Cultural Analysis at Concordia University)**

The project of Envisioning Real Utopias was proposed by Erik Olin Wright (2008) as a means of overcoming our contemporary limitation to formulate future alternatives to capitalism. Advocating for a focus on the Way and not the Will[1], Wrights idea was that by mapping existing or achievable utopias (utopian institutions) we would move closer to what he called a state of radical democratic egalitarianism (p. 33). But, as a contradiction in itself, the idea of proposing real utopias is nothing more than a hampering of the utopian impulse. As non-places, utopias are fundamentally projections of what could be but still isnt. Their radical transformative value lies precisely in their impossibility, on their inexistence and, therefore, on the projection of a future that could come. Thus, once utopias are limited to the present, to a notion of achievability, their transformative power is removed. As Wright himself ends up showing through the examples present in his book, real utopian institutions exist and have existed for many years yet, the fact of their existence has not visibly helped to break our mental limitation to project a post capitalist future. On the contrary, their reality, their limitation to the present seems to be more of a burden on the utopian impulse than a guiding path. Hence, the lesson that we must take from Erik Olin Wrights work is that of returning our attention to the Will. In talking about the Will, the utopian will, we must, first, further develop Fredric Jamesons definitive diagnosis of our existing inability to imagine a world beyond capitalism. This means it is not just that we are unable to conceive of a post capitalist future but, also, that we lack the belief that such a future is impossible. It is as if capitalisms logic of abstraction not only restricted our ability to think historically but also pushed us into a state of absolute indifference and disbelief. Therefore, the utopian project must be one that not only allows us to historically map the dynamics that govern our existing social order, and thus enable us to envisage a future beyond them; but that through this mapping, moves us into believing that a non-capitalist future is possible. The importance that the Will plays in the formulation of utopian thought was identified by Ernst Bloch (2018: p.31). In his claim for a return of the utopian impulse, Bloch put forward the idea that historical materialism must be composed of both a Cold Stream and Warm Stream of Marxism. The first, refers to Marxisms rigorous scientific analysis of society, while the second points to the revolutionary passion to change the world, along with mans capacity for hope and for

dreaming ahead (Mardsen: 1989: p.34). In that sense, what Bloch proposes is that we not simply describe the contradictions of the present but that we identify the potential of a future within these contradictions. It is then, by focusing on these future potentials, by yearning for the Not-Yet-Present or the Not-Yet-In this World that a sentiment of hope and a revolutionary passion is awoken. Considering the aspirational and future oriented nature of Ernst Blochs arguments, Fredric Jameson proposes that we understand Blochs work, in part, as hermeneutics (1974: p.120). For Jameson, what Bloch is proposing is a form of reading that looks to generate both a critical and affective reaction to the world and, in doing so, pushes us to both hope for and believe in the potential for a different future, a non-capitalist one. Thus, it is by focusing on the expectation of what is to come, the genuine astonishment of the future, that exists in certain social manifestations and relations, that we break from the ahistorical logic of capitalist society. So then, the question of the utopian impulse becomes that of how to perform a Blochian reading of the world that effectively injects hope and believe into critical analysis? Put differently, if start from the idea that capitalism produces the conditions for its defeat, how do we approach these inherent contradictions in order to awaken a sentiment of hope and a revolutionary passion? To address these questions, this presentation would like to approach the issue of affect in contemporary cultural manifestations, or what Jameson has called the waning of affect (1991: p.10) as a possible expression of future potentials. This means that the objective of this intervention would be to read the issue of the waning of affect from a Blochian position in order to not only critically outline the historical conditions of this decline but also to unveil instances of hope in this state of diminished affect. To do so, this presentation will start by outlining the contemporary debates on the role that affect plays in postmodern society. Hence, following the work of Beverley Best and Fredric Jameson, this presentation will approach expressions of affect as manifestations of the logic of late capitalism and not as some sort of contentless intensity as understood by Brian Misumi (2002. p.26). From there, we will move on to delineating the fundamental elements of Ernst Blochs theory and his proposal for a resurgence of the utopian impulse. Essentially, we will focus on the importance of the claim for an incorporation of a Warms Stream of Marxism into critical analysis, while, also, describing how feelings of astonishment and hope allow for the overcoming of late capitalist cynicism. Finally, this presentation looks to propose a return to Blochs speculative materialism in the hope that it is precisely through the revalidation of our believe and desire for change that we overcome the ahistorical abstractions and limitations of capitalist society.

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## Utopia for impossible times

Sarah Daynes (University of North Carolina Greensboro)

We all know that one of the most problematic issues in politics, and especially in revolutionary or alternative politics, has to do not just with political commitment, but with sustaining it towards as well as beyond the exaltation of the revolutionary moment, during long periods of tedious administration of daily life. Life is so slow hope so violent goes Apollinares poem. This emotional intensity of utopian thinking needs not be exclusively tied to the revolutionary moment, however. I will explore ways in which utopia can be understood as an emotional context akin to a reservoir of emotions capable (and perhaps necessary for) of sustaining and/or revitalizing political commitment. Joy as an act of resistance, sadness as rebellion, love as political, hope as a passion for the possible as emotional atmosphere, utopia is what makes a critical examination of the present possible, beyond technocratic tinkering and dream imagined both. Subsequently we might also interrogate whether this emotional context actually makes political action possible. In recent years there has been several attempts to redefine utopia as something that is real either by assimilating it to reform, or by seeing it in a variety of already existing, everyday, counter-hegemonic practices. In other words, utopia has been pragmatized. It comes as no surprise, as we have also seen a general resurgence of pragmatism in social theory, in politics, and in everyday life alike. And so for instance Erik Olin Wright opposes what he calls real utopias to fantasies the latter, he argues, are counterproductive to leftist politics, since what we need right now, according to him, are hard-nosed proposals for pragmatically improving our institutions rather than dreams to indulge in. Others have argued that utopia should be defined as a process, a way of thinking, a method of analysis, or a practice something that's done, something that's attainable, something even that's already attained pulling what's possible or potential into the present. For sure utopia is not best understood as the dream itself (e.g. the imagination/representation of another world), but neither is it about dreaming per se. Rather, it might be better to think of it as the belief in the possible realization of the dream. In that sense, there is a realist inflection in utopian thinking although the real here is vastly different from what we would find in technocratic policy making. But at the same time it means that utopian thinking gains its vitality (and with it its potential to influence and even provoke concrete action) from its potential, rather than from its realization. (and by potential here, I do not mean its feasibility or its likelihood, but rather its imagined existence, able to hold the present, as it were, in its potential to be actualized). In fact I'll go farther and argue that utopia is neither content nor a process, nor even a belief rather it is an atmosphere that enables imagination and makes it possible to question the present. This is not to say that, to use Peter Frases words, politics in impossible times do not require or need practical, implementable, realistic policy proposals; but such pragmatic appeal should not (or cannot) be both goal and means. People do not get together and act collectively because of, or through, discussions of the administration of things; they do so because they believe in something that transcends their individual experience in the present. This belief might be rooted in an idealized past (used as a detour towards the future, as Michael Lowy would argue about romanticism), in a painful present, or in a dreamed future; it can be infused by pessimism, or even melancholia, by the fear of a catastrophe thought inevitable, or on the contrary in an

unshakable trust in the better that is yet to come. But there is always an emotional context to political action without it, there is only technical administration. What are the practical implications of such a theoretical discussion? We can think of this in different terms in terms of goals and the means to reach them. Robert Brenner and others for instance have argued that the outcomes of a revolutionary stance have historically been social democratic; and so we could equate utopia with asking it all, pragmatism with asking for some: ask for all, achieve some. Participating in social democracy the pragmatist politics of reform through policy (through, for instance, electoral politics) as a mean to an end is something that we have done many times. But pragmatic thinking never gets the goods. Asking for everything implies taking a leap, and this in turn can only happen if tapping into the intense emotions of utopian thinking: taking a leap is risky, insofar as it requires a full commitment from us, be it because we strike, or protest, or fight. Electoral politics, on the other hand, do not require any commitment on the part of individuals; they are safe, and can be entered and exited at will. Perhaps the only risk comes from the bumper sticker on your car, or public electoral records. In other words, utopian thinking compromises us and perhaps we could argue here that, in that sense, there is no political action more real, since it marks the human body by putting it on the line. The puzzling electoral results of the French radical left in the past few years might well be an example of such plasticity of electoral politics: a historic 11.03% of the votes for La France Insoumise in the first round of the 2017 elections was followed by a disappointing 6.31% in the 2019 elections. (even though of course presidential, legislative, and european elections are vastly different in the French context, both in terms of abstention and demographics). I will explore these issues in link with their practical implications, in the present context (in particular attempting to expand on Frases idea of impossible times), in an attempt to discuss the question of whether utopian horizons are especially important to revolutionary struggles now.

## **Climate Leviathan:**

**Joel D Wainwright (Department of Geography Ohio State University Columbus, OH 43210 USA)**

This session is devoted to a discussion of Wainwright and Mann, *Climate Leviathan: A Political Theory of Our Planetary Future*, published by Verso in 2018 (link:<https://www.versobooks.com/books/2545-climate-leviathan> ) (If the conference organizers are open to having a session on the book, I will be happy to help assemble the critics/readers.)

## **The ‘non-sovereignty’ of communist politics**

**William Searby (Revolutionary Socialism in the 21st Century - rs21)**

The concept of sovereignty sits broadly within what we might consider, in Gramscian terms, as a war of position, concerning the claims and interests of existing hegemonic blocs and social constituencies. Within a political strategy, we might in this way conceive of

sovereignty as the pole of stasis. However, the practice of proletarian politics has always ultimately entailed an address not to the interests of pre-given social constituencies and their sovereign agency, but to aleatory subject positions as the effects of social transformation. I will argue that Marxism implies a consistent rupture in the field of political sovereignty in the fact of registering the effects of class antagonism; and in turn this rupture re-frames the problematic of sovereignty into a topography of relations of force. Without sufficient theoretical interrogation, stasis turns to paralysis, and I will argue that sovereignty is a necessary, but strictly depoliticised moment in the constitution of political struggle. Whilst this thesis is stark, and potentially one-sided, I will attempt to seriously explore the potential consequences of a 'non-sovereign politics' by tracing the epistemological threads of sovereignty on the level of individual agency, political representation, and historicity, by opposing Gramsci's conception of hegemony as 'national-popular' will to Althusser's conception of ideology as unconscious interpellation. I will argue that ultimately opposing the stasis of sovereignty is the absolute precondition of politicisation and I will attempt to demonstrate this with reference to a Lacanian psychoanalytic framework and in reference to the thesis of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat in the works of Marx and Lenin.

## **A “reproduo social” no feminismo marxista contemporneo e a “reproduo das relaes sociais de produo” em Henri Lefebvre: uma aproximao entre a teoria feminista e a teoria crtica urbana**

**Carolina Freitas (Universidade de So Paulo)**

O artigo tem como objetivo traar similaridades e correspondncias entre a contribuio recente do feminismo marxista, reivindicada por suas autoras como “teoria da reproduo social”, e o conceito de “reproduo das relaes sociais de produo”, desenvolvido pelo terico francs da produo do espao urbano Henri Lefebvre. Embora no haja anlises que vinculem as duas percepes, o trabalho criado por Lefebvre nos anos 70 relevante no sentido que

## **Marx, the Critique of Politics and the Crisis of Marxism**

**Darren Roso (Socialist Alternative (Australia))**

This paper will explore the nature of Marx's critique of politics while thinking through the possible responses to the so-called crisis of Marxism of the late 1970s in Europe. Through the old question of whether or not Marxism can think politics conceptually I will explore the immanent tensions within Marxism itself, by working through Marxism's relation to early modern political thought. I hope to win clarity with respect to the specificity of Marx's endeavour for emancipatory politics today.

# **Brazilian Indigenous Peoples Rights and Natural Environment Under Threat: Reflections on the Possible Impacts of Far-Right Populisms Empowerment in Brazil**

**Julia Bittencourt Costa Moreira (Lund University)**

Indigenous peoples and natural environment in Brazil share a history of subjection to the economic interests of those in power, a condition that tragically resulted in the killing of thousands indigenous individuals and in unprecedented destruction of the Amazon during the military dictatorial regime (1964-1985). Now, as Jair Bolsonaro, who openly praises the dictatorship, is elected as president amid a global trend of empowerment of the far-right, the future of both indigenous right and ecological balance are eminently and mutually concerning. In light of the above, this paper aims to provide a review of historical records in Brazil in order to identify worldviews, projects, and discourses that justified environmental degradation and violations of indigenous rights since the military regime of 1964, highlighting the continuities observable until this day. Additionally, recognizing the crucial political difference between a regime that takes power by force and a president that was democratically elected, this research provides a contextualization of the current global context of empowerment of the far-right populism. Further, it makes a specific and brief comparison between Donald Trump in the United States of America and Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil to outline the risk both leaders represent to environmental and indigenous struggles. Finally, as indigenous lands are proven to prompt natural conservation, the risk of regressions in indigenous rights does not only concern human rights activists, but also environmentalists and climate activists all over the world. Importantly, combined with severe deterioration of environmental legislation as well as disregard towards climate mitigation efforts that tend to occur under the rule of far-right leaders, the empowerment of far-right populism in the country that controls over 60% of the world's greatest rain forest is a vital matter for the whole international community.

## **Do we need a theoretical discussion of sovereignty right now?**

**Megan Hoetger (University of California, Berkeley)**

The short answer to the titular question my paper proposes is: No, we do not. In posing such a question and answer Do we need a theoretical discussion of sovereignty right now? pushes back against the separation of race and capital and rethinking sovereignty as different streams of thought. Theories of sovereignty, I argue, will not break apart the alliances being formed among Far Right and fascist-populist parties in the aftermath of the recent EU parliamentary elections. Holding these coalitions together, across their divergent nationalist understandings of sovereignty, are Islamophobia and anti-blackness. We know this; and this is not a theoretical problem, it is a historical one. There exists an enormous body of literature in critical race theory, in colonial and post-colonial studies, and in black feminist thought, which has examined the centrality of empire to modernity, to the nation-state, to global capitalism; but this material is by and large treated as a separate set of



issues from the class concerns that continue to dominate in prevailing strands of Marxist thought much like race and capital is here treated as separate from rethinking sovereignty. The perpetual avoidance of discussing this literature and these histories in the European political imaginary and not just in terms of a contemporary migrant crisis, as if communities of color do not exist (and have not long existed) in Europe as documented citizens that understand themselves to be European, French, Belgian, German, Italian, Austrian, Hungarian, Czech, Estonian, and so forth is a failure across the political spectrum; a failure that the Far Right is mobilizing. We need to talk about sovereignty as it has been and is being formulated in relation to race, racism, colonialism, assimilation politics, and white supremacy. Starting from these historical conditions and processes as at the center of formulations of sovereignty underway at the present moment is the only possibility I see, not just to combat the rise of fascisms, but also to combat capitalist centrism.

## **Disaster in Crisis. Self-organization, Logistics and Social Reproduction during Hurricane Harvey**

**Peer Illner (Goethe University, Frankfurt am Main)**

My paper examines American disaster relief as a problem for social reproduction. It maps recent reforms in US disaster aid onto the economic crisis of the 1970s, arguing that reductions in state-spending on disasters have significantly heightened the pressures on communities to self-organise relief activities during calamities. This has opened up disasters as a key arena for social reproduction struggles, in which the disaster communism of the people faces off extinction capitalism in its terminal stage. My paper dramatizes this conflict through the case study of the American Black Cross, a self-organized relief initiative, launched by Black Lives Matter in response to the 2017 Hurricane Harvey. It firstly discusses the Black Cross resounding success at providing a highly politicised form of disaster relief that combined technical efficacy with the radical structural critique of Black Lives Matter. Subsequently, the study problematises a key element of the Black Cross organisational structure, whose operational model was based on the sharing economy and relied on logistics companies like Amazon to cut out the middle man and create autonomy from the state. Finally, the case study criticises the role of the market in the bad dialectic between the state and social movements, in which market solutions are increasingly summoned to generate opposition to the state during disasters.

## **Expropriate Everything**

**Jacob Blumenfeld (Freie Universität Berlin)**

Real estate is the preeminent form of wealth today, it is our gold. Whoever owns the property title, reaps an exclusive return from the labor, value and speculation on that land. Since property rights are inherited, that wealth is inherited too. But property wealth is not just passed on to the next generation, it is used as the basis for more accumulation, more expansion, more wealth. In a capitalist economy, the purpose of owning a home, house,

building, apartment, or land is neither the need it serves nor the use it has but the value it represents. With a global housing crisis, skyrocketing rents, and real estate capital more powerful than ever, the property question has returned with a vengeance. In Berlin, a new struggle has emerged to expropriate and socialize the city's largest profit-oriented property owners, or mega-landlords. In this talk, I will discuss the potentials and limits of expropriation as a means for overcoming the power of private property today. In so doing, I will also touch upon contemporary justifications of private property rights, Marx's and Marxist understanding of property and expropriation, and the very intelligibility of property relations in a rapidly warming world.

## **Early social reproduction theory: Critique of capitalism and bourgeois feminism**

**Ankica Cakardic (Faculty for Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb.)**

Socialist women from the end of 19th and the beginning of 20th century mainly gathered around the Second International based their universal political demands on socio-economic foundations, with a full understanding of the interconnection between the process of exploitation at work place and oppression that arises in household sphere. Unlike bourgeois feminism of that time which, by its lobbying for equal rights, reinforced itself on the basis of gender oppression of the higher classes, socialist feminism rejected the idea of struggle whose foundations were not centred around class relations and the critique of capitalism. Among women socialists, four theorists and revolutionaries stood out who strongly addressed the relations of class and reproductive labour in the context of the capitalist mode of production: Clara Zetkin, Rosa Luxemburg, Nadezhda Konstantinovna Krupskaya and Alexandra Kollontai. Their conclusions should certainly be interpreted as early social reproduction theory and we will attempt to illustrate that. If we want to provide an overview of the continuous theoretical lineage of Marxist feminism as a critique that extends over a period from the nineteenth-century, via the twentieth-century, onto recent theoretical enquiries and into the problem of social reproduction, we would use Zetkin, Luxemburg, Krupskaya, and Kollontai as our points of departure.

## **Rotten Edens: Plantations, Palms and Palaces in Modern Britain and Beyond**

**Esthie Hugo (UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK)**

African Oil Palm products played an essential role in the development of modern capitalism. In Victorian England, African palm oil was used to lubricate the railways as well as in the production of tinsplate, margarine, and household cleaning products. The plants, native to West Africa, were also placed on display in spectacular palm houses, such as the Palm House at Kew Gardens, where they stood as testament to the enduring power of

empire. Such was the impact of palm oil in forming modern British culture and consumer society that historians have termed palm oil the quintessential commodity of the era of so-called legitimate trade (Lynn, 1996; Corley and Tinker, 2003). As these scholars suggest, it was the growth in the palm oil market which ensured that there was a profitable and thriving alternative trade immediately available in the aftermath of British slavery. Keen to meet the rise in consumer demand, British colonial agents began to cultivate a series of industrial-scale palm plantation blocs in Nigeria and what was then the Belgian Congo, marking the beginning of a transformation in the global palm oil business that has reached far into the present moment. Today, palm oil is in virtually everything we consume, from cosmetic products such as shampoo and lipstick through to processed foods, packaged bread, and biodiesel. Meanwhile, West Africa, once home to one-fifth of the world's tropical rainforests, has had up to ninety percent of its coastal rainforest felled to clear land for the industrial cultivation of the African Oil Palm. This paper looks to investigate the historical interplay between botany and economics through a comparative examination of the Palm House at Kew and the Oil Palm Exhibit at The Cornwall Eden Project. The aim here is to furnish a deeper understanding of the collision of global capitalism with nature, and the social operations which facilitate this encounter. To do so, I take my cue from recent scholarship that has sought to reformulate the Capitalocene through the Age of the Plantation (Tsing, 2016), thus insisting that the current global ecological crisis cannot be decoupled from the histories of slavery, colonisation and capitalism. I suggest that the Oil Palm Exhibit and The Palm House may be viewed as legible surfaces upon which the extractive histories of capital can be read, and thereby illuminate the developments in our past that continue to shape the contemporary global environment.

## A Marxist Theory of Extinction

Troy Vettese (Harvard University)

This essay presents a framework for understanding why capitalism extinguishes many more species than other social forms. It begins with a critique of the standard framework, the 'tragedy of the commons', by Garrett Hardin, which is not only ahistorical but also predicated on genocidal racism. This should not be surprising as Hardin did not hide his fascist leanings, even if mainstream environmentalists have tried to overlook them. My framework begins with a pre-capitalist stage of relations with nature, where it makes no sense to over-hunt as it would not be worth the effort and one could not longer benefit from future use of the species. A capitalist then begins to formally subsume a people within a broader world market, like the early fur trade. As surplus value can only be increased absolutely, more hunters are employed or they work longer hours. A species then could be extinguished, or brought to the brink. At which point there may be an effort to shift to real subsumption by controlling the life process of the creature. It is then possible to increase relative surplus value by increasing productivity. This process can be extended quite far, whether through genetic engineering or mechanised feeding, etc. Real subsumption, however, concentrates natural flows and resources, which then likely will put pressure on other biomes and threaten other. For example, fishmeal for fish farms. Also, not all creatures can undergo real subsumption, say, because they do not reproduce in captivity.

Thus, there can be hybrid forms of subsumption, where only part of the economic relation is subsumed, such as industrialised trawling on the high seas, which only quickens the pace of extinction.

## **Internationalization of Capital and the Customs Union between Turkey and the EU**

**Ekmel SAYIL (Middle East Technical University)**

Customs Union between Turkey and the EU was established in 1996. It can be considered as the final step of a set of economic agreements (namely the Ankara Agreement in 1963 and the Additional Protocol signed in 1971) in which tariffs on the trade of certain goods and trade quotas were gradually reduced. With the CU, trade tariffs were minimized on both sides (few sectors in industry, services and agricultural products were excluded) and Turkey became part of the Common Customs Tariffs. Despite the exclusion of agricultural products and services, the CU is an important decision in Turkey's economic integration with the EU, having important political (and) economic implications. Apart from the neo-liberal and/or institutionalist perspectives that favour the policy anchor role of the EU in Turkey's policy-making processes, on the part of the Turkish left-nationalism or left-Kemalism, the CU between Turkey and EU has been interpreted in terms of Turkey's one-sided loss of economic and political sovereignty. Criticisms to the agreement put forward that the CU has limited the policy space of Turkey both in the conduct of the foreign economic relations and/or its broader developmental efforts including industrialization. The criticisms from the left-nationalist ideology in Turkey comes from two different aspects: i) the fact that Turkey abides by EU's foreign trade agreements with 3rd parties with the implementation of Common Customs Tariffs ii) Turkey doesn't have any say at the decision making of EU's foreign economic relations. The solution proposed however, varies. It is either Turkey's accession to EU as she obtains a say in trade agreements of the EU, the CU turning into a Free Trade Agreement as Turkey does not have to abide by common tariffs in that case, or, in more radical accounts, Turkey becomes part of a Eurasian geopolitical camp by abandoning ties with the Atlantic, therefore with the EU and the CU. Despite the discussion whether Turkey should completely cut ties with the EU as one of the actors of neoliberal capitalist globalization or whether it is only the asymmetrical nature of the relation between parties that needs to be figured out, a common point despite the differences is celebration of the reclaim of the independence and sovereignty of the nation-state in Turkey and its reclaim of domestic and foreign policy space. However, again from a critical/Marxist perspective, one could oppose these criticisms and argue that in these accounts, competitiveness of the nation-state is taken as given and the CU is criticized, in essence, as it prevents Turkey from competing in world-market on an equal footing. Furthermore, one could bring forward the problematic domestic-external juxtaposition, with the corollary of conceptualizing the relationship between globalization and the nation state as a zero-sum relationship and argue that, dynamic, transformative comprehension of capitalist social relations and the class dynamics of late-development in the Turkish context is ignored in left-Kemalist criticisms. Paper, which is also my PhD research project at preliminary stages, will try to accord with the second argument and argue that there are

limits in defending the progressiveness of the reclaim of national sovereignty as it seems to ignore the essentially capitalist nature of imperialism and with it, the class aspect of developmentalism, even in accounts that propose de-linking from the EU. Instead, I will try to locate the CU in the internationalization of capital in Turkey, the development of the domestic bourgeoisie and its articulation with the global accumulation circuits as well as its role in transformation of the trade policy regime in Turkey. This will correspond to a re-visit of different conceptualizations of the Turkish state in particular and capitalism in general of different accounts within the Turkish left. At a time when the CU is to be updated via negotiations and extended to agricultural products, services and public procurement despite the global surge towards economic protectionism, it seems timely to bring back in an historical and critical perspective to discuss the progressive potential of different critical theoretical contributions via this specific case.

## **Panel: Theorising the Marxist Animal**

**Troy Vettese (Harvard University), Andr Krebber (University of Kassel) Ken Fish (University of Winnipeg) Dominic O'Key (University of Leeds)**

The purpose of this panel is to apply the insights of Marxist theory to better understand the status of animals in capitalist society. Troy Vettese, 'A Marxist Theory of Extinction' This essay presents a framework for understanding why capitalism extinguishes many more species than other social forms. It begins with a critique of the standard framework, the 'tragedy of the commons', by Garrett Hardin, which is not only ahistorical but also predicated on genocidal racism. This should not be surprising as Hardin did not hide his fascist leanings, even if mainstream environmentalists have tried to overlooked them. My framework begins with a pre-capitalist stage of relations with nature, where it makes no sense to over-hunt as it would not be worth the effort and one could not longer benefit from future use of the species. A capitalist then begins to formally subsume a people within a broader world market, like the early fur trade. As surplus value can only be increased absolutely, more hunters are employed or they work longer hours. A species then could be extinguished, or brought to the brink. At which point there may be an effort to shift to real subsumption by controlling the life process of the creature. It is then possible to increase relative surplus value by increasing productivity. This process can be extended quite far, whether through genetic engineering or mechanised feeding, etc. Real subsumption, however, concentrates natural flows and resources, which then likely will put pressure on other biomes and threaten other. For example, fishmeal for fish farms. Also, not all creatures can undergo real subsumption, say, because they do not reproduce in captivity. Thus, there can be hybrid forms of subsumption, where only part of the economic relation is subsumed, such as industrialised trawling on the high seas, which only quickens the pace of extinction. Andr Krebber, 'Breaking the Spell of Identity: Animals and the End of Capitalism' Much has been made out of the dire environmental situation we are finding ourselves in, from capitalism spelling the end of nature to history spelling the end of capitalism. Indeed of (re-)instating paradisiacal circumstances, the large scale and penetrating appropriation of natural resources, made so much more potent by capitalist forces of production during the early days of modern times, appears to spell the end of

(human) history. Yet capitalism, reason and history have always been in cahoots to overthrow nature. What unites the exploitation of nature and capitalism is its focus on equivalency. Relying on an unlikely alliance with the first generation of critical theorists, the paper will argue that our current historical situation enables us to challenge the spell of identity by way of a confrontation with animals as monuments of nonidentity. By breaking the spell of identity, this confrontation rings the bell for capitalism as well as its underwriting drive to overthrow nature.

Ken Fish, 'Animal Alienation: Toward a Critical Humanism for non-Human'

The dominant interpretation of Marx's humanism precludes the possibility of a critical theory for animals. Central to this interpretation is the notion that, for Marx, the human essence is a self-consciousness that lies inside members of the species and becomes externalized in a world of objects, social relations, and ideological forms. Alienation is here conceptualized as a failure of self-recognition, where the human subject fails to recognize itself in the world it has made, and the role of critical theory is to analyze this alienation and articulate demands for its transcendence. Animals are excluded from such a theory insofar as they do not externalize their self-consciousness, and therefore cannot suffer alienation or make demands for its transcendence. The purpose of my paper is to outline an alternative interpretation of Marx's humanism, and to suggest its value for critical animal studies. I argue that the scientific humanism characteristic of Marx's later work creates the space necessary for developing a social theory attuned to the unique suffering experienced by animals in a capitalist mode of production. First, I contrast speculative and scientific forms of humanism, focusing specifically on the concepts of essence, alienation, and critique. Next, I demonstrate the ways in which scientific humanism allows us to theorize the unique alienation of non-human animals under capitalism and the ways in which this alienation is intertwined with the human self-alienation characteristic of wage-labour. I conclude that any critical social theory worthy of the name must not only seek to understand animal alienation and suffering, but must assist in the struggle for its transcendence.

Dominic O'Key, 'Against Neoliberal Veganism, a Veganism to Come'

Can we count veganism as a leftist strategy against capitalism's commodification of life? In this paper, I answer this question by making two simultaneous arguments. First, I historicise the recent mainstreamification of veganism within the paradigm of neoliberalism. I argue that in the west, the ascendant contemporary conceptions and practices of veganism are aligned with green capitalist economicsof consumer behaviour and dollar voting. But second, and against this, I look backward to Marx's early writings on capitalist production and industrialised agriculture, in order to then look forward to a communist veganism to come. Communist veganism, rather than indicating a privatised model of ethical consumption, would instead name a post-capitalist mode of production that calls time on the meat-industrial complex, the "meatification" of diets, and the staggering greenhouse gas emissions of factory farming. I suggest that this kind of veganism is not only foundational to a future green-red politics, but that it also rethinks capitalist social relations under which animals and nature are exploited as free gifts and private property. In this sense, communist veganism can function as one particular method for working towards what Marx called "the genuine resolution of the conflict between man and nature and between man and man."



## **Year One of Mexico's 'Fourth Transformation'**

**Colin Peter Mooers (Department of Politics and Public Administration Ryerson University Toronto, ON Canada M5B 2K3)**

This panel analyses the first year of the Lopez-Obrador governments *cuarta transformacin* or Fourth Transformation and its challenges for the Left. While the new government was elected with a strong progressive majority and has retained high levels of popular support opposition has emerged on two different fronts: Mexican elites, abetted by local and the international financial press, have begun openly campaigning to undermine the governments social and economic agenda to reverse the countrys extreme inequality, while ratings agencies like Fitch and Moodys have down-graded the national debt and that of Pemex, the national oil company. Meanwhile, the US and a coalition of right-wing regimes in Latin America, have been outraged by the Mexican governments refusal to back their coup attempts in Venezuela. At the same time, indigenous and campesino organizations have challenged from below government plans for large-scale economic development projects in the southern part of the country; the Zapatistas have argued that the Lopez-Obrador government has become hopelessly compromised and must be resisted. Based on extensive research, interviews and travel throughout Mexico before and after the presidential elections of 2018, we explore these contradictory challenges and how the Left might position itself in relation to the new government. Colin Mooers, Ph.D. Department of Politics and Public Administration Ryerson University, Toronto, ON  
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## **Eco-nihilism, eco-socialism, and eco-authoritarianism**

**Andrew Johnson (University of California Santa Barbara Political Science Department)**

Industrial capitalism is the cause of the impending ecological collapse. Regrettably, as businesses have intensified their destruction of vital non-renewable resources, undermining our capacity of sustainability, they have captured control of our political institutions and made social life structurally dependent upon their goods and services. Democracies have proven themselves incapable of solving collective action problems, informing or motivating publics, responding quickly or effectively, and, it is no stretch of the imagination, will represent the biggest obstacles to the immediate, large-scale transformations needed. Nancy Rosenblum establishes the political problem quite pertinently: The existential threat of global warming is too hard to grasp, emotionally and cognitively. We in high-consumption countries are warned of catastrophe if we just keep doing what have been doing, and that the changes required go beyond energy-saving lightbulbs. Global warming undercuts foundational assumptions of economic growth... And the method for addressing it discounting is beyond our ken. Given the current trajectory of world history, preventing species-extinction would entails a massive transformation of

values, a reconfiguration of the most basic habits of individual, social, and political life. Our enlightened liberal values (equality, democracy, liberty, the free market, bodily sovereignty, scientific progress, technological reliance, etc.) must be upended, all in the name of a nobler cause: species-preservation. Humans are incapable of the collective response necessary to prevent planetary destruction. Some argue that those without hope will succumb to anti-politics. This argument relies upon crude, unsubstantiated psychological assumptions and is not a political solution. The arguments summoned to combat pessimism belie the inefficacy of present-day post-democratic institutions. Our political institutions are more demons than saviors. In this paper I will explain and explore the rise of three difference approaches to the politics of climate change: eco-nihilism, eco-socialism, and eco-authoritarianism. The rise of eco-authoritarianism is most likely and is already happening. There is hope, demonstrated by the emergence of democratic socialism and the Green New Deal in the developed world, that eco-socialism is the only and best response to the rise of eco-authoritarianism. Recognizing a third option, eco-nihilism, will help us in the battle against eco-fascism. Far from discouraging political agency, an eco-nihilism approach is an attractive non-humanist alternative to the failures of our political institutions and the civilizing process.

## **Suburbia, a temporary ceasefire in the class struggle ?**

**Romain Venet (Architect from the architecture school of Saint-Etienne (FR), beside Xavier Wrona.)**

Suburbia, a temporary ceasefire in the class struggle? The right to the city in respect of the Yellow Vests movement. David Harvey argues that in order to allow for its social reproduction, the capitalist mode of production must condition the production of the urban environment in terms that are favourable to it (The New Imperialism, 2003 ;Le Capitalisme contre le droit la ville, 2011). In his book Paris, Capital of Modernity (2003), Harvey demonstrates that the haussmannization of Paris during the Second Empire was a violent expression of class struggle through the production of the built environment. But when looking at the history of the french suburban city, no sign of any such class segregation seems to have been present in its development since the suburban phenomenon apparently corresponds to the preference of the French people for a housing model: nearly 80% of them declare to be willing to live in a single family house. In other words, it would seem no one was forced to live in a suburban house. We will assume that for half a century, the production of the French suburban space has been the result of a tacit agreement that has the value of an armistice of the class struggle. This agreement was made possible by a temporary convergence of the interests of the various actors in the residential city. What is really at stake with the taking of the roundabouts by the Yellow Vests is precisely the breach of this tacit agreement, and by the same token, the return of antagonisms between producers and inhabitants of the suburban housing model. We will see that for nearly half a century, housing, urban and economical policies have been set up to allow even low-income families to become owners of their own individual homes in suburban areas, in exchange for their consent to waive their right to the city and their control on urbanization processes. This paper will attempt to present a study of the Yellow Vests movement from

this perspective, and we will try to see it as a critique of alienated urban life forms that are no longer accepted today.

## Salvaging “Utopias” in Contemporary Art

**Adam Turl (Red Wedge Magazine, University of Nevada-Las Vegas), Anupam Roy (Hochschule Luzern- Design & Kunst in Luzern, Switzerland) David Mabb (Reader in Art and Programme Leader MFA Fine Art (Studio Practice) at Goldsmiths University, London, UK.)**

The following papers aim to explore different strategies for salvaging the utopian impulse in contemporary art through three different studio art practices informed by socialism and Marxist theory. Medium Size Luxury Products David Mabb The ‘Medium Size Luxury Products’ are made from samples of a Bauhaus wallpaper book cut into squares and pasted onto square painted canvases framed with fragments of William Morris fabrics. The paintings squares exist in their composition midway between Kazimir Malevichs ‘Black Square’ and Josef Albers ‘Homage to the Square’, enabling the ‘Luxury Products’ to engage with a broad tradition of modernist painting. The squares, cut out of Bauhaus wallpaper rather than painted directly onto the canvas with oil paint, amalgamate fine art and decoration. This merging is reinforced by the Morris fabric frames. Each frame is made from a stitched patchwork of a single Morris pattern in different colourways and scales, giving the ‘Luxury Product’ a specific Morris context. There are 57 paintings in total, using all the different wallpaper samples from a Bauhaus wallpaper book. All the paintings are made using a simple breakdown of production, similar to craft production. They are all unique because of the juxtaposition of different materials, but they are made within the same format. The title and materials used in the work seeks to amplify the cross-over between painting and decoration/craft. Painting is now almost solely a decorative product for the wealthy, offering little of critical interest (challenging art is now more likely to be found in video and installation). However, that is not to say that it is totally without interest: it can be interesting in the same way that craft is interesting. In that sense the Luxury Products propose that art/craft should be considered together, acknowledging their economic position within a capitalist mode of production and distribution. This proposal would have certainly been understood by William Morris, who believed that quality craft production for all could only be achieved after the dismantling of capitalism. The Bauhaus quickly moved the other way, abandoning craft for design for capitalist mass production within the first couple of years of its existence (the painters kept their distance from these values by attempting to differentiate their work within metaphysical frameworks: Albers, Klee, Itten etc.). Some Bauhaus designers were able to produce quality products that reached large numbers of people, however this left the arts and crafts (‘Medium Size Luxury Products’) for the wealthy few. Born Again Labor Museum (BALM) Adam Turl BALM is an evolving memorial/installation to current and past generations of working-class lives oriented to a participatory working-class audience. This installation, which will eventually become a semi-permanent sited museum, will also serve as a space for community and cultural collaboration. In theology, apocatastasis refers to the

reconstitution of the primordial; the salvation of past souls. Walter Benjamin transposed the concept to a cultural Marxist framework; arguing the messianic (revolutionary) generation enacted a materialist apocatastasis the redemption of past generations of the exploited and oppressed. The working-title of this project, Born Again Labor Museum, inspired by Benjamin, mixes the classical Marxist schematic of living and dead labor (people and machines, etc.) with evangelical language. This project serves as an evolving memorial. In part, anthropomorphic art objects are based on creative or found texts about famous, unknown, historic, contemporary and fictional working-class subjects. These will conflate anachronistic populist and avant-garde gestures, borrowing tropes from folk/outsider art (paintings on tools, salvaged post-industrial materials), early zine/punk aesthetics, comics, Dada, surrealism, constructivism, arte povera, etc. The eventual museum and earlier iterations of the project will be open to community groups and used in collaboration with other artists. Exhibits would include interactive elements in which materials are distributed to visitors, and where visitors are invited to alter and produce art works. This will include irrealist Bible-tract like comics based on Marxist politics. A museum website is being created along with memes that mix the analog and digital. This will also include manifestations of the digital in analog space. For example, crafting three-dimensional pixels in conflict with art objects. The Impossibility of Representation and the Real Image Anupam Roy We have to search for the real image. So, for example, I've used the Venus of Willendorf in my work. For me, that image is a historical image, holding in a way the history of women's bodies. So, in my work, the Venus of Willendorf has a broken breast not to represent Nangeli (an Ezhava-lower caste woman, this is related to the Brahmanical imposition on the Dalit community where the women were not supposed to cover their breasts. Nangeli covered her breasts. When the tax collector came she cut off her breast and paid her taxes with it.) Rather, I try to capture the presence of her historical act. To understand the historical relevance of Nangeli or her particular subversive act, we have to understand that her individual assertion comes from the historical and collective consciousness. We are not going to use the same metaphors, the same kind of reality, which are used by the upper caste and the ruling class. We have to identify the real image if we really are with the people, on the people's side, then we can visualize and realize our image, and we don't have to bother about the superficial Brahmin-upper caste metaphors. Counter image, untimely image, true image can only come from the real people.

## Materialism of Suffering

**Lea Kuhar (A young research fellow at the Philosophical Institute, Scientific Research Centre, Slovenian Academy of Science and Arts (ZRC SAZU) PhD candidate at the Postgraduate School ZRC SAZU )**

The Italian philosopher Davide Tarizzo argues that in considering social phenomena, one can bring into focus either the way society works or the way society doesn't work. In the first case one adopts an operational approach, trying to grasp social phenomena with descriptive or normative analysis. In the second case one adopts a clinical approach, according to which the knowledge of the supposedly proper, normal functioning of society

is not needed since it suffices to acknowledge human suffering. In order to detect social illnesses, one does not need to know the secret of social health. On the contrary, as Adorno argued the need to lend a voice to suffering is a condition of all truth. On the presuppositions of the clinical approach, a different kind of materialism can emerge. Tarizzo describes it as the materialism of suffering, the materialism of social, political and historical disorders. Every theory that applies the clinical approach to social and political history is a critical theory. According to Tarizzo, there are at least three different paradigms of critical theory the Marxian, the Nietzschean and the Freudian. Each one of them displays a different understanding of truth and history and has a different stance towards ontology. In the Marxian paradigm, every social dysfunction manifests a social function. By analyzing the symptoms of social suffering one discovers the truth of history that is always stronger than its current illness for Marx the ultimate truth of society is communism, for Agamben inoperativity, for Negri the multitude, for Esposito it is life etc. In the Nietzschean paradigm, there is no truth or true orientation in history. Behind every social suffering one can discover only the deep sickness of the historical process itself. History is ruled solely by the logic of its own disintegration described by Adorno as negative dialectics, and as deconstruction by Derrida. In the Freudian paradigm history is perceived as a discontinuous series of truth fictions. Its main task is to deal with the truths that falsely present themselves as ontological truths and reveal them as clinical formations, as pathological-ontological fantasies. For Freudian critical theory, social and historical sufferings are always due to the decay of individual or collective historical truths. I want to challenge the distinction between these three paradigms, with a special emphasis on the distinction between the Marxian and Freudian paradigms. To do that I'll apply a clinical approach to the specific social phenomenon recently analyzed by Enzo Traverso as leftwing melancholia. I would like to argue that the case of leftwing melancholia can show how the discrepancy between the Marxian and Freudian paradigms is not as big as Tarizzo would have it. I'll argue that it is only by means given by Marx's critical theory that one can understand the phenomena of left-wing melancholia.

## **Degrowth and the Aporia of Utopia: Developing a Future-Oriented Vision of Social Wellbeing within Planetary Boundaries**

**Tomislav Medak (Centre for Post-Digital Cultures, Coventry University  
Multimedia Institute / MAMA, Zagreb)**

Post-capitalist imaginary is caught in a double bind of climate realism and political pragmatism. Climate realism cautions that there is no empirical evidence that the existing growth-oriented technocapitalist processes can be brought within planetary biophysical boundaries (Hickel & Kallis 2019). Political pragmatism cautions that we cannot easily decouple the existing organisation of social needs from the intensely technological world designed on the high throughput of energy and matter (Huber 2013). Accordingly, the utopian imaginaries of eco-socialist transition tend to polarise into opposing visions: accelerated eco-modernisation through socialisation and greening of the existing technological base or restorative slowdown through technological downscaling and radical

redefinition of social needs. The polarisation gives a deep relief of the aporia that haunts the imaginary of a transition to an environmentally sustainable and socially just post-capitalist world in the present: what needs to be done in socio-metabolic terms, might not be socially and politically practicable. In my paper I will discuss how the de-growth as a transitional framework is trying to grapple with this aporia by developing both concrete proposals of radical redistribution and concrete proposals of lowering throughput. First, I will situate the utopian politics of degrowth in the context of exhaustion of political imaginary in the post-socialist world, where it is easier to imagine the end of the world than the end of growth-based global capitalism (Jameson 2003). While socialism was built on future-oriented social development, one that was equitable but not sustainable, its demise entailed that we are left only with a capitalist realist common sense (Fisher 2009) where there is no alternative to a dominative social system that is neither oriented toward equality nor sustainability. The last three decades of liberal capitalism's uncontested hegemony have created enormous inequalities, failed to address poverty (Hickel 2018) and accelerated environmental degradation. In the wake of Great Recession, this has led to its legitimational crisis, which has first opened the door for contestations of its dominative structures based on class, race and gender - and then, once a systemic alternative failed to arise, unleashed forces of ethnonationalism and authoritarian sovereignism. In the face of this capitalist reality with no alternative on the horizon, exacerbated by the urgency of environmental crisis, the fundamental challenge is to re-instill politics with a future-oriented, utopian yet practical possibility of transformation. Second, I will go on to argue that the degrowth as a transitional proposition offers just such a framework from within which an alternative, counter-hegemonic and future-oriented common sense can be built and instilled into the present social world. Degrowth articulates an alternative common sense that: a) starts from a long-term imperative that humanity has to bring the social metabolic processes within the planetary biophysical limits (Raworth 2017) that provides a safe operating space for humanity (Rockström et al. 2009), understanding however that that cannot be achieved in an equitable way across societies at the current organisation of social needs and with the current institutional and technological mediating structures (O'Neill, Fanning, Lamb, & Steinberger 2018); b) places substantive economic relations between biophysical, political and socio-economic aspects of social metabolism before formal economic relations measured in monetary terms (Gerber & Scheidel 2018); c) proposes a number of practices that focus on social wellbeing, redistribution and social reproduction, drawing on critical insights from fields such as feminism (Federici 2018; Tronto 2005), environmentalism of the poor (Martinez-Alier 2003), and political ecology. Third, after having analysed the aporia of post-capitalist imaginary and the degrowth as a utopian orientation, I will conclude with a discussion how degrowth can provide impulses for an eco-socialist politics that provides a future-oriented vision of social wellbeing and a foundation for mobilisational processes built on hope. \*\*\* Federici, S. (2018). *Re-enchanting the World: Feminism and the Politics of the Commons*. PM Press. Fisher, M. (2009). *Capitalist Realism: Is There No Alternative?* John Hunt Publishing. Gerber, J.-F., & Scheidel, A. (2018). In search of substantive economics: Comparing today's two major socio-metabolic approaches to the economy MEFA and MuSIASEM. *Ecological Economics*, 144, 186-194. Hickel, J. (2018). *The Divide: Global Inequality from Conquest to Free Markets*. W. W. Norton & Company. Hickel, J., & Kallis, G. (2019). Is Green Growth Possible? *New Political Economy*, 0(0), 118. <https://doi.org/10/gfzrxb> Huber, M. T. (2013). *Lifeblood: Oil,*



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## **The notion of zonification in the thought of Alain Badiou**

### **Dionysios Skliris (Greek Open University)**

Alain Badiou develops a theory about the crisis in contemporary sovereignty which is based on the following characteristics. What we witness during the last decades is a perverse form of a capitalist “withering away” of the state. The latter means that the nation-state is no longer indispensable for the capital but it can also be a nuisance due to its regulations, such as legislation for the workers etc. But it also entails a change in imperialist policy. In its colonialist phase, capitalism was based on state structures in the colonies, either in the form of client states and protectorates or of structures that were directly dependent on the metropolis. In its current phase, we have a new form of colonization in which the state is no longer desirable. Alliances of imperialist powers do not colonize but simply destroy the structures of state and create zones. Some zones which contain resources are guarded by private armies and are linked to Western interests, whereas other zones are abandoned to the mercy of military gangs that have replaced state organization. This is a condition of capitalism of catastrophe in which chaos sometimes becomes a goal in itself. In this paper I will develop this notion of zonification with examples from Iraq, Libya and Syria.

## **When Flood Waters Run Dry: Hurricane Harvey, Climate Change & Social Reproduction**

### **Rene Casallas (Loose affiliation with Unity and Struggle)**

The Gulf Coast region of the US offers a rich tapestry of resistance and struggle. Increasingly, our struggles are including the fight against climate change. In 2017, Hurricane Harvey, second only to Hurricane Katrina in terms of destruction, slammed into Houston, TX. The impact of Harvey is still being felt by working class Houstonians to this day. This

paper examines proletarian life before and after Harvey, how contracted social reproduction intensified after the hurricane, and how climate change is reshaping capitalist social relations. Furthermore, I analyze the strengths and limitations of disaster relief efforts and its relation to the state. Lastly, I offer strategic thoughts on how to advance organizing efforts using disaster communism as an alternative framework to overcoming the limitations of disaster relief work.

## **THE PERSISTENCE OF LIVING LABOUR IN AN AGE OF AUTOMATION AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE**

**Bruce Robinson (independent researcher)**

In the wake of recent developments in robotics, automation and artificial intelligence, some left writers (Bastani (2019); Mason (2013); Srnicek and Williams (2015)) have taken as unproblematic the assumption that human labour can be replaced by machines, ushering in the possibility of a work-free post-capitalist society sometimes called fully automated luxury communism. It is assumed that the capitalist development will create the successful implementation of work destroying technology. Focussing on the economic drivers for capital the accumulation process - there is little consideration of the nature of the technology or its implementation in labour processes. This paper will contest this view of the likely outcome of current technology development and the possibility of the abolition of work drawing both on recent research into the applications of automation and AI and Marxist writings on the fundamental nature of the labour process and humans role in it. Current research points not to the elimination of human labour but to its reconstitution to cover the gaps left in the last inch of automation by functions that must necessarily be undertaken by humans. This work is largely hidden. (Dyer-Witheford(2014); Ekbia & Nardi (2017); Gray & Suri (2019); Pfeiffer (2016)) There is an increasing trend towards systems of robot-human cooperative work rather than outright automation. Such heteromation is becoming more widespread as the dangers of over-automation become more apparent. It is not merely transitional to a situation where AI and automation are perfected but rather flows from the nature of the labour process and human labour, summed up in Marx's concept of labouring capacity (See Pfeiffer(2014)) and of labour as part of human species-being. Lukacs (1980) concept of the centrality of goal-directedness of human labour (teleological positing) is something machines are incapable of. The labour process requires knowledge that is tacit (unconscious and unformalisable), local to the environment in which the work is carried out, is adaptable to contingencies that could not be incorporated in the model on which the technology is based and subjective and experiential. There are also inherent technical limitations to the scope of computerisation contrary to Caffentzis (2012) theoretical assertion that any job can be replaced by a program. This paper will also examine the implications of the irreplaceability of living labour. Firstly, by looking at the likely contemporary consequences of attempts by capital to drive labour out of the labour process despite these limitations as leading to more fragile production processes and also the transfer of many last inch functions to less visible unwaged labour. Secondly, looking at the implications for the nature of labour in a socialist society, if work cannot be abolished, its distribution, form and content remain major issues as does the process by which

technology is designed and implemented. As William Morris (1889) put it, replying to an earlier no-work utopian, the ideal of the future does not point to the lessening of men's energy by the reduction of labour to a minimum, but rather to the reduction of pain in labour to a minimum, so small that it will cease to be a pain. Machines can and should be used to cut drudgery and lessen work time but human labour will persist. To think otherwise is to fall victim to technocratic illusions. REFERENCES Caffentzis, G. (2012). In letters of blood and fire: Work, machines, and the crisis of capitalism. pm Press. Dyer-Witheford, N. (2015). Cyber-proletariat: Global labour in the digital vortex. Between the Lines. Ekbia, H. R., & Nardi, B. A. (2017). Heteromation, and other stories of computing and capitalism. MIT Press. Gray, M. L., & Suri, S. (2019). Ghost Work: How to Stop Silicon Valley from Building a New Global Underclass. Eamon Dolan Books Lukacs, G. (1980) The Ontology of Social Being: 3. Labour. Merlin Press Mason, P. (2015). Postcapitalism: A guide to our future. Allan Lane. Morris, W. (1889) Looking Backward. At: <https://www.marxists.org/archive/morris/works/1889/commonweal/06-bellamy.htm> Pfeiffer, S. (2014). Digital labour and the use-value of human work. On the importance of labouring capacity for understanding digital capitalism. tripleC: Communication, Capitalism & Critique. Open Access Journal for a Global Sustainable Information Society, 12(2), 599-619. Pfeiffer, S. (2016). Robots, Industry 4.0 and humans, or why assembly work is more than routine work. Societies, 6(2), 16. Srnicek, N., & Williams, A. (2015). Inventing the future: Postcapitalism and a world without work. Verso Books.

## **This is no democracy, we want Real Democracy: Capitalist crisis and democratic utopias in Portugal 2011-2014**

**Jonas Van Vossle (Center for social studies, university of Coimbra University)**

The economic and financial crisis which affected Portugal in 2011 launched representative democracy in a serious legitimacy crisis. Huge demonstrations and different forms of protest rocked the country between 2011 and 2013. This presentation will discuss how the crisis of peripheral capitalism in the Eurozone opened the gate for new democratic alternatives to the traditional representative form of democracy that governed Portugal since the constitution of 1976. The analysis is based upon 67 short interviews and 6 in depth interviews with activists and protestors, which focus on their perspectives on the state of democracy in Portugal, how they perceived the influence of the crisis in Portugal, how they conceive their idea of democracy as an alternative, and how they project democracy in the past and the future. The main reasons behind the rejection of liberal democracy are the perceived lack of social rights, accountability, legitimacy, freedom of speech, sovereignty, participation and respect for the constitution. From these, a wide range of different conceptions of democracy emerge. This presentation distinguishes and elaborates three more developed democratic conceptions encountered during the research: the acampada pre-figurative autonomous movement, the occupy movement influenced by the Spanish 15M; the radical trade union democracy in which the Lisbon Dockers union took the lead and the left parliamentary alternatives presented by the PCP and the Left Block. The paper then discusses if the coexistence of these different democratic alternatives is a mere empirical phenomenon or a political goal? How does this diversity

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## **Gillian Rose, mourning and the Reformation of Marxism**

**Daniel Andrs Lpez (La Trobe University)**

In the final chapter of her major work, *Hegel Contra Sociology* (HCS), the Hegelian philosopher Gillian Rose presented a brief critique of Marxism, describing it as a culture which has not yet risen to self-reflection and which is consequently beholden to antinomic and essentially Kantian structures of thought. She outlined an alternative - based on speculative, Hegelian philosophy - capable of transcending the dichotomies of modern philosophy. This would recover Hegel's Absolute, grasping it as both necessary and constitutively unrealisable. This, in turn, would acknowledge - but not annihilate - the element of utopia or *sollen* (ought) within philosophy, consequently exposing its subjective and irrational element. (HCS, p. 218.) Consequently, Rose demanded a reformation, in the Christian sense of the term, within Marxism. This would begin by identifying the element of

ought within Marxism; namely, the occluded ground upon which Marxism theologically affirms capitalism. Rose hoped that such a reformation may open a pathway between Marxism and speculative philosophy while also recovering a radical criticism of political economy for the latter. In the lead up to her untimely death, Rose did not return to this call. Instead, she elaborated a concept of mourning that might allow us to grasp the infinite through a reconciliation with our finitude, and in so doing, sustain a thinking of the Absolute at home in its own brokenness. This paper will explore the relationship between Rose's late philosophy (as outlined chiefly in *Mourning Becomes the Law*) and the reformation within Marxism for which she called in HCS. Simultaneously, this paper will sketch a program for such a reformation.

## **Launch: Thesis Eleven special edition on Georg Lukcs's Philosophy of Praxis**

**Daniel Andrs Lpez (La Trobe University), Anita Zsurzs (Etvös Loránd University)  
Cat Moir (University of Sydney) Michael Lazarus (Monash University) Robert  
Jackson (Manchester Metropolitan University)**

This panel will launch the recent special edition of *Thesis Eleven* (Sage) dedicated to Georg Lukcs's philosophy of praxis. Daniel Lopez (La Trobe University) Discussant Daniel Lopez, as the editor of this special edition of *Thesis Eleven* and author of the recent book, *Lukcs: Praxis and the Absolute*, will serve as discussant to this panel.

Anita Zsurzs (Etvös Loránd University) Lukcs's Hungarian Writings from the Late 1920s It is widely agreed that the 1920s were Lukcs's most radical decade, both politically and philosophically. These years were bookended by the essay *Tactics and Ethics* (1919) on the one end and on the other by the *Blum Theses*, submitted to the 1928 congress of the Hungarian Communist Party. The most famous of Lukcs's works from this period *History and Class Consciousness*, *Lenin: A Study in the Unity of His Thought* and the recently rediscovered *Defence of History and Class Consciousness* are still subject to widespread discussion. Recent contributions (most notably, those of Andrew Feenberg and Konstantinos Kavoulakos) have pointed out the radically-democratic nature of Lukcs's political commitments during these years, as well as the connection between these commitments and his broader philosophical standpoint. It has also been noted perhaps first by Michael Lwy that Lukcs's emphasis shifted over the course of the 1920s, as he came to emphasise realism and a less messianic interpretation of philosophy of praxis. Indeed, as Lukcs himself details in his *Notes Towards an Autobiography*, his literary activity was divided during this time between philosophy and concrete political intervention. As the Communist International bureaucratised, isolating Lukcs intellectually, he re-focused his attention on Hungarian questions, hoping to build a political practice in his homeland that might lead to a revival of the revolutionary hopes of the early 1920s. To this end, Lukcs contributed to two Hungarian-language journals, *100%* and *Journal of the Hungarian Workers*, often under pseudonyms. He served as editor of the former with his then collaborator, József Rvai. Lukcs's essays in *100%* touch on a range of themes, from literature and culture to politics

and philosophy. These essays, no doubt owing to linguistic difficulties, have never been translated or commented upon in the Anglophone scholarship on Lukcs. To begin rectifying this gap in the scholarship, this paper will provide an overview of Lukcs's late 1920s Hungarian writings with a view to situating them within his broader philosophy and politics.

Cat Moir (University of Sydney) Utopia and Praxis in Bloch and Lukcs When Ernst Bloch and Georg Lukcs first met in Heidelberg in 1910, they quickly recognised one another as kindred spirits and intellectual equals. Throughout the early years of their friendship, the pair were in contact in person or by letter almost every day. Their interests were so well aligned Bloch would later recall that the pair had to create a nature reserve of artificial differences so as not always to say the same things in public. Both men were inspired by the romantic spirit that infused early twentieth-century central European thought and culture. Preoccupied philosophically with the aesthetic and spiritual value of life, politically, they were romantic anti-capitalists. Bloch's early work *Spirit of Utopia* (1918) and Thomas Mnzers *Theologie der Revolution* (1921) mobilised the dreams of the past in an attempt to create a new future, while in *Soul and Form* (1908) and *The Theory of the Novel* (1920), Lukcs sought to unify aesthetics and politics in a utopian vision of liberated life. After his turn to Marxism, Lukcs would come to disavow his early utopianism, seeing it as antithetical to a praxis-oriented approach to politics and culture. Meanwhile, Bloch's growing commitment to Marxism, which he partly inherited from Lukcs, did not dilute his utopianism. Not only were utopia and praxis not at odds for Bloch, he saw them as inseparable. The two men's personal estrangement and their own subsequent narrativization of their relationship and their own intellectual development, as well as a tendency in the history of ideas to characterise intellectual trajectories in terms of early and late projects, have contributed to a view of Bloch and Lukcs as becoming increasingly polarised on the interrelated questions of utopia and praxis. However, this characterisation conceals continuities and dissonances both within and between their works. In this paper, I will plot the coordinates of Bloch and Lukcs intellectual relationship by examining the changing relationship between utopia and praxis in their thought. I argue that the dynamic tension between utopia and praxis animated both men's thinking from the outset, even if their perspective on the question shifted relative to one another over time.

Michael Lazarus The Standpoint and Historical Specificity of Marxism: Lukcs after Postone. Moishe Postone's reinterpretation of Marx's mature writings has had a wide impact on value-form theory in the last few decades. Postone's recent passing has once again renewed discussion of his work among a range of contemporary commentators of Capital and its relation to Georg Lukcs and Frankfurt School Critical Theory. The strength of Postone's intervention in *Time, Labor and Social Domination* (1993) is his insistence that Marx's critical theory is a historically specific critique of capitalist social relations of production. Postone analyses the dynamics of the labour process within capitalist production and draws out the fundamental importance of abstract labour to comprehending capitalist human alienation and domination. This has distinctive advantage over the orthodox and dogmatic versions of historical materialism that Postone directs his reinterpretation against. Postone takes Lukcs to task precisely as the thinker that tests the limit but remains confined to a traditional interpretation of Marx. The defining feature of the traditional view,



as Postone would have it, is the adoption of the standpoint of labour. He argues this standpoint lacks historical specificity. In his view, traditional Marxism understands labour transhistorically, in discordance with Marx's concept of labour, especially evident in the *Grundrisse*. Lukács figures as the most important interlocutor for Postone. He contends that Lukács' account of the historical subject-object identity of the proletariat is a faulty attempt to materially appropriate Hegel's theory of consciousness. Accordingly, in this view proletariat subjectivity and emancipatory potential are rendered in terms of *Geist* rather than the necessary negation of the form of labour specific to capitalist production. I address both aspects of Postone's critique of Lukács: 1) his account of labour and 2) his account of subjectivity. I argue that Postone's account of Marx's theory of value provides a strong basis to investigate the relationship between Marx and Lukács. However, Postone's critique of Lukács is undermined by his rejection of Marx's social ontology and in his reading of Hegel. I tease out these consequences for a concept of labour from these problems.

Rob Jackson (Manchester Metropolitan University) - Reflections on the recent season of Lukács studies In Georg Lukács's *Philosophy of Praxis* (Bloomsbury), Konstantinos Kavoulakos's close reconstruction of the development of Lukács's ideas from his early writings through to the essays of *History and Class Consciousness* (HCC) reveals a number of the well-known characterisations of Lukács's philosophy of praxis as misrepresentations of his actual positions. In Lukács's *Phenomenology of Capitalism* (Palgrave), Richard Westerman presents a phenomenological reading of Lukács by reading HCC in the context of his early drafts on aesthetics. Both Kavoulakos and Westerman debunk diverse readings that see in Lukács's work a form of economic reductionism, or an idealist dialectic. Their reconstruction of Lukács's thought shows the complex dialectical balance of the diverse influences (Hegelian, neo-Kantian, and beyond) that are articulated by Lukács within his writings. In this paper, I outline what I consider some of the important contributions of their books for those interested in Lukács studies and those operating with frameworks influenced by his thought. I will examine critically their case for revisiting dialectical-practical theory as a means to overcome the weaknesses of the recent critical theory.

Konstantinos Kavoulakis *Crisis and Praxis in Lukács's Early Marxism* After the eruption of the Greek crisis, a good part of the Greek political elite presented the crisis as an opportunity to radically transform Greece into a western, modernized state. Paradoxically enough, in regard of its form this attitude is in accord with Georg Lukács's revolutionary aspirations about proletarian revolution and radical social change although it essentially deviates from it in regard of its content. Unfortunately, the Left in the West was unprepared to understand crisis in the way the elites perceived it namely as an opportunity for radical political action. In my talk I reconstruct Lukács's thoughts on the phenomenon of crisis in modern society, its relation to mechanical historical becoming and to the possibility of free collective action. In Lukács's early Marxist thought crisis is understood as an expression of the deeper dissonance of the social form and the content of life in bourgeois society. The experience of crisis reveals the violence inflicted upon life even in its normal condition and it can thus lead to new forms of social consciousness. However, this transition is by no way necessary. Crisis can be perpetuated and temporarily overcome through the restoration of dominant power relations. At the same time, it represents a period in which system mechanisms fail and therefore the dominant social determinations can be radically

questioned. These short periods of systemic instability and relative indeterminacy urge us to think about the appropriate forms of organizing collective political praxis to effectively intervene in the historical continuum, instead of letting historical automatism be restored. I will argue that this open dialectic between discontinuity and continuity is an integral part of every serious radical whether revolutionary or reformist politics.

## **The Rose in the Cross of the Present: Gillian Rose on Marx, Hegel and Absolute Ethical Life.**

**Michael Lazarus (Monash University)**

Hegels philosophy of right demands for the intriguer to find delight in reason, to embrace rational thought as the passion of life in the suffering of modernity. Gillian Roses account of modernity centres on her concept of absolute ethical life, reconstructed from a radical interpretation of Hegel. She mobilises Hegels critique of Kants concept of morality, which she argues is confined to a paradigm defined by private property relations. Rose argues that Hegels speculative thought presents a critique of modern social relations by allowing reality to be thought and since reality is itself ethical, to demand freedom without domination. Rose uses the figure of Athena as the embodiment of this concept, in which her return represents an emancipatory opening. Here Rose brings out the radical implications of Hegels account of civil society and the state, one in which their division prevents a distinctly modern problem, in dramatic contrast with the Greek polis. Rose reads Hegel in the manner begun with Marxs On the Jewish Question, which characterises modern life as antinomial between the public and private realms. In her presentation of Hegels thought, Rose takes challenges the way Marxs early writings have often been viewed as his decisive parting ways with Hegels conservative political constitutionalism (Colletti 1975). This paper argues, following Rose, that Marxs social thought (in the early writings, especially On the Jewish Question, and his mature Grundrisse and Capital) operates much closer to a Hegels social theory than common interpretative approaches insist.

## **The Fascist Concept of the Enemy**

**Ishay Landa (The Open University of Israel)**

The aim of this paper is to examine and seek to explain the distinctive nature of the way fascist thinkers and statesmen construct and conceptualize their enemies. By looking at the theories put forth by prominent interwar neo-Nietzscheans such as Martin Heidegger, Ernst Jnger or Carl Schmitt, as well as some post-War figures on the extreme right, this paper seeks to shed light on the remarkable irrationality and extremity characterizing the way fascists conceived of their enemies. The fascists' notion of the enemy will also be related to their particular understanding of truth and of history. This complex of ideas will be placed within the context of the fascist social crusade against the masses. Finally, it will be argued that understanding the peculiarities of fascist myth-making might be helpful in

addressing the current worldwide recrudescence of far-right movements in an age of so-called “post-truth.”

## **How common senses and a naive understanding of the state can restrain the political orientation of Fridays for Future Vienna**

**Philipp Chmel (Vienna University of Economics and Business)**

This essay discusses the role of the state in combination with differing and partially contradictory common senses (as understood by Gramsci) within Fridays for Future Vienna and the current climate movement at large. The main question of this essay is firstly, how a (mis)understanding of the bourgeois state as being in itself a neutral structure, can contribute to a hierarchy among the discussed common senses and, secondly, how particular common senses can in turn restrain the political orientation of the movement in strategies and demands. For this, the role of the state as it is commonly perceived in society is contrasted with Gramsci's concept of the integral state (Dalis and Kallis 2016) and Poulantzas understanding of the state as a social relation (Jessop 2017). Following that, two opposing common senses within Fridays for Future Vienna, both concerning the actor of change, are discussed and connected to a particular understanding of the state. The common senses relevant for this discussion are firstly, we the people as actors of change, as opposed to secondly, the state as the actor of change. The essay further highlights potential shortcomings in the demands raised, which could lead to outcomes opposed to the fundamental demand of limiting global heating to 1.5°C, and instead contribute to an incorporative hegemony (Hunt 2018), potentially enabling a Gramscian passive revolution (Spash 2019). The essay focuses on Fridays for Future Vienna as the author is an activist within this group, and thus has insights into the movement's self-understanding and reasoning.

## **Gramsci in Palestine: Reflections on counterhegemony through the praxis of the single democratic state intellectual in Palestine/Israel**

**Cherine Hussein (The Center for Middle Eastern Studies, Lund University, Sweden)**

It was the late Edward Said who once wrote, criticism must see itself inhabiting a contested cultural space (Said 1983: 225); it must recognize that it is of this world, and aspire to hegemony in Gramsci's sense of the word (Said 1983: 167); and is an interventionary and directive phenomenon (Said 1983: 171) that must remain linked with the realities of human life. Thus Said argues that the realities of power and authority as well as the resistances offered by men, women, and social movements to institutions, authorities, and orthodoxies are the realities that make texts possible, and it is these realities that should be taken account of by criticism and critical consciousness. In many ways, this view is an affirmation of the centrality of Gramsci's philosophy of praxis in elaborating revolutionary

theory one which remains of this world, begins with human empowerment, and with the building of counterhegemony as a process of mapping spaces of power that can be territorially gained by an oppositionary collective with an alternative vision of selves and social relations. It is also a revolutionary theory that centers its struggle within interlinked civil societies, and within which intellectuals are the pivotal agents in instigating social transformation. In the context of exploring Marxist thought and activism in the Middle East, this paper uses a de-colonial approach to explore the counterhegemonic activism of a selection of Palestinian and Jewish-Israeli single democratic state intellectuals against the hegemony of Zionism and separation and the reality of domination that has emerged on the land since the signing of the Oslo Accords. Hence, it explores the activism of these intellectuals from within their own self-understandings, conceptions of the world, geographies and maps to power. Focussing on the diverse images of the intellectual of the Left today that emerge, it aims to create a window into the processes of building counterhegemony and solidarity within situated geographies of domination. In doing so, it aims to reflect upon how practices and theories of resistance themselves travel and are transformed; what these images can inform us about the practices of resistance that are emerging against settler-colonialism today within the inter-national; the effectiveness of this form of resistance in changing self-understandings and political realities in the context of settler-colonialism in Palestine/Israel; the role of BDS; and where power and the joint, inter-national struggle for social transformation is imagined to be located from within the activism of a particular collective against a situated form of (inter-national) domination.

## **I want you to panic: metabolic rift and combat breathing in the Capitalocene**

**Sophie Silverstein (Utrecht University)**

Destructive climate change regularly has embodied effects, such as making lives lethally unbreathable (World Health Organization, 2019), robbing peoples loved ones, homes, and possessions (Levitt & Kommenda, 2018), or, closer to home, shaking the ground beneath their feet (Provincie Groningen, 2019). Based on a Marxist interpretation of these processes that remains relevant today, this climactic disruption and its negative effects on human existence has its roots in capitalism (Moore, 2016; McBrien, 2016; Foster, 2000; Marx [1939] 1973). Even stronger, the Marxist theory of metabolic rift maintains that the capitalist destruction of the Earth also destroys humans, as humans and nature take part in a continuous, life-sustaining metabolic exchange (Foster, 2000, p. 92). This embodiment of capitalist destruction rings a bell with Magdalena Grskas understanding of the body as a site where oppressive social structures manifest (2016). These interfere in the undisturbed functioning of the bodys metabolic processes through anxiety and panic attacks. Simultaneously, however, this disruption creates potential for political resistance through combat breathing (Grska, 2016, p. 282; Fanon, 1965, p. 65). Breathing differently in this way is both a response to oppressive social conditions and enact[s] changes in and resistance to dynamics and forces that make life suffocating, immobilizing, traumatizing, unbearable (Grska, 2016, p. 284). If capitalism and its attendant exploitation of the planet disrupts the environmental metabolism that keeps humans, nonhuman organisms, and the

Earth alive, then what lessons can be drawn from the embodied resistance strategies outlined by Grska? Political mobilization in response to bodily breakdown is relevant to individual bodies and the planetary metabolism. Further, it creates vital opportunities to challenge business-as-usual that has led to current environmental degradation. This project takes Greta Thunbergs appeal to world leaders at the World Economic Forum in January of this year seriously: I want you to panic (2019, 2:25).

## Threshold of the Political: Shifting Sand Dunes of Sovereignty

**Avantika Tewari (Centre for Comparative Politics and Political Theory, School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University)**

The sovereign decides not the licit and illicit but the originary inclusion of the living in the sphere of law or, in the words of Schmitt, the normal structuring of life relations, which the law needs. The law has a regulative character and is a rule not because it commands and proscribes, but because it must first of all create the sphere of its own reference in real life and make that reference regular (Agamben 1995: 26). Prime Minister Modi gets a second term in India and his cabinet took oath only yesterday. Is the shock and awe around this electoral mandate misplaced? Scratch beneath the surface of democratic ideological glue and the signs were ever present. Elections reflect the conventional wisdom determined by the hegemonic ideology in a society fragmented along caste, religious, linguistic lines the consolidation of political identities has further polarisation. We neednt place the far-right outside of liberal democratic framework at present despite its fascistzoid form. The far-right embodies liberal democracy, proper and thats what frustrates liberal sensibilities most - the far right is the limit of liberal democracy and not its excess. It is also then a window to read the the originary structure of law in the exception demonstrating the permanent structure of juridico-political de-localisation and dis-location (Agamben 1995: 38). The recent works of Weronika Grzebalska, Eszter Kovats, and Andrea Peto on 'illiberal democracy' in Hungary introduces the notion of gender as symbolic glue being used by the anti-political correctness type right wing populism, which is exploiting the lacuna of equality politics of liberalism and mobilizing against it. Posed in this way, the right wing resurgence in society is not only a manifestation of the essentially anti-women sentiment. It is not a consolidation of the latent hatred towards women, but also comes to represent the hatred towards the academic institutionalization of politics of emancipation which expresses itself in a policy driven solutionism. Therefore, they argue that the depoliticisation of the rights based and identity politics based discourse itself has paved the way for discontentments which is now being channelized by the right. Then, the right wing is essentially attacking the neo-liberal democratic order using gender as the glue, which seemingly talks only about recognition and representation. But isn't this 'illiberrall' element contained within liberal democracy? Far right doesnt need to undo democratic political regime to establish its reign. Democracy sanctions it. The liberal blackmail tells you that exit from liberal democracy entails a regression into authoritarianism - its mirror/enemy. State form will have to change. Liberal democracies are nation-state democracies - they contain both right wing populist tendencies as well as its liberal welfarist face. Radical democracy proponents arent beckoning us to abandon democracy as a blind alley but

radicalise and realise it as substantive democracy and not liberal democracy - which is a mere formal legitimising discourse due to which the power oscillates between soft and tough identical non choices. Frustration with hollowed secular myths of liberal democracy is somewhat warranted, especially since in India, we live under a regime which has cast off the even ideological pretence of being a neutral arbitrator. The right wing instrumentalises the hypocrisy of the liberal state to undercut it with conservative politics. The real problem though with the liberal state is hardly its hypocrisy. Rather, it is the promise of freedom, equality, justice it delivers to political subjects at the level of pure abstraction. In some ways then the limits of neo-liberal democracy is being exposed and tapped by the right, which then is also destabilizing the liberal institutions either through aggressive taking over of those bodies or by diminishing their capacities. The rise of the right wing and the simultaneous congealing of political identities is expressing a need for return to the community against the secular universalisations of the body politic. In such times when the polarization in society is so high and the perniciousness of equating freedom with autonomous rights-bearing individualist discourse has reached saturation then what is the way ahead? The problematic of sovereignty is not to be reduced to who within the political order is invested with certain powers, but must refer to the threshold of the political order itself (Agamben 1998: 11 12). This line of questioning investigates the structuring logic of spaces we inhabit that animate our non-political everyday. Sovereignty, then is not a notion that needs to be traced back to a person or an institution, it is not a process of identification of pure enemy in the fight against precarious existence. In so far as it is maintaining the capitalist, patriarchal, casteist, heterosexual familial order of society in representational politics, where the myth of the sovereign individuality goes hand in hand with the displaceable sovereign decision making authority (law, State, family) sovereign exception then comes to represent this displacement between two contrasting juridical demands into a limit relation between what is inside and what is outside law. (Agamben 1995: 23). Between a radically self-determined notion of the self and the identitarian notion - the task is to formulate within this constituted frame a critique of identities contemporary juridical structures engender, naturalise, immobilize to see gender not only as a cause of victimization but a symptom, in which power is both external to subject as well as its venue. At the height of fascist attacks, India witnessed many hate crimes against Muslims (that constitute a minority population) and lower-castes. A new phenomenon of public lynching as a mode of dispensing historical justice, was carried out by Hindu supremacists. Not only did they brutalise the bodies of minoritarians but also video taped it as a badge of honour and caste pride. We see, here, how the public law is suspended to attune itself to the local expression of social norms that govern justice, therefore giving the impression of suspending the juridical order while actually (re-)defining law's own threshold or limit. I wish to argue, that this aporia is not an anomaly or a coexistence of residual feudal forms of authority in a liberal democratic ethos but rather is the very (constitutive) substance of juridical order. As we have seen in the ways in which power gets operationalised on ground - the source of localized authority is not necessarily a derivative of public law. The logic sanctioning the dominant caste persons power over others is not stable nor linear. The invocation of public morality overrides constitutional morality, social conventions undercut legal sanctions, even while market discourses bend community control. How do we, then, understand the indeterminacy that marks everyday negotiations without rendering these relations and structures of power and exception as totally errant? The



irreducibility of power and sovereignty to law and its indistinguishability from law marks and regulates these social relations that organize bodies in and orders the social life rendering some visible and other invisible, some included and others, excluded both structured by the relations of exception where the sovereign decision is constantly tracing and retracing the relations of exception. It is rather important to grapple with the structure of sovereignty which constitutes itself by defining what is made to seem like an anomaly. Sovereignty then is not the sovereign decision maker, but a structuring logic which invokes multiple powers and authorities at once capitalist, feudal, parental, legal authority which comes to define the relations of power, exception and domination. Therefore, I will not seek to stabilize and depoliticize the notion of sovereignty by fixing it in the bodies on which it acts or the body which carries the force of authority, but would like to trace how the fight against the powers that be point to the fundamental violence of Law at the heart of which is the vicissitude of the legal order. The indeterminacy of sovereign power and its indistinguishability and irreducibility to legal order is the paradox which frames both political action and processes of subjectification leads us to engage with research on the critique of capitalist Ideology. Here, is where the articulation of resistance becomes difficult for the subject of resistance is also subject of Law inscribed by an obligation to obey in return of recognition by law, to have gratitude for the protection it offers as also with the desire to transgress the law that regulates desire itself. It is important to study is how the sovereign structure of the law is able to create guilt in its subjects which is a constitutive element of production of the subject and therefore, their governing rationalities. Obedience then precedes institutions that make it possible. The process of subjectivation and concrete political action can only be seen in relation to one another since they engender transactional subjectivities[i] which engage with one another without being reduced to any pure or static political identity or any normative universalism of legal subjects (citizens governed by a Constitution). In the face of right-wing resurgence, there is a need to radicalize democracy and reclaim it from the clutches of litigiousness as a way of political life by abandoning the task of deepening democracys liberal ideology its ontological essentialism and epistemological foundationalism - to reconstitute notions of sovereignty and juridicity and towards producing militant subjectivities. [i] In this impossibility of deciding if it is guilt that grounds the rule or the rule that posits guilt, what comes clearly to light is the indistinction between outside and inside and between life and law that characterises the sovereign decision on the exception. (Agamben 1995: 27) Bibliography:- Giorgio Agamben.Homo Sacer. / I, Il Potere Sovrano e La Nuda Vita. Torino, Einaudi, Cop, 1995.- Giorgio Agamben,State of Exception. Chicago, Univ. Of Chicago Press, [20]08, 2005.

## **The obsolescence of dock labour, between self-management and automation. A comparative analysis on two European ports**

**Andrea bottalico (University of Bergamo, University of Florence)**

This paper presents an inquiry on the labour conditions in two European ports the critical nodes in the global capitalist supply chain , through an analysis of the automation processes in particular, and the role of the trade unions in negotiating these dynamics. In fact, no impact has been as pervasive as the technological innovation introduced in the

organization of dock labour. Automation processes produced unavoidably a contraction of the number of dockworkers in the port segment of the maritime logistics chain since the 1960s. Increased containerization, intermodal transport, and the integration of ports in global supply chains are just some of the elements that have characterized this process. This paper in particular aims to answer the following research question: To what extent do unions respond to the constraints driven by market players, in two distinct ports/container terminals? Drawing on the empirical findings gathered during the fieldworks in the ports of Genoa (Italy) and Antwerp (Belgium), the paper offers a new observation of the port sector, as it is typically understood in the literature. It argues that, given the tight interdependencies across the chain, unions should face automation by looking at the overall logistics chain instead of focusing only on the port segment. Port labour systems, in fact, are analysed by looking across the overall maritime logistics chain, and this analytical challenge should be taken seriously into account by the unions involved in the port sector, both at national and at supranational level, especially with regard to the strategies concerning the automation issues in the bargaining process.

## **Ghosts of Our Lives From Left Melancholy to Collective Depression**

**Evan Sedgwick-Jell (Birkbeck University of London)**

Statistics surrounding mental health saturate media expressions of a suppressed state of emergency. Mental health is everybody's business (No Health Without Mental Health, Department of Health: 2010), and as discussions of conditions such as depression and anxiety are destigmatized, it appears that this represents a new bent towards wellbeing. Yet how is being well a concept interpenetrated by the logics of capital? It can be no coincidence that many of those concerned with our mental health are managers and companies, neoliberal think tanks and shareholders; in short, the wards of capital. Subjective mental distress has always been a rich resource for the left, the psychic proof that capitalism marks the mind as much as the body. From Marx's alienation and its deployment by humanist psychologists such as Erich Fromm, to the questioning of a mad/sane binary by theorists whose formative years coincided with 60s counterculture such as Michel Foucault, Irving Goffmann and R.D. Laing, the mental has always potentially offered a political imaginary that at once offers a concrete utopia of psychic liberation while also threatening a return to romantic idealism. Mark Fisher approached depression as a political problem as well as a form of depoliticizing subjectification, seeing mental distress as captured discontent. Using his and Franco Berardis theories around the psychic impact of neoliberalism as that of precluding political alternatives, my aim is to theorize depression as a site of political struggle. Using Fisher's formulation of collective depression supplemented by Enzo Traverso's reimagining of left-melancholy as not so much an affliction but rather as a weapon of struggle, I wish to discuss how depression might be viewed beyond being an aporia of the individual's existence; rather a political imaginary. Returning also to Peter Sedgwick's 1980s work *Psychopolitics*, my project is to reformulate a Marxist approach to mental health that does not allow itself to be defined by simplistic models of health nor co-opted by neoliberal logics.

## **Green New Deal or Degrowth? Maybe both.**

**Riccardo Mastini (Institute of Environmental Science and Technology (ICTA), Autonomous University of Barcelona)**

To limit global warming to 1.5 compared to pre-industrial levels, the IPCC latest report warns that countries must reach net zero CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 2040. Scholars and activists debate which policies are best suited for the deployment of renewable energy infrastructure and the socio-economic changes that need to accompany it. I review and compare two prominent decarbonization discourses: the Green New Deal and degrowth. Here I show that both discourses have internal contradictions and present possible synergies and trade-offs between them. Green New Deal advocates propose a plan to coordinate and finance a large-scale overhaul of the energy system, but they disregard the issue of scale in energy use. Degrowth researchers and activists address also other environmental issues beyond climate change and place social justice at the centre of their analysis, but they fall short on discussing policy and financing measures. Economic growth plays a pivotal role in setting these two discourses apart from each other: it is the engine of the renewable energy transition in the case of the Green New Deal, whereas it should be abandoned as a policy goal from a degrowth perspective. However, both discourses already converge on two policy proposals: rethinking the ownership structure of the energy system and expanding the welfare state. I posit that these two discourses should enter in a dialogue and that this can be mutually enriching.

## **DIALECTICS IN SPINOZA AND WHAT IT MEANS FOR MARXIST PHILOSOPHY**

**Vesa Oittinen (Professor, Aleksanteri Institute (Center for Russian and East European Studies), University of Helsinki, Finland)**

Not only Hegel noted Spinoza as a dialectical thinker. In Marxism, too, Spinoza is often viewed as one of the most important precursor of materialist dialectics. Especially the protagonists of the left wing of the II International (Mehring, Plekhanov) stressed the importance of Spinozas heritage as an alternative to the Neo-Kantian revisionism of Bernstein et al. In the early Soviet Union of the 1920s, Spinoza was in high esteem and discussions concerning his philosophy contributed significantly to the formation of dialectical materialism. However, these discussions focused mainly on Spinozas materialism, and although Spinoza constantly was presented as a forerunner of Marxist dialectics, it seldom was specified of which his dialectics should consist. Mostly there were only vague references to the idea of substance as a *causa sui*; not even such important Soviet Marxists as Evald Ilyenkov or Lev Vygotsky (who had written an extensive study on Spinozas doctrine of affects) have been more explicit. In my paper, I attempt, in drawing lessons from the Soviet discussions, to put Spinoza in the tradition of the dialectical thought of modernity. Such a viewpoint will regard already at the outset the dialectics in modern epoch as different from the forms of dialectics in antiquity. It is first in modern

times than a clear subject-object-divide arises in philosophy (of which the Cartesian *distinctio realis* is the first and most famous instance). I try further to show that the modern forms of dialectical thought are all to a greater or lesser degree attempts to handle with this fundamental divide of modernity, the difference between the subjective and the objective. In its mature form, which one can find in Hegel, these attempts lead to a theory of the dialectical triad, where the last member, the synthesis, unites the thesis (subjectivity) and antithesis (objectivity). However, already in Spinoza, such a triadic form of categories can be distinguished. For example, the *conatus*, the idea of the activity inherent in things, which is central for Spinozism, is a result of the tension between essence and existence of things. What is yet more interesting, Spinoza's philosophy can be regarded as materialistic, and so we have here Hegel turned on his feet already before Hegel himself. However, Spinozistic dialectics is a possibility much neglected in Marxist theory. Forms of so-called Spinozistic Marxism (Antonio Negri et al., but even Althusser) have usually stressed quite other sides of Spinoza's heritage than his dialectical ideas. My planned HM conference paper will partly draw upon the article I already have published in *Das Argument* 274 (2008) and 307 (2014) and, further, upon the book on Soviet Spinoza interpretations I have in preparation for the HM book series.

## **Optimal Planning with Consumer Feedback: A Simulation of a Socialist Economy**

**Jan Philipp Dapprich (University of Glasgow)**

Mathematical optimization can be used to increase the effectiveness of economic planning in socialist economies. Cockshott and Cottrell have proposed a model of socialism (Towards A New Socialism/TNS model) with which optimal planning could be made responsive to consumer demand. I've previously argued that the emphasis on labor values in the TNS model means that the environmental impact of production is insufficiently reflected in planning targets and suggested using a system of mathematically derived valuations instead. The paper discusses how such values can be calculated using linear optimization and presents a computer simulation of a socialist economy based on them. An agent-based consumer model was developed to model the behaviour of consumers. It is found that such an economy does indeed put a stronger emphasis on more environmentally friendly production under some circumstances.

## Providing more than energy: Inequality, growth, and distribution of resources in the energy system

Anke Schaffartzik (Institute of Social Ecology (SEC), University of Natural Resources Vienna (BOKU) and Life Sciences Vienna Institut de Cincia i Tecnologia Ambientals, Universitat Autnoma de Barcelona (ICTA-UAB))

The destruction of habitats and livelihoods, local and global pollution and persistent environmental change, the accumulation of materials and waste: Current patterns of resource use and sustained growth are inherently unsustainable. International environmental inequality the unequal distribution of the benefits and burdens associated with this resource use is not only the outcome of past growth trajectories, it is also a prerequisite to continued growth. That ever more resources must be extracted, processed, and traded in order to close the gap between the worlds high-consuming rich and the low-consuming poor and dispossessed is nothing short of a myth (Duro et al., 2018; Mies, 1993). Quite to the contrary, current patterns of growth can only be sustained if inequalities are upheld. This includes material inequality the focus of this contribution alongside gender inequality, the urban-rural divide, and the power disparities between the global North and the global South. From a material perspective, the relationships between flows (extracted or traded materials) and stocks (materials integrated into infrastructures, buildings, and durable capital and consumer goods) are decisive in understanding current and future growth (Krausmann et al., 2017). These stocks not only require material flows for their construction, maintenance, and use, they also play a pivotal role in controlling access to (Ribot and Peluso, 2003) and distributing resources. Examining the systems through which energy is provisioned, I propose an integration of a socio-metabolic or material and a political-economic perspective in order to investigate the links between material stocks and flows in (international) inequality. The socio-metabolic transition that occurs at sites of the extractive expansion is one into which people are commonly and often violently coerced (Temper et al., 2015). Stocks (especially in the shape of infrastructure) play a pivotal role in these transitions and are simultaneously frequently the subject of opposition and conflict (e.g., del Bene et al., 2018 for energy infrastructure). I discuss the role of these stocks in shaping local socio-metabolic transitions that in turn are a prerequisite to the stabilization of the industrial metabolic profile in other parts of the world (Schaffartzik et al., 2014). Considering inequality and distributional issues as part of the problem is an important analytical lens, considering the diversity and plurality of approaches to transformation to which this inequality gives rise is an important part of the solution. References del Bene, D., Scheidel, A., Temper, L., 2018. More dams, more violence? A global analysis on resistances and repression around conflictive dams through co-produced knowledge. *Sustain Sci* 13, 617633. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11625-018-0558-1> Duro, J.A., Schaffartzik, A., Krausmann, F., 2018. Metabolic Inequality and Its Impact on Efficient Contraction and Convergence of International Material Resource Use. *Ecological Economics* 145, 430440. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecolecon.2017.11.029> Krausmann, F., Wiedenhofer, D., Lauk, C., Haas, W., Tanikawa, H., Fishman, T., Miatto, A., Schandl, H., Haberl, H., 2017. Global socioeconomic material stocks rise 23-fold over the 20th century and require half of annual resource use. *PNAS* 114, 18801885.

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## **A Politics for Alienation? On a Historical Misunderstanding**

**Nejc Slukan (Faculty of Arts & Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ljubljana)**

Since Althusser's discovery of an epistemological break in Marx that has supposedly relieved the latter's work of its early humanist pastoral schlock, the concept of alienation has often been viewed with suspicion, especially among theoreticians weary of being accused of the cardinal sins of essentialism and metaphysical humanism. Quite recently, however, the topic has reclaimed some of its old allure in contemporary versions of post-Habermasian critical theory (Jaeggi, Honneth, Rosa) that have positioned themselves against the dominant post-structuralist dismissal of the concept's critical potential, while producing versions of it that are inferior to Marx's view on the topic. On the opposing side, new materialisms inspired calls to theoretical and political action have quite a different view. Alienation is supposedly to be cherished as a mode of enablement (Srnicek and Williams), the tool of freedom's construction (Laboria Cuboniks) or as the enabling condition of rational agency (Negarestani, Brassier). What is apparently common to all of the later versions of politics for alienation is an understanding of the concept that is rooted in a specific part of the Marxist tradition, namely, in the history of the mischaracterization of the concept of alienation, starting from Lukács' *History and Class Consciousness*, moving through Central-European versions of humanist Marxism and continuing up to the present day. The conception our new Prometheans criticize is one of alienation as fall from an idealized harmonious state of being, where woodchucks chuck wood, blacksmith swing the hammer and human essence is preserved against the encroachment of modernity's abstractions. However, Marx's conception of alienation is nothing of the sort. It is not based on a metaphysical notion of human essence and is quite in line with inhumanism" seen as "a vector of revision (Negarestani). It is a historically situated critique of conditions of human objectification that does not speak against objectification per se, but speaks of the failures of its realization in capitalist modernity. It is not the alienation of an essence, but of existence. It is not a concept hindering our possibilities for experimentation and reinvention, but something that critically illustrates what limits us in doing so under capitalism. Following Fischbach's reconstruction of the concept of alienation in Marx, I will try to show two things: 1) that the concept of alienation, although unnamed, persists even



in Marx's later works and 2) that a critique that is based on the concept of alienation stands in support and not against Promethean ambitions.

## **All hands on deck. Academic activism in 2019**

**Elke Pirgmaier (University of Leeds), Julia K. Steinberger (University of Leeds)**

This contribution explores how a systemic understanding of fossil capitalism can be linked to individual and collective action to deliver systemic change. It addresses the specific role of the scientific process to support struggles more effectively. Marxian Political Economy, and its foundations in theories of value and capital, are fit for purpose to uncover causal structures and dynamics of ecological overshoot, as well as barriers to social change. But realistic theory is not enough. Universities and the education system are central for the reproduction of capital, especially in economics. A core achievement of the mainstream economic church has been to establish economic narratives as scientific, whilst discrediting and eradicating Marxian insights as ideological, utopian and dangerous. As a consequence, dominant ecological discourses and decision-making spheres emphasise biophysical drivers and techno-fixes (which naturalise the problem) and fetishize growth (which accentuate outcomes), at the expense of confronting the social and political root causes of unsustainability and injustice. These narratives leave large fractions of the public in the dark of the gigantic challenge ahead, and those who are aware feel helpless as to what can be done. Those in power are compromised by their proximity to capital. Ultimately, we are prevented from having an honest debate, and the skewed distribution of power in society continues to reproduce the status quo. What is the role as academics in this context? We see our role as supporting social struggles on two fronts: fostering the conditions of the birth of a better future; and fighting against what needs to die so that this future can exist. Damaging industries, technologies, and political regimes. The core task remains to support and protect the building of resilient communities and to consequently translate this ambition into every-day research and action. We must not be naïve about the possibilities of systemic change and must not be blind or ignorant about what we are up against: Capital, the dominant societal form of organising life around the globe. Radical change will not come into being without active resistance, protests, and solidary movements that rise up against unacceptable modes of living and politics. To support these struggles, research needs to be an effective communication and outreach tool for radical urgent action. This is not the traditional playground of scientific inquiry, but it can be learnt and strengthened. Guiding principles for a radical research and action agenda include: Promote the application of Marxian Political Economy as a realistic economic theory and systemic methodology for understanding capitalist dynamics in research and teaching. The translation of Marxian insights in easily accessible language to the general public is key. Resist the reproduction of mainstream economic narratives, distorted ideas, and pragmatic tools by exposing them as serious distractions and barriers to desirable systemic change. They comfort, rather than challenge, the reproduction of the very power relations that stand in the way of sustainability transitions. Oppose capitalist institutions that uphold a highly destructive money-making and power-protecting machinery for a global elite based on structural inequality and exploitation (e.g., megabanks, fossil corporations). Co-

design and support institutions whose purpose is the direct provision of human needs and dignity access to healthy food, clean water, mobility, healthcare, and education; rather than indirect provision via growth, job-creation, profit-making and rent-extraction. Co-create democratic decision-making processes with the vast middle ground of people who are open-minded (via peoples assemblies, sociocracy, learning from p struggles) to practice deep democracy and build an uprising collective fabric for mass mobilization, solidarity, and the democratization of production for need. Encourage academic collaborative action and bravery, that is, use our academic spaces to pursue all of the above. We need to speak up, point to uncomfortable realities, proactively engage with interest groups, and steer decisions in our realms. These guiding threads have existed on fringes for a very long time but need to be strengthened to fight the old (2,3), create the new (4,5,6), starting from the here and now (1).

## **For A Marxism of Radical Finitude: Merleau-Ponty, Hgglund, and Immanent Critique**

**Conall Cash (Cornell University; Universit de Paris 10-Nanterre)**

To the extent that the French phenomenologist Maurice Merleau-Pontys career-long engagement with Marxism is known, it is most often seen as an historical footnote to the trajectory of really existing communism and its reception by Western intellectuals in the mid-twentieth century. Merleau-Ponty, it is said, began by crudely defending Stalinism (in *Humanisme et terreur* of 1948), and concluded by denouncing Marxism altogether (in *Les aventures de la dialectique* of 1955), moving from communist realpolitik to liberal idealism. The extreme intellectual poverty of this still widely accepted reception should be challenged not only for the intrinsic reason of understanding the thought of one of the last centurys major philosophers, but also because of the continued philosophical importance of Merleau-Pontys political writings, and what could be called his immanent critique of Marxism, for todays left. Rather than being the conjunctural effect of external historical events, his engagement with Marxism is rooted in a fundamental concern he shares with Marx, which is the effort to articulate a philosophy of movement or process beyond the separation of subject and object. Like Marx, Merleau-Ponty sees in this perspective the capacity to overcome, in critical and self-reflective fashion, the limitations of previously existing philosophy. Thinking through this question will occasion both the affinity with Marxism expressed in his earlier works, and the more avowed distance taken in writings of the later 1950s. A necessary facet of this search for a philosophy beyond subject and object is a refusal of the separation of ideas and their realisation in the world, the rational and the real. Merleau-Ponty begins his immanent critique from the starting-point that all forms of Marxism had frozen over into dogmas in the period after the ebb of the Russian revolution, and its philosophical expression in Lukss notion of praxis. His critiques of both Trotsky and Sartre show that the alternately idealist or realist grounding of a Marxist worldview represented a collapse of Marxisms belief that it had identified the concrete subject of history as a sense-making process in the proletariat. The Marxist demand that the rational become real is thus made of Marxism itself, in a manner that returns to some central concerns of Hegelian philosophy. In retracing how Merleau-Pontys writings on Marxism

are grounded in his overall philosophical project, this paper will argue that any renewed Marxism must recognise the irreversibility of the sense-making process which is history, in a way that permits no philosophy of history in the form of a closure or consummation; it will thus briefly outline what a Marxism premised on the full recognition of finitude would entail. The latter will be articulated in relation to the reading of Marx as a thinker of radical finitude in the recent work of Martin Hgglund.

## Extractive Modernity at Large

Eli Jelly-Schapiro (University of South Carolina)

Marx's reflection on primitive accumulation foreground two concurrent processes, unfolding, respectively, in Europe and in the colonized world: the divorcing of the producer from the means of productionthe enclosure of common lands and depredation of subsistence farmers within rural England (to cite Marx's classic national example); and the discovery of gold and silver in America, the extirpation, enslavement and entombment in mines of the indigenous population . . . the conquest and plunder of India, the conversion of Africa into a preserve for the commercial hunting of black skins. Marx's attention to the latter, colonial expressions of primitive accumulation highlight the ways in which capitalist modernity is born in the moment of extraction. This is true in at least two senses. The mining of gold and silver in the New World signaled what Henri Lefebvre would describe, more than a century later, as the absolute predominance of exchange over use, the essence of commodity culture. And the surplus value derived from the combination of slave or wage labor and precious, subterranean metals catalyzed the expanded reproduction of industrial capital within the metropole. The treasures captured outside Europe by undisguised looting, enslavement and murder, Marx wrote, flowed back to the mother-country and were turned into capital there. Elaborating Marx's insights, myriad contemporary criticsamong them David Harvey, Rob Nixon, Silvia Federici, and Nikhil Singhhave evinced the ways in which the original act of extraction is perpetually reproduced. In dialogue with the latter thinkers, as with Marx himself, the paper proposed here will examine how two novels, Hernn Diaz's *In the Distance* (2017) and Fiston Mwanza Mujilas *Tram 83* (2015), represent the projections of extractivism across space and the endurance of extractivism across time. These texts bear witness, that is, not simply to the spatially and temporally confined violence of capital's genesis, but to the constant repetition, and planetary reverberations, of the moment of extraction. In so doing, they help clarify the particular languages of critique that emerge within, and begin to imagine a way beyond, both acute sites of dispossession and the deeper, enduring history of extractive modernity.

## **Workers' inquiry into the "anxiety epidemic": What are the radical prospects for the post-financialized subject?**

**Max Haiven (Canada Research Chair in Culture, Media and Social Justice, Lakehead University (Canada)), Aris Komporozos-Athanasίου (University College London)**

What if the much-reported epidemic of anxiety in the financialized, neoliberal university was, in part, a manifestation of a mass refusal of labour by a generation for whom all of life has been transformed into sites of speculation and extraction? With this provocative and counterintuitive thesis in mind, in this paper we present a sketch of a research project to be undertaken in the future with university students, using many of the methodologies of workers inquiry to discover the radical edge of an emerging generations political subjectivity and revolutionary prospects. Without diminishing the very real and significant challenges faced by individuals struggling with the features of what is today defined as various anxiety disorders our project takes a sociological view: why the epidemic of anxiety now? Why has its locus been the university, an institution with its own particular anxieties over funding models. Through a comparative analysis of university institutions in the UK and Canada, we suggest that the tools of workers inquiry can fruitfully be brought to bear on contextualizing the struggles of students around mental health in terms of the composition of labour and capital in a moment of financialization and its many crises. We are particularly interested in the ways in which students contend with the imposition of debt and the imperative to self-invest and become a financialized subject in a moment when all the promises associated with these ventures ring hollow for a generation consigned to a bleak future of precarity, climate disaster and rising authoritarianism. This presentation draws on a first phase of our research with university faculty and student support workers on the front lines of the anxiety epidemic and seeks feedback for our plans to advance a workers-inquiry inspired methodology to work with anxious student-workers to better understand the crisis and the potential for rebellion.

## **Hegemony Works! Deconstructing Sociological Views on Riots with Gramsci**

**Hendrik Erz (University of Bonn)**

To counter current capitalist developments such as the complete breakdown of whole ecosystems and an impending climate catastrophe, the Left needs to develop viable strategies of attaining hegemony in several central discourse fields. Still, this goal remains illusory for as long as the Left is caught up in what Mark Fisher termed "Capitalist Realism". This paper highlights a specific way in which hegemony (Antonio Gramsci) is attained by not only shifting discourses towards favourable views of the ruling class, but by shifting what is thinkable. Using the discourse set by Gustave Le Bon of "irrational" and "mad" crowds, this paper shows how the conceptualisation of crowds by Le Bon prevents sociology until today to develop a meaningful theory of riots that is able to capture not only

the visible, seemingly “irrational” action of rioters, but also their political overtones. Using this knowledge, it becomes possible to focus not on ruling discourses, but on the way we perceive the world phenomenologically. This opens up a new perspective on the notion of hegemony that goes further than simply looking at how hegemony works currently and prevents a narrow focus on only discourses.

## **Within Yet Against the State: Women’s Struggles in Late Socialist Bulgaria**

**Nikolay Karkov (State University of New York at Cortland)**

This presentation argues that, in the context of today’s disaster capitalism, the historically existing socialism of the latter half of the previous century offers important lessons for the contemporary left. Over against mainstream accounts of the socialist period as an empty time for feminism (at worst) or state patriarchy (at best), the presentation argues that the significant political and economic gains of socialist feminism were no mere crumbs handed down by the party leadership but rather the product of struggles by women and women’s organizations, often against that same (patriarchally male) leadership. Drawing on archival evidence of socialist feminist activism of the period, journalistic reports from *Zhenata Dnes*, the most popular women’s magazine in the country, and policy proposals smuggled in by women activists in official state documents, this presentation explores the context and ramification of those struggles in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Among their major consequences were unprecedented gains in the socialization of reproduction (up to three years of maternity leave, a legalized right to abortion, a sophisticated system of creches and kindergartens, etc.) and significant redefinitions of conceptions of womanhood and femininity, facilitated by strategic (if also ambiguous and personally costly) access to the instruments of state power and its official rhetoric of Marxist humanism. The presentation also engages in a comparative analysis with contemporaneous debates around social reproduction and domestic labor on both sides of the Atlantic, including the Wages for Housework campaign, and approaches critically the erasure of socialist women’s struggles in the work of contemporary feminist scholars such as Kathy Weeks and Nancy Fraser.

## **"Tronti, the workers' movement, and the party"**

**Jason E. Smith**

The recent translation of Mario Tronti’s *Workers and Capital*, the so-called Bible of Operaismo, finally provides an occasion for anglophone readers to square their assumptions about the Italian workerist current with the writings of that current’s primary theoretical voice. In this paper I will address the following questions: 1. what is the relation between Tronti’s actual theoretical project and the set of concepts and methods (workers’ inquiry, class composition, the “fragment on machines,” etc.) generally attributed to

operaismo?; 2. what is Tronti's account of the historical workers' movement's function in what he calls "capitalist development"?; and 3. what is Tronti's conception of the role of the "party" in revolutionary situations, understood in relation both to Lenin's writings and activities, and to the evolution of Togliatti's PCI in the post-Salerno turn period?

## **To think reproductive work in connection with gender oppressions, capital accumulation and social reproduction.**

**Bruna Piazzentin Martinelli (IFCH - Unicamp - Brazil)**

Paper to Marxist-Feminism Stream This paper aims to bring to discussion the first results of our current PhD research. This research has, as an objective, to understand the role of domestic and reproductive labor as a reproducer of the labor force, and to that extent, as a moment of the reproduction of variable capital. In order to do this, we aim to understand the possible relations that these labors establish with the production of value, with the accumulation of capital, as well as with the particularities of the gender oppressions in capitalist society, whether or not such labors are directly productive. In order to discuss such questions, we place our work in the discussion field constructed by Marxists Feminists, especially by Social Reproduction Feminists such as Lise Vogel and Susan Ferguson, as well as by taking Marx's categories of Capital, and Georgy Lukacs's reflections on the Ontology of the Social Being, as starting points to understanding the role of domestic and reproductive labor in the reproduction of variable capital, and its connections to the value theory, the gender oppressions, and the capitalist social reproduction.

## **Exploiting the Sea of Riches: Blue Capitalism and the Oceanic Pursuit of Growth**

**Borja Nogu Alguer (Institute of Environmental Science and Technology (ICTA) - Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona)**

The oceans have long been sites for capital accumulation and economic growth: as maritime trade routes, commodity frontiers or waste sinks, they act as the forgotten but critical spaces of industrialized societies. In recent years, leading intergovernmental organizations and environmental NGOs have sided with the maritime industries and financial capital in promoting blue economy and blue growth discourses and policy initiatives centered on the idea of the ocean as the new economic frontier. Establishing a clear historical parallel with the cornucopian and futuristic imaginations that accompanied the deep-sea discoveries of the post-war era, the proponents of the blue capitalism paradigm envision the creation, expansion, and modernization of maritime industries as the ultimate strategy to marry economic growth and environmental sustainability. However, the profound environmental impacts of key blue economy sectors such as commercial shipping point to a fundamental contradiction between increased economic activity and the ability to maintain the socioecological wellbeing of the world's seas and



coasts. Mainstream blue growth narratives and economic strategies are poised to become the ideological platform for capitals coming assault on the oceans. In response, scholars and activists concerned with the protection and sustainable use of one of humanity's last global commons are articulating a blue degrowth counter-paradigm: a critical framework to analyze how the sea acts as a conduit for notions and projects of growth as well as an exploration of sea-based emancipatory politics towards the horizon of social justice and environmental sustainability.

## **Post-work beyond FALC on the ecological necessity for a post-work society**

**Stefanie Gerold (TU Berlin), Maja Hoffmann (WU Vienna) Ernest Aigner (WU Vienna)**

Recent debates on post-work often refer to the notion of Fully Automated Luxury Communism (FALC) the idea that technology will free us from alienated, burdensome work, thus enabling more autonomy (e.g., Srnicek & Williams, 2016). However, given the ecological crisis, energy and resource use have to be reduced drastically (Kallis, 2017). This means that we cannot rely on resource- and energy-intensive technological solutions, such as robotization, to abolish work. Post-work, however, is also discussed on entirely different grounds, pointing out that despite all previous technological advances and regardless of its necessity, work has become ever more central to modern societies. This hints at deeper structural and cultural aspects that seem to remain unaffected by technological trends (e.g., Paulsen, 2018). Post-work ideas in this tradition provide highly useful imaginaries of how to realise a post-capitalist, degrowth society that is in line with biophysical limits. In this paper, we argue that work-centred societies are highly problematic, not only due to the heteronomous and alienating character of wage labour, but also due to works ecologically harmful aspects. In addition, we argue that much of the work currently performed is not serving any use value, but is instead mainly conducive to capitals interest, or in fact meaningless (so-called bullshit jobs; Graeber, 2018). We conclude that, instead of replacing human work by robots, the economy needs to be downscaled, and production and work restricted to use-value generating and ecologically sustainable activities. Graeber, D. (2018). *Bullshit jobs*. New York: Simon & Schuster. Kallis, G. (2017). Radical dematerialization and degrowth. *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society A: Mathematical, Physical and Engineering Sciences*, 375(2095). doi.org/10.1098/rsta.2016.0383. Paulsen, R. (2018). *Arbetsamhället hur arbetet verlevde teknologin* [Work society how work survived technology]. 2nd edition. Stockholm: Atlas. Srnicek, N., & Williams, A. (2016). *Inventing the Future* (revised and updated edition): *Postcapitalism and a World Without Work*. London: Verso.

## The Political and Cultural Economy of the Marxist Animal

Troy Vettese (Harvard University), Leah Kirts (None) Nathalie Joelle (Birkbeck)  
Katherine Perlo (Independent scholar) Vignesh Sridharan (New York University)

Troy Vettese, chair Nathalie Joelle, 'Gleaning Lean Culture: On Lean Logic' Since the term lean was coined to describe and disseminate the efficiency innovations of the Toyota Production System to an Anglophone audience in the late 1980s, lean thinking has spread across the world. Education, healthcare, government, energy, and agriculture are amongst many sectors increasingly adopting the methods of lean management, and attempting to do more and more with less and less. We live in lean culture. This polemical paper, presented at a university that is part of the global Lean HE initiative, connects the rhetoric of lean to its troubling source in the slaughterhouse. The research develops what I term a gleanological methodology: a genealogy of global lean technologies and their roots in the packing of lean meat. Gleaning the phrase lean culture from management handbooks for our critical lexicon innovatively connects contemporary systems of control within and across species with a term that is as specific and identifiable in how it permeates everyday language as it is global and transdisciplinary in reach. It has never been more important to name, and in so doing, call out the investments of lean culture than in our current climate crisis, in which the production of lean meat and its by-products is the largest single cause of greenhouse emissions and a leading contributor to climate change, because lean thinking does not only reproduce the technologies of slaughterhouses, but tacitly inscribes across culture the idea that there is an essential meat. Lean Logic: A Dictionary of the Future and How to Survive It, by influential British ecologist David Fleming, is an experimental distillation of his complex life work that controversially advocates extending lean management into grassroots environmental groups, and so also shifts the meaning of lean. As the popularity of Lean Logic amongst international environmental activists grows, this paper makes timely enquiries into the animal remains at stake in Fleming's idea of lean, making reference to his journalistic articles on meat and dairy production. Gleaning lean culture, revealing its animal remains, is an urgent response to the violence and ecocide encoded in the lean management of everyday life. Katherine Perlo, 'Is Scotland bad on animals? If so, how can independence help?' Scottish independence is a class issue. With right-wing Westminster holding key economic powers, Scotland is gripped by austerity, and in the 2014 referendum, independence was supported notably by the poor. Although some leftists claim that independence movements divide the working class, the diverse Scottish movement includes ethnic/cultural nationalists; self-determination-for-its-own-sake nationalists; and class-based radical independence campaigners. But most leftists and independence campaigners reject animal rights. Radical independence supporters must recognize animals as an exploited class who have only their bodies to sell. The Scottish National Party, formed to promote independence, introduced social-democratic policies but has recently moved rightwards to seek business and middle-class support. Left-wing independence campaigners oppose this. Holyrood is also bad on animals, subsidizing bloodsports tourism and rejecting a live exports ban, while improving other animal policies only under pressure. The reason may lie in profits from meat/dairy production, fishing, and to a lesser extent vivisection. Thus animals and humans alike are sacrificed to

capitalism. But Scotland also has pro-animal campaigning groups and animal-friendly parties. Veganism flourishes here. However, there is a danger of solely environmental veganism yielding to animal-exploiting technofixes paralleling the carbon offsets which spare capitalism. Independence can benefit all species by ditching Westminster austerity, turning the SNP leftwards, and strengthening pro-animal and socialist groups. Importantly, it can enable land reform. The expulsion of the peasantry delivered capitalism, and in Scotland, unequal land ownership and occupancy are still a scandal. Land redistribution would help the human working class, while land management reform could help animals by increasing plant-based agriculture and protecting wildlife. This can only happen if the Scottish working class, in solidarity with exploited animals, control their own economy.

Vignesh Sridharan, 'Rewilding Print: Notes on a History of Nature-Literacy' The 2007 and 2012 editions of the Oxford Junior Dictionary provoked, by their exclusions, some belated anxiety. Margaret Atwood and Andrew Motion signed a 2015 petition that railed against the dictionary's deletion of words related to nature and the countryside: they noted for instance that kingfisher, crocus, bluebell and heron had gone, to make way for such inessentials as broadband, bullet-point and voicemail. The dictionary's small notoriety and that of the petition eventually prompted the publication of Robert Macfarlane's *The Lost Words*, which attempts to conjure the conker, catkin and wren (lost from definition, public consciousness and a deadened Palaearctic) for young readers with gold-leaf, verse and illustrations. The petitioners against the OJD claimed their desire for herons was not just a romantic desire, but in fact Romanticism is the point. The constitution of popular ornithology and botanising, an urban culture's recovery of country scenes and rural vocabulary, the public's ability to distinguish a tree swallow from a sand martin: these are nineteenth-century products of a broad Romantic impetus in print culture that imagined and recreated (as petitioners in 2015 might imagine or recreate) a pre-industrial past of untroubled acquaintance with daffodils. Such books as *The Lost Words* are closing brackets that one can think of as opening variously with Bewick's *History of British Birds* (1797), Audubon's *Birds of America* (1827), Hardwicke's *Illustrations of Indian Zoology* (1830) or the journals of Dorothy Wordsworth. If a set of ethical obligations towards wild things depends on the knowledge that they exist, and in some profusion, how does one give a British public this knowledge? This paper will suggest some answers that rest on a history of how it was given before. If field guides, natural histories, ornithological dictionaries and botanical art books have in fact had a radical effect on the public's nature literacy in the recent past, what alternatives to the deathbed conjurations of *The Lost Words* might be apt or strategic for publishing in a period of mass extinction?

Leah Kirts, 'Vegan Tech Bros Won't Save Us' This paper explores the rise of mainstream capitalist veganism and Silicon Valley-backed plant-based meat production where consumerism is equated with activism. Adopting an ecofeminist perspective, I examine the culture of the vegan burger commodity chain and how technocratic meatless startups such as Beyond Meat and Impossible Foods exploit the discourse of environmental corporate responsibility, animal welfare and human health to increase the value of heavily-branded meatless proteins. Since its IPO in early May, Beyond Meat's share price has risen over three hundred percent, pushing the value of the company to over five billion dollars. The Beyond Burger is positioned to be an ethical alternative for the climate-concerned and health-conscious in the \$1.4 trillion meat industry, reports the Washington Post, while its privately held competitor, Impossible Foods, promises to make earth great again through heme-based products that replace

animals with bleeding plants. The supply chain for tech-heavy plant meat mirrors industrial animal agricultures track with nary a vegetable in sight; monocropped grains processed into alternative proteins in factories are then distributed along fast-food supply chains serving an end product that is sold as an efficient and ethical solution to factory farming without challenging the low-wage labor of individual factory workers and fast food employees in the commodity culture of disposability. In this world, even if the future is meatless, nature would still be dominated by capital. The concept of cruelty-free consumption allows capitalist vegans to divest in speciesism without challenging dominant white patriarchy that maintains control over labor, flora and fauna.

## Questions of History and Progress within Cultural Activism in India

Deepanshu Mahajan (University of Delhi)

Men make their own history, but they do not make it as they please; they do not make it under self-selected circumstances, but under circumstances existing already, given and transmitted from the past. The tradition of all dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brains of the living. - Karl Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* We shall fight For why we didnt until now We shall fight To accept our sentence, To keep up the memory of those Who died fighting We shall fight - Pash, *We Shall Fight Comrade* This paper is situated in the tension between these two poetic proclamations: one from Karl Marx, and the second from a poet of the Punjabi Naxalite movement, Avatar Singh Sandhu Pash. In one proclamation, past and tradition inhabit a negative character like the haunting of the dead which refuses to die and burdens the present, while in the second, the poet transforms this haunting into a source of revolutionary inspiration for struggle against injustice. We find not only an inspiration in Pashs poem but a refusal to let the dead die, a struggle to keep the dead alive in ones memory. As if, the dead do not inspire the revolution, instead, they are the objects of the revolution. This quarrel between two poetic proclamations on the question of the haunting contra remembrance of the dead is what forms the crux of this paper. This paper attempts to examine the position of past and history in the ideology of progressivism and understand the effects of such position(s) on cultural activism in India. This examination will take place by discussing in detail the ideas and works produced under the banner of two sister organisations the Progressive Writers Association (PWA) and the Indian Peoples Theatre Association (IPTA) together referred to as the progressive cultural movement. This discussion will be contextualized by charting out the growth of the progressive philosophy of history, which had its roots in the European Enlightenment and was carried forward in the works of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. As we shall see in our discussion, some of the ideas which came out of the PWA and IPTA were not always congruent to each other and the contradiction between them represented the conflict around tradition and past hinted at the beginning of the paper. This contradiction was consequential to the outlook adopted by cultural activists towards subaltern cultural forms which were being destroyed with the growth of capitalism in India. The paper will finally attempt to understand these contradictions by bringing into discussion works such as Walter Benjamins *Theses on the Philosophy of History* (1940), turning towards some of Marxs own writings, and by presenting the ideas of selected

Indian cultural activists. Keywords: Progressive Cultural Movement, Marxist Cultural Activism, Progressivism, Memory and Past, Philosophy of History, Subaltern Cultures

## **Marxs inquiry into the birth of capitalism. Why does it matter?**

**John Milios (National Technical University of Athens)**

Marx conceptualised the point of departure of capitalism through the notion of original accumulation (ursprüngliche Akkumulation). Although this concept is generally accepted by Marxists, there has always been a broad divergence of views among many of them, as to when (and how) capitalism was born. To my view, this divergence of opinions regarding the origins of capitalism reveals an equally broad divergence of opinions as to what capitalism as a system actually is. Furthermore, approaches to original accumulation focussing on the methods that violently promote(d) the capital relation, implicitly presuppose an already existing capitalist class strategy, aiming at the consolidation of wage labour and of capitalist exploitation. This fact allowed certain critics of Marx to claim that his whole analysis was based on circular reasoning: the birth of capitalism presupposes capitalism itself. However, Marx conceived original accumulation in a twofold way: on the one hand, the confrontation of, and the contact between (Marx) the money-owner and the propertyless proletarian that pre-existed capitalism, which is the process of the genesis of capital relation as such; (b) on the other, the state-driven processes which violently paved the way for the broadening and deepening of the (already-born) capital relation. The emergence of capitalism is thus understood as a singular historical process which subsequently played a catalytic role in the consolidation of capitalist social relations and their spread to other territories. After a theoretical discussion on Marx's concept of original accumulation and of some of its contemporary interpretations, the paper will focus on the Venetian social formation in late fourteenth and the fifteenth centuries, presenting the historical contingencies which ultimately led to the prevalence of the capitalist mode of production, through the formation of huge, state-owned manufactures organized on the basis of the capital wage-labour relation, the creation of a proletariat of wage-earning mariners, and the establishment of a huge internal public debt, which nurtured both advanced budgetary management and fiscal policies, and greatly expanded capitalist finance.

## **The Tragedy of the Worker**

**Richard Seymour (Salvage), Andreas Malm () Holly Jean Buck () Rosie Warren (Salvage/Verso.)**

What is the basis for revolutionary strategy in the age of extinction? We argue it must be the tragedy of the worker. As long as she works for capital, she must be her own grave-digger. Capital, which cannot appropriate fossil energy without also appropriating surplus labour, makes taxing withdrawals on the workers body even as it despoils the planet and threatens species-survival. Walter Benjamin once defined capitalism as a

permanent cult with no dogma: only the imperative, Accumulate! Accumulate! Yet it also produces, amongst other industrial effluents, a peculiar capitalist form of Bad Hope. In this disavowal the earth is a cornucopia, and the only question is its efficient and sustainable stewardship within the framework of perpetual growth, and green capitalism will finally solve the problem it has created after decades of intensifying the death-spiral. To end this energy regime is both class self-defence and the necessary condition for human survival. Almost too late, the proletariat proves to be the universal class. Yet, even if, as historians like Chad Montrie argue, the origin of ecological consciousness can be traced to the conflict between capital and labour in the birth of the industrial revolution, it does not follow that our models of working-class emancipation have been compatible with biological survival. The narrow trade-unionist politics predicated on an instrumental attitude to nature and a productivist approach to work has failed. The dream of red plenty, fossil communism, Soviet power plus electrification, now appears profoundly problematic. Realistic solutions are inadequate, and the only adequate solutions appear wildly out of reach. To overturn capitalism and achieve a habitable planet requires a farther-going revolution, not just in social relations but in infrastructures, work consumption, tastes, practices, than has hitherto been achieved. We call, not for a Deep Ecology, but for a Deep-Historical Materialism. Only the urgent extension of materialist theology into the realm of geologic Deep Time can point the way out of our extinction crisis.

## AIDS - voices, images and care

### Jakub Stanczyk (Independent Researcher)

In the general opinion AIDS epidemic has produced death and a sick body. Reading main academic texts about the epidemic one can have the impression that AIDS is a scourge homosexuals brought on themselves. My perspective comes from biographical books written by AIDS patients their partners and friends like Paul Monette, Herv Guibert, Guillaume Dustan or Edmund White. In those texts another image of the epidemic emerges. One which bases on care, help and intimacy. My paper shall draw on feminist and queer authors who write about care and intimacy. Authors like Carol Gilligan and Nel Noddings shall meet queer authors like Jose E. Muoz and Tim Dean. The main research question of my paper is what types of care, labour and intimacy did the epidemic create, influence and reshape. Using my previous idea from my paper Literary production of an HIV+ gay body, presented at HM Athens 2019, I would like to continue my inquiry into material conditions of life of AIDS patients, their bodily experience of the illness and their ways of. Coping with it. I want to show that the gay community during AIDS epidemic, since it didnt get support from the state, had to invent a number of strategies, networks and sub-communities in order to survive and take care of each other. My main thesis is that what I call living with the virus did not only kill but it also lead to establishment of new types of voices, care and intimacy.



## **Jewophobia and Zionism**

**Richard Seymour (Salvage), Sai Englert (SOAS) Barnaby Raine (Columbia University.)**

In the 21st century, antisemitic forces are resurfacing: from the United States to Hungary, from 'lone wolf' murderers to Poland's Holocaust laws. Internet subcultures thrive on antisemitic conspiracy theories. Whence the resilience of these racist beliefs? Is antisemitism a distinctive kind of conservative fetish, qualitatively different from other forms of racism? Is the modern capitalist state largely responsible for its production, or does it have other popular sources? And what role does the State of Israel have in the genesis of today's most prevalent forms of antisemitism? Given the ferocity of debates in the British Left, where this has become a wedge issue, it is vital to develop an appropriate marxist answer to these questions. In this panel, Sai Englert and Barnaby Raine debate how to do so.

## **The Politics of the Cave: Bolsonaro and the Counter-revolution in Brazil**

**Ricardo Antunes (Universidade de Campinas - Brazil)**

The first electoral option for the dominant class in the 2018 elections focused on a center-right candidacy. Incapable of growing in the electoral polls, the main opposition groups changed their course in the direction of the only candidate that could defeat Lula: Bolsonaro. But for these purposes, the ruling classes made a demand: knowing that they were dealing with a completely unprepared candidate, it was essential to provide him with an ultra-neoliberal economic team that would guarantee that their economic program would be implemented. The fact that Bolsonaro defends ultraconservative and neofascist values was easily adopted by the Brazilian dominant class who never had any beacon of democracy. Politically, Bolsonaro is similar to Orbán (Hungary), Duterte (the Philippines), and inspired by Trump. The myth, as his followers call it, has clear neofascist components. His cabinet has several military reserve ministers, possibly a demand made by the military. His party (PSL) is a chaotic and unprepared organization with ultraconservative values and neopentecostalism as their uniting factors. His cabinet is medieval to say the least. He is averse to the poor and black populations, he is a misogynist, he finds the LGBT movement repugnant, and he is against giving indigenous community autonomy, among other regressive platforms. Whether these propositions will or won't be implemented will depend on the capability of the workers and social movements (feminist, youth, black, indigenous, environmentalist, etc.) and the unions, leftist parties, to resist and put forth efforts that can effectively hinder the fascistization of the government, a kind of lumpen-government. The spectacular general education strike on May 15 marked a first and decisive mass action against Bolsonaro, is currently experiencing a crisis of unpredictable proportions.

## **Anti-extinction alliances: towards a 21st century ecosocialism**

**Stefania Barca (Center for Social Studies, University of Coimbra)**

Climate change and earth-systems collapse are 21st century forms of class war. Never before has this fact become so clear in mass consciousness. As (eco)Marxist scholars, we need to reflect on how to turn this awareness into revolutionary ecosocialist praxis. This panel calls for a collective conversation on how, to counter extinction capitalism, we need anti-extinction intersectional alliances that tackle class, gender/sexuality, race/colonial, and species oppression together as these are co-constitutive of extinction capitalism. In other words, on how we can rethink and theorize ecosocialism in decolonial/feminist form. Responding to this call, the panel will draw together contributions that address the theoretical bases of various socioecological struggles and practices, analysing their relationship with (eco)Marxist theory and their potentialities for converging towards a 21st century ecosocialist praxis. The panel will be formed of two sessions: the first will offer analyses of different political theories and praxis (ecofeminism, social ecology and democratic confederalism, commoning, posthumanism) that have inspired or are now inspiring a variety of social movements to counteract the ecological crisis in different contexts. The second session will focus on ontological struggles around labor and value, face to their reconfiguration in the current phase of capitalist political ecology.

## **Exploitation**

**Andrea Coveri (University of Urbino (Italy)), Riccardo Bellofiore (University of Bergamo (Italy))**

In Capital, Volume 1, Marx breaks with Ricardos labour theory of value turning it into the foundation of capitalist exploitation. In Marxs theory of value (versus Ricardos) it is crucial to distinguish conceptually the determinate direct labour resulting after production (a given amount) from the living labour expended within production (a fluid, which is indeterminate until the end of production). It is equally fundamental to clearly have in mind that labour power is attached to wage workers as human beings, and that living labour is the use of that labour power: it is, therefore, the consumption of workers themselves. The paper put in analytical form the Marxian macro-monetary theory of capitalist production. In a first part a survey is provided of the usual approaches: the dual system, the iterative approach, the new interpretation(s). A 'living labour' alternative is proposed, based on the writings of Augusto Graziani and Riccardo Bellofiore. However, a proper understanding of Marxs notion of exploitation must distance itself from a merely mathematical terrain of discourse and from the spurious connection with the so-called transformation problem. All the discussions have been tainted by the idea that exploitation has to do with the possibility to solve surplus value into surplus labour: this position reveals a limited, Ricardian understanding of the specificity of exploitation in Marxian theory. The notion of exploitation that is appropriate to Marxian theory cannot be reduced to a merely distributive matter, whether that is understood as a physical surplus over and above workers consumption or as the surplus labour behind gross money profits. It is

rather grounded on the peculiar feature that, under capitalism, the whole of the living labour extracted from free and equal wage workers is a forced and abstract-alienated performance of labour as activity. It is in this pumping out of living labour of Capital as a vampire that we find the most important meaning of Marxian exploitation: the direct compulsion to do labour and surplus labour. Exploitation is therefore co-extensive with the whole working day. It is paradoxical that one finds a correct understanding of the meaning of Marxian exploitation where one would least expect it, in Sraffa. Exploitation, Sraffa wrote in 1940 and implicitly maintained in his 1960 book, is nothing but a prolongation of living labour over and above necessary labour. The distinction in the notion of labour between the three aspects of living labour power, labour power and living labour, on the one hand, and the insistence on the variability of the living labour made liquid by capital within the period, are the fundamental keys to the return to Marx on exploitation: an interpretation which is far away from Neoclassicism, Neoricardianism, but also from the old and new Marxist approaches.

## **Freedom is an Endless Climate Camp: A comparison between the ideological tenets and their temporal development in Reclaim the Power, Ende Gelände and Extinction Rebellion**

**Alice Swift (University of Manchester)**

Reclaim the Power (UK), Ende Gelände (Germany) and Extinction Rebellion (XR) are all products of the British Climate Camps of 2006-2010. They are social movement organisations (SMO) that seek to generate large amounts of people to take (non-violent) direct action against the prospect of extreme climate change. Despite some stating that XR has taken off where the Climate Camp left off (Simon Farlie, *The Land Magazine*, 2018) the SMO Reclaim the Power has been operating since 2013 to mobilise thousands to take action in the name of Social, Economic and Ecological Justice (website) developing towards the overarching term of climate justice in recent years. They have predominantly focussed on the struggle against fracking with a secondary focus on the expansion of coal mining. Set up by many of the radicals of the Climate Camps they have been driven by an anti-capitalist and intersectional ideology which in previous years was often implicit in their organising preferring to not be explicitly anti-capitalist for fear of scaring off potential new recruits to the movement. A plural SMO RtP is driven by radical politics that it has struggled to bring to the fore as radicals compromise on explicit radical politics to keep moderates on board or to attract new actors. By comparison the SMO Ende Gelände (It Stops Here) has been overtly anti-capitalist and very explicit about their radical politics and foundation. EG grew out of the Klimacamps which also inspired by the British Climate Camps decided to use the well-used protest camp tactic developed and refined in Germany by the historic anti-nuclear movement. They have not struggled to gain numbers for their mass actions and they have continued to grow in numbers since their first mass action in 2015 to reach a peak of 6,500 participants at their last camp in October 2018. Most recently Extinction Rebellion has exploded onto the scene demanding space in the public conversation about the threat of severe climate change. A SMO years in the making from some former Climate

Camp activists it has clearly declared itself to be beyond politics and beyond left and right. They see change in society as a numbers game and seek to achieve around 3% of the population to be active in climate activism. They have formulated a very particular Theory of Change in collaboration with the Radical Think Tank which has deliberately set itself apart from the rest of the radical left in denying itself an explicit anti-capitalist, radical or intersectional politics. This comes from the belief of their founders that they must not be explicit as they will not generate the numbers required for the change they seek. Despite the SMO being only about a year old this is already being challenged by a number of their influx of activists. These movements come from the same lineage but to what extent does their politics differ and how explicit are they about it? How has their politics changed over time? How has this affected the demographic of the people activated into taking direct action in their movement? (This abstract is submitted by a PhD student who is focussing on the SMOs Reclaim the Power and Ende Gelände for their thesis on the European climate justice protest camp movement and has been active in both movements for their duration. She also works in collaboration with XR on a number of projects from a point of critical engagement but would not call herself an XR activist).

## **The origin of abstraction and alienation in the wrong form of societal mediation and its effects on social relations of nature and subject constitution in the anthropocene.**

**Julian Kuppe (independent)**

The suggested paper attempts to explain how the abstraction and alienation, that are so dramatically disastrous for the natural conditions of human societies, have its origins in the capitalist form of societal mediation and what that means for the materiality of nature and for the psychic constitution of the social subjects in view of the current state of the world, especially in respect of the present societal relations to nature how they are expressed in the notion of the anthropocene. For more than fifty years the ongoing destruction of the natural conditions of civilizational human life by the the silent compulsion of capitalist relations of production has been visible and was criticized by marxist and other critical theories. All of this criticism has had dramatically little effect on the way societies developed since. It is as if the abstractions produced by the false mediation would literally eat through the materiality of nature, the eternal natural foundation of human life, as Marx called it. How is it possible, that human societies are reproduced in a way that is so destructive to its own human and natural foundation that it will ultimately lead to incapacity for its own reproduction? There is a built in irrationality in this way of societal mediation through the commodity form and the value form, despite all the rationality invested in producing the goods as efficiently as possible. Following Marx and the critical theory of the Frankfurt School, the origin of this irrationality is the wrong form of societal mediation, that creates a social force which is not exercised collectively. The societal process without subject as the process that became independent against the particular human beings as the producers of this process is exactly the meaning of alienation and fetishization that Marx described as a core principle of capitalism. The abstractions

produced by this form of societal mediation, that is to say abstract time and abstract space, are destructive not only in regard to the natural foundations of human life, but also in regard to the psychic foundations of human beings to reflect their living conditions in a rational way. The form of societal mediation brings forth a form of subject constitution that is bound to imaginary ideas, detached from the material world of objects, which can easily lead to the denial of the constitutive dependence on the materiality of nature and other human beings. What then must lead ultimately to the dissolution of these imaginary ideas? It is the priority of the object, a certain form of the reality principle. What is currently taking place is a fundamental confrontation between two different reality principles: the reality principle of capitalist relations of production on the one hand and the reality principle of the eternal natural conditions of human life on the other. The concept of the priority of the object by Adorno or the concept of the rift in the interdependent process of social metabolism by Marx could explain, which principle will eventually prevail. To sharpen the perception of the consequences of the priority of the object, science is fundamentally needed. Today science is not anymore only the essential tool for the instrumental reason of the capitalist relations of production, as suggested in the Dialectic of Enlightenment, but at the same time the tool to recognize the priority of the object.

## **2.0 Social Protest Movements and trade unionism in Portuguese call and contact centres**

**Isabel Bonito Roque (Centre for Social Studies, Coimbra University)**

The challenges for labour brought by the digital revolution of the 21st century are complex, with social, economic and technological dimensions, creating a rise in precarious and vulnerable work. Call and contact centres represent a part of the service sector that exemplifies many aspects of technological innovation, being one of the fastest developing forms of electronic work. The spread of the call and contact centre industry represents one of the fastest developing forms of electronic work, emerging not so much as a single industry but as a business function which crosses several industries in a post-industrial service economy, accompanying the proliferation of deregulation and privatisation programmes and the contraction of the welfare state. Between 2011 and 2014, several social protest and anti-austerity movements, connected with digital labor, such as Precios Inflexveis, Mayday, Ferve, Precariaces and Indignados, had a major impact in the Portuguese society. Stemming from them, the Call Centre Workers Trade Union emerged as an alter-globalization movement, creating a greater international awareness for social struggle amongst trade unions and precarious workers in general. These are some of the examples of virtual-real activism, working as a powerful weapon at the service of media activists to support their activities and causes. Through the workers inquiry approach, as well as thirty interviews conducted between 2014 and 2018 with present and former call centre and contact workers, trade union delegates, and activists involved in social protest movements, it is aimed at listening to their voices and experiences in order to analyze the engagement between trade unions and social mobilization. It is crucial to examine how these novel social movements organize themselves and how became relevant for the awakening of a class consciousness of call and contact centre workers, fighting for their

rights, as well as its importance for the Portuguese society and precarious workers in general?

## **The boundaries of capitalist nature: ontology and its historical and material conditions**

**Janne Synjkangas (University of Jyväskylä)**

The era of ecological crises is also an era of redefinition of our relationship to nature. Deeply rooted ontological categories dividing humanity and nature are losing legitimacy alongside with their collapsing material conditions. What has been considered as natural, such as climate, can no longer be considered to belong to the domain of things that are indifferent to human endeavors. At the same time it is becoming harder and harder to maintain the illusion that any facet of culture, such as economy, politics or science could operate in purely autarchist fashion, unconcerned by anything else but their own immanent laws. We should count ontology among these facets of human culture and ask a two-fold question: how do the ecological crises matter to ontology and how does ontology matter to ecological crises? As an attempt to think historical and material conditions of ontology on the basis Marxist environmental theory, this paper sets out by designating “world” as the basic unit of ontological analysis and defining it as any historically specific totality of referential meaning-relations. World has material conditions (which are often referred to as ‘nature’) that set limits to what is possible for a world from the perspective of its current historical configuration. At the same time a world gives those conditions their historical meaning. What is possible for a world is limited not only by its material conditions themselves, but also by how that world defines those conditions. This two-directional ontological interdetermination takes shape through social and practical engagements with nature. While ecological crises are diminishing the horizon of possibilities for capitalist mode of production, spaces might be opening for new ways to reorganize our historical relationships to our material conditions, perhaps with different kinds of limits than those which appear within capitalist nature as scarcity of sinks and raw materials. On this basis ontology should be rethought in the light of its intertwinement with ecology through the interdetermination of historical worlds and their material natures.

## **Revisiting FEMINISM SEDUCED**

**Hester Eisenstein (Queens College and the Graduate Center, The City University of New York)**

It is 10 years since FEMINISM SEDUCED was published. (See *Feminism Seduced: How Global Elites Use Women’s Labor and Ideas to Exploit the World*, Routledge, 2009.) In that book I argued (along with Nancy Fraser and others) that contemporary mainstream or hegemonic feminism was serving as a kind of handmaiden to the interests of globalized capitalism. Since then the rise of Feminism for the 99% around the world, from Ireland to Argentina to Poland and the US, has in effect given shape to an oppositional feminism that



links women's struggles to an explicitly anti-capitalist stance. I will extend my analysis in FS to the ideological and material implications of this development.

## **Furio Jesi Cultura di destra: Deconstructing Fascist Mythology Through Literary Analysis**

**Giorgio Chiappa (Freie Universitt Berlin)**

Historian and literary scholar Furio Jesi is something of an insider tip from the intellectual panorama of Post-War Italy his independency from institutional academia and his early death at the beginning of the 1980s sadly truncated the reception of his work even in his own country, up until recently. That is a rather lamentable fact: the scope of his scholarship covers a wide range of masterfully conducted studies on the mythologies of the ancient world, on modern European (and specifically German) literatures and cultures, and on the question of how ideology and politics can seep through literary and cultural artifacts. A rather idiosyncratic Socialist intellectual, Jesi defied most of the intellectual paradigms of his time, and for a contemporary Marxist perspective on literature, one of his publications stands out particularly: his 1979 essay collection *Cultura di destra* (Right-Wing Culture). His reflections on right-wing culture unmask what he defines as the ideas without words of fascist and reactionary movements in Italy, Germany and other parts of Europe including France and Rumania. He tracks down these ideas in popular writers like Julius Evola, Mircea Eliade, Liala and even in respectable canonic authors like E.T.A. Hoffmann and Thomas Mann by examining the construction of an irrationalistic, reactionary ensemble of myths and received opinions that serve as an exoteric foil to cover up the esoteric truths of power relations and exploitation behind fascistoid movements. Jesi could thereby make the most of his grounding in the study of mythology and apply it to a modern and contemporary context with a view of deconstructing the linguistic, ideological and cultural foundations of Fascist ideology in its different incarnations across Europe. My paper would serve as a brief presentation of Furio Jesi's intellectual career and works (with special reference to *Cultura di destra*) to an international audience who might still be unaware of its value due to a lack of translation. This would be meant as an invitation to rediscover and perhaps divulge his work, as well as an introduction to his peculiar brand of demystifying, materialist literary analysis as a powerful and cross-cultural tool that stands the test of time.

## **Tracing the Marks of the Classless Society in Ursula K. Le Guins Utopia: Always Coming Home**

**Ebru Deniz Ozan ( Kutahya Dumlupinar University The Department of Political Science and International Relations Kutahya-Turkey)**

In social theory, the imaginations of the alternative non-capitalist society in which there is no inequality based on class, race and gender maintain their importance whether in the

form of the design of a future society or in the form of micro practices such as alternative economies, free universities or social centers. These attempts and utopianism in general are criticised for being idealist and saying nothing about material contradictions or for being totalitarian, end-ist and not being open to change (Martell, 2018). This article considers Ursula's utopia -Always Coming Home-, as a response to both criticisms of idealism and totalitarianism. First, it deals with class-based mechanisms rooted in material conditions of today's societies. Secondly, it presents a changeable, always reconstituted society and the self. The article traces the marks of a communist, classless society in Ursula's utopia focusing on the relationship with nature and the property relations in Kesh society, more specifically focusing on the concept of ownership, greed, competition, technology, giving, exploitation and also focusing on the concept of change, totality, self, the hinge and coming home in the book. Luke Martell (2018) Utopianism and Social Change: Materialism, Conflict and Pluralism, Capital&Class, 1-18. Ursula K. Le Guin (2013) *Hesperides* (Always Coming Home), ed: Cemal Yardmc, 3. Bask, Ayrnt: stanbul.

## **Workers organisations and the fetishism of the trade union form**

**maurizio atzeni (Centre for labour Relations Ceil Conicet)**

In the field of labour studies and industrial relations there is a long standing tradition common to both the reformist and Marxist left of focusing on the trade unions as the par excellence form of workers organisation. The reasons behind this focus derive from the long historical role of the trade unions movement in the defense of workers both in the workplace and at political level. However, changes in the global political economy in the last two decades have completely altered the productive and social landscape in which trade unions have historically been inserted and this in both core and non core countries, putting into questions the usefulness of this form of workers organisation as focus of research and opening the ground for a theoretical rethinking. I argue that despite this adverse context for trade union organizations, labour relations research has remained trapped into a logic which I call, paraphrasing Marx, trade union fetishism. Instead of producing new lines of research and critical reflections on the current possibilities of workers organization within an increasingly fragmented and dispersed working class, studies continue to remain attached to a trade union centered perspective limiting advances in the field. In this paper I aim to criticize this perspective not by arguing that trade unions are destined to the bin of history or that other forms of workers organization should be preferable. Rather my critique should be read as a methodological call to abandon the comfort zone of the capital labour relation, made of known actors and institutions and of labour studies symbiotic relationship with a trade unions represented working class to advance the field of study toward a truly working class analysis, based on actually existing social processes of struggle and not on pre-conceived forms and actions.

## **Socialist strategy at the moment of global climate chaos**

**Jonathan Neale (campaign against climate change)**

Maybe Green New Deals will win through, and we will avoid the horrors of runaway global heat and climate chaos. But probably not. For fifteen years I have been thinking about what socialists can do if we reach that point. That starts with thinking about the probable political and economic situation. The usual assumptions feature small bands of isolated savages wandering in the ruins. This dystopia is a Hobbesian, elitist fantasy. What is far more likely is tanks on the streets, and a dictatorship talking in ways that combine far right and deep green ideologies. They will tell us that we have consumed far too much, and that we must tighten our belts. Then they will build a new green inequality. This will go hand in hand with racism, hatred for foreigners and refugees and border walls, and the sexual damage of bullies. In an imploding economy, the new order will require enormous cruelty to keep the new inequality in place. Nor should we forget that the new order may also be wrapped in the red flag. The result will be suffering on much larger scale than the last terrible time, the middle of the twentieth century. But the massacres, famines and cruelties of that period provide some signposts for what we will face. So do the effects of climate change in Afghanistan, Syria, but especially Darfur and Sudan. The latter reminds us that the moment of runaway change is not the end of a long struggle, but the beginning. So how do socialists organize now, with the probability of that terrible future in mind? And what do we say, how can we hope to resist, and who can we hope to resist with, if and when we reach that future? This paper opens that discussion. Jonathan Neale has been a climate activist since 2005. He helped to organize global climate demonstrations from 2006 to 2009, and has worked with union-backed climate jobs campaigns in Britain, South Africa, Norway and Portugal. He has a doctorate in social history from Warwick, and writes plays, novels and nonfiction, including *A Peoples History of the Vietnam War* and *Stop Global Warming*. He edited *One Million Climate Jobs*, and is now writing a book on *Good Sense, Climate Jobs and the Green New Deal* with Andreas Ytterstad.

## **Neoliberal Workers: Unemployed University Graduates in Tunisia**

**Kira Brenner (SOAS, University of London)**

This paper analyses changes in labour markets following neoliberal structural adjustment programmes in Tunisia, focusing specifically unemployed university graduates. New types of work, created through the adoption of structural adjustment programmes, demands the creation of new types of workers, including those in long-term unemployment. While there are many theories that purport to explain the rise of the neoliberal worker (Standing, 2011; Hardt and Negri, 2000), however these theories do not engage in adequate analysis of labour market changes. This paper argues that Tunisian neoliberal capitalism needs unemployed university graduates for several reasons, including acting as a disciplining force and as a reserve army of labour. While unemployed university graduates are not traditionally considered workers in much of the literature, they have organised and mobilised around the identity of unemployed worker. While conditions among university

graduates differ across the country, they organise around demands for employment, primarily within the public sector. This analysis shows that understanding the neoliberal worker requires an analysis of state-level labour markets, as well as an analysis of the states changing role in social reproduction. The data for this paper is drawn from multiple Tunisian government sources, including three development plans, as well as semi-structured interviews with unemployed university graduates in Tunisia in June-July 2018.

## **A>Conclusions without Premises=: Is there an Aesthetic in Althusser=s Aleatory Materialism?@**

**Thomas Carmichael (Dept. of English and Writing Studies, Centre for Theory and Criticism, University of Western Ontario London CANADA N6A 5B7)**

A>Conclusions without Premises=: Is there an Aesthetic in Althusser=s Aleatory Materialism?@ In a recent lecture, tienne Balibar reminds us that it is impossible to understand the trajectory of Althusser=s thought without its investment in cultural criticism, or at least in the metaphors of cultural production. Althusser, Balibar suggests, might in fact best be understood as Aa stage director in the field of theory.@ Though the focus of his remarks in his 2015 lecture is Althusser=s politics of ideology, it is nonetheless significant for my argument that Balibar specifically points to Althusser=s late work, the posthumously published, Machiavelli and Us, as an important instance of Althusser=s Aonce again rewriting the dramaturgy of ideology and its internal tensions.@ My paper explores the relation between Althusser=s cultural criticism, his essays on literature, theatre, and art, and his later aleatory materialism, his final position in philosophy. My paper draws upon both recently published texts from the Althusser archives, and unpublished archival material. The paper attempts to read a cultural criticism in aleatory materialism, even as it demonstrates the persistence of the rewriting of the dramaturgy of the collective in his last texts. Thomas Carmichael Department of English and Writing Studies Centre for the Study of Theory and Criticism University of Western Ontario London, CANADA N6A 3K7 tomc@uwo.ca

## **Mario Tronti's Copernican Revolution**

**Andrew Anastasi (Viewpoint Magazine; City University of New York)**

Mario Tronti has been one of the most innovative and radical contributors to the development of Marxist theory in post-war Europe. But his work, although increasingly discussed in Anglophone Marxist circles, has remained largely untranslated into English. This year will see the publication of two volumes of work from the classical period of Tronti's "political workerism": the long-awaited English translation of *Workers & Capital*, the "bible of operaismo," from Verso Books, as well as Mario Tronti's *Copernican Revolution* [provisional title], a newly edited collection of public talks, personal letters, and political dispatches written during the same period, published by Common Notions. Drawing from these new translations, this paper will recapitulate the essential historical

and methodological premises of Trontis “Leninist critique of Marx” from the viewpoint of working-class politics. It will also provide the audience with some reflections on what use activists and theorists might make of Trontis work fifty years after its original production.

## **Race production and labour exploitation as the basis of public security policies in Bolsonaros Brazil.**

**Joao Guilherme Leal Roorda (Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro)**

This paper seeks to demonstrate the importance of the public security discourse in the surge of the Brazilian far-right. Both the federal government of Jair Bolsonaro and local governors, like Rio de Janeiro's Wilson Witzel, have been adopting a belicist rhetoric of war against bandidos (criminals), on behalf of the cidadãos de bem (good citizens). Police killings have achieved record numbers in many states. For example, in the first three months of 2019, 434 people (about seven a day) were killed by Rio de Janeiro's police force alone, the biggest number ever recorded. Besides, Bolsonaro's Justice Minister, Sergio Moro, has proposed a Bill that will promote impunity of police killings. I posit that the construction of the apparently colourless enemy has a racial basis, and operates according to Brazilian racism by abnegation (racismo por denegao). Both discourse and policy reproduce race, creating zones of nonbeing, with precarious lives and killable subjects. I conclude showing that public security policies are functional in two ways. On the one hand, the creation of a public enemy allows a diversion from the real origin of social problems, the crisis of capitalism. On the other, the creation of these zones of nonbeing disciplines the working classes, both black and non-black, to accept the conditions of superexploitation of labour force that abounds in dependent capitalism.

## **The Rise of Sovereign Wealth Funds: (Re)Rethinking State Sovereignty in Contemporary Capitalism**

**Ali Mert Ipek (Middle East Technical University)**

Sovereign Wealth Fund (SWF) is a government-controlled investment vehicle which is created to manage foreign exchange assets commonly derived from the current-account surpluses, and which aims to achieve diverse financial objectives for macroeconomic purposes. SWFs have been in existence for more than sixty years now. These sovereign investors, however, caught attention with scepticism only recently, especially in the advanced capitalist economies (ACEs), as the number of SWF establishments by the developing and emerging capitalist economies (DECEs) with poor democracy record has grown dramatically since the beginning of new millennia. Thereby SWFs have been initially portrayed as hostile predators and Trojan horses under the administrative control of DECEs whose policy-orientation is supposedly driven by a hidden political agenda aimed at invading or destroying the Western economies and threatening their sovereignty. The global financial crisis ironically reserved these images for some observers, making them

white knights since SWFs run by DECEs have bolstered the international financial system in the time of need, although the others kept emphasising the detrimental impact of the increasing role of the state in economic sphere at both domestic and international level. Today SWFs continue to grow in significance and exercise more economic power than ever before. These novel institutions no doubt occupy an important place at the very heart of state-market relations. This makes them valuable object of inquiry for the development of a comprehensive understanding as regard to not only the characteristics of the current global economic landscape but also the future trajectory of capitalism because they are uniquely situated at the intersection of discussions concerning globalisation, state sovereignty and neoliberal financialisation. Notwithstanding there has been a proliferation of studies undertaken by scholars from various disciplines in the last decade with a quest to account for the place of SWFs in contemporary capitalism, the conundrum posed by these institutions is still yet to be fully overcome. The substantial body of literature involves significant researches focusing on different aspects of SWFs such as their investment strategies, governance or stated objectives. However there have been only few meaningful attempts to go beyond being merely descriptive in explaining such a global phenomenon and establish an adequate theoretical framework for the study of SWFs that at the same time urges us to rethink the relevance of the globalist-cum-neoliberal belief that the state sovereignty has been systematically undermined by the rise of financial globalisation in particular. For many within the institutionalist current, the constraining effects of globalisation are exaggerated, and the state as an autonomous unit rather preserves its central role in the international economy thanks to its transformation capacity. The surge of SWFs in this respect has been seen as the reassertion of state sovereignty especially for DECEs. These insightful contributions however carry certain shortcomings due to the state-centrism in their analyses. As to the understanding of SWFs more importantly they remain unchallenged. This paper calls their assumptions into question and intends to fulfil the void in the SWF literature by critically engaging with the state-centric accounts. It problematizes the state-market dichotomy so as to develop a genuine explanatory framework based upon historical materialist perspective. It contends that the issues surrounding SWFs could be better understood if the historical specificity of these sovereign investors in capitalist development is taken into account. This would also allow us to reconsider the debate on state sovereignty in contemporary capitalism since such a perspective help us to grasp SWFs in relation to the changing dynamics of capitalism and the reconfiguration of state-market relations.

## **Value, rent, labour and the capitalist appropriation of nature**

**Elisa Greco (Sustainability Research Institute, University of Leeds), Elia Apostolopoulou (University of Cambridge, Geography Department)**

Panel proposal for the Historical Materialism Conference 2019 Panel title: Value, rent, labour and the capitalist appropriation of nature Panel organisers: Elisa Greco (University of Leeds, Sustainability Research Institute) and Elia Apostolopoulou (University of Cambridge, Geography Department) Discussant: Bill Adams (University of Cambridge, Geography Department) TBC The global economic crisis along with the post-2008



acceleration of the financialization of nature have breathed new life into the relevance of Marx's labour theory of value to discussions on the capitalist appropriation of nature and its relation to the accumulation of capital (Andreucci et al., 2017; Apostolopoulou et al., 2018; Huber, 2017, 2018; Purcell et al., 2019). In this panel, we aim to contribute to and further expand this emerging dialogue on the importance of the value analytics for contemporary work on the valuation of nature and its financialisation by adding two aspects that have been surprisingly absent from current debates: the centrality of class and the relevance of the Marxist theory of rent (Greco and Apostolopoulou, in press). By taking a distance from existing analyses who tend to characterise the shift to environmental markets as a manifestation of the commodification of nature, we draw on Marx's labour theory of value and on the theory of rent (e.g. Burkett, 2006; Harvey, 2006; Fine and Lapavistas, 2000; Marx, 1894, 1887; Swyngedouw, 2012;) to show that several instances of the economic valuation of nature, including biodiversity and carbon offsets, are cases of rent extraction (Apostolopoulou et al., 2018; Felli, 2014; Greco, 2015). By discussing new theoretical advances and applications to empirical cases on financialised investments based on nature which have a component of rent land grabbing and wind energy in Mexico, land grabs and the assetisation of land and rent-bearing commodities - our goal is to push forward the value analytics by re-establishing Marx's theory of rent as a quintessentially social theory of social relations (Murray, 2000) that can advance our understanding of the capitalist destructive appropriation of nature. We also pay particular attention to labour relations necessary to sustain carbon (Jones, 2009) and biodiversity (Apostolopoulou et al., 2018) offsets, a so far largely ignored aspect in empirical research. We argue that understanding labour is crucial not only for defining the social relations behind the valuation of nature but also for pushing forward our understanding of how to change them. The rent component reorganises structures of property which have to be studied through empirical analysis of specific cases, distinguishing among monopoly, absolute and differential rents, and between differential rent I and II and acknowledging the consequences in terms of class relations. The panel is a first step towards shifting research into labour questions arising from climate and biodiversity rents, the valuation of nature and its financialization while also reflecting on how to organise scholar-activist alliances that bridge existing struggles over rent with struggles over value. The political mapping of the transfer of value through the extraction of rent can push the analysis forward to strategise on the role of labour and the implications of financialised nature on class dynamics and class struggles in the current climate crisis conjuncture contributing to the recovery of ecological politics as class politics.

Paper contributions 1. Lourdes Alonso Serna (University of Manchester)  
lourdes.alonsoserna@postgrad.manchester.ac.uk Title: Land grabbing and value grabbing. The conflicts over the redistribution of rent in the deployment of wind farms in Oaxaca, Mexico Abstract: Over the last few years, there has been a massive deployment of wind farms in Oaxaca, a Southern state in Mexico. In 2017, Oaxaca held 60% of wind energy's total installed capacity. However, this massive development is fraught with conflict. Different sectors of the local population have questioned, and to a certain extent, challenged wind energy. On the one hand, some social movements complain that utilities, along with the state, have not included local communities in the design and decision process and, thus, oppose wind farm deployment. On the other hand, landholders have

complained of the low rents they get from wind companies, but they do not reject wind projects. While the opposition to wind energy has been widely studied (Dunlap, 2018; Dunlap, 2017a, 2017b, 2017c; Howe, 2015; Howe, 2013; Howe & Boyer, 2015; Diego, 2018; Selwood & Valdivia, 2018), landholders stance towards wind energy is overlooked. This paper aims to address this gap by bringing agrarian political economy and political ecology into dialogue. Recent research in the agrarian political economy has focused on a new wave of land deals that are taking place in the global South. Whether for the growth of new commercial crops (such as biofuels) or speculation, land transactions have soared since the first decade of the 21st century. This new wave of land deals is called land grabbing (Borras & Franco, 2011; Borras & Franco, 2013; Li, 2014, McMichael, 2012). While, political ecology has focused on capitals major shift towards different forms of rent extraction (Zeller, 2007; Felli, 2014; Andreucci et al., 2017; Kay, 2017). Value grabbing, or the appropriation of value through rent, is pivotal in contemporary class and social struggles around the world (Andreucci et al., 2017: 29). The presentation builds on this literature to tease out the conflict for rent redistribution between landholders and wind companies. It address the past conflicts over land in the region of study and the political arrangements to create private land titles as wind companies arrived in the region. It also presents the different struggles over the appropriation and distribution of rents.

2. Callum Ward (University of Leuven) and Erik Swyngedouw (University of Manchester). Note: this paper has been accidentally submitted as individual paper (submission ID 1401) but it is part of this panel. Presented by Callum Ward, callum.ward@kuleuven.be Title: Producing Assets. Abstract: Karl Polanyi argued in *The Great Transformation* that land (as well as labour and money) are fictitious or pseudo-commodities. This view echoes Marx's argument that (virgin) land has both use value and exchange value but no value, thereby also insisting on the distinct place of land in the political economy of capitalism. In other words, land is not a commodity like any other but requires particular theoretical, practical and political attention. Yet land (and its appurtenances) has always been central to, and in recent years pivotal for, sustaining the expanded capital circulation process and the capitalist accumulation dynamics. In particular, the relationship between financialization and the appropriation/transformation of land (in the form of urban land, extractive resources, agricultural production, or ecological services) has the forefront of both local and global accumulation strategies. The problem of land has always been a vexed one. In this paper, we shall return to the land question as Marx and subsequent generations of Marxist scholars examined it. Specific attention will be paid to the particular nature of monetary returns that can seemingly be extracted from land, namely rent. The production and distribution of rent, and its central co-ordinating role in contemporary capitalism, as well as the relationship between rent production and the expanding circulation of fictitious (financial) capital will be highlighted. On the basis of this rehearsal of Marxist rent theory, we shall point to how the possibilities for rent production and extraction resides fundamentally in the process of assetization. The latter refers to the socially, politically, and culturally contested process through which land (or other things) is turned into an asset that provides the potential basis for its insertion in the capitalist circulation and valorization process. The making of an asset articulates not only around the imposition of exclusive (private) property relations but also involves the formation of a wide range of institutional and regulatory configurations that sustain the making of an asset, and its

transformation into a financialized and fictitious capital product. These processes will be illustrated through a range of case-studies, varying from urban land dynamics to climate mitigation projects. The paper will conclude that assetization is a necessary complement to financialization. It is through the process of assetization that social (class) struggle unfolds most intensely, and around which divergent political claims crystallize in the present choreography of capitalist transformation.

3. Tom Purcell (University of Leeds Beckett) [tfpurcell@outlook.com](mailto:tfpurcell@outlook.com) Title: Rent-bearing commodities and the accumulation of capital Abstract: The cogency of Marx's theory of rent and its applicability to different spheres of capitalist production and distribution has been the subject of intense, but interspersed, periods of academic debate. The recent resurgence of interest in the valuation, financialisation and commodification of nature has rekindled debate with particular focus being dedicated to the politics of distribution and value appropriation. Notwithstanding important insights, to date, most have confined rent to the realm of distribution and none, so far, has fully linked rents to the circulation and accumulation of capital. Indeed, the way in which much of this research has been subsumed under the moniker of rentiership has tended to weaken the analytical link between value and rent. Drawing from new directions in rent theory (Iigo Carrera 2017), this paper argues that we should theorize the value composition of commodities produced on the land rather than restricting analyses to the extraction of value from the sphere of distribution. To do so the paper forwards an analytic which focuses on ground rent bearing commodities as a way to think through wider circuits of ground rent appropriation and forms of class struggle implicated in the transfer of rent. This reading encompasses both primary commodities and immaterial commodities where natural and artificial forms of monopoly respectively, mediate the production and circulation of surplus value.

4. Elisa Greco (University of Leeds) and Elia Apostolopoulou (University of Cambridge) [eligreco@yahoo.com](mailto:eligreco@yahoo.com) [elia.apostolopoulou@gmail.com](mailto:elia.apostolopoulou@gmail.com) Title: Value, rent and nature: the centrality of class Abstract: The last two years have seen a renewed interest in rethinking theorizations of value among geographers. In this presentation, we argue that a focus on value could serve as a unifying concept for studying capitalist natures moving forward the highly fragmented literature on neoliberal natures. Marx's labour theory of value offers a powerful analytical tool towards this direction by enabling us to understand variation while speaking across different places, contexts, and resources, bringing together cases that may otherwise appear disparate. We aim to show the importance of a Marxist approach by organising our contribution around three important aspects that we consider capable to bring about more theoretical clarity advancing current debates and offering concrete recommendations for future theoretical and empirical research. Firstly, we argue that current debates need to refocus from whether nature contributes to material wealth to whether and how nature relates to the value-form under capitalism. Secondly, we highlight the need for a systematically joint analysis of value and rent to understand the role of nature in capitalism. Such an analysis leads to a focus on class and class struggle and requires interdisciplinary collaborations between nature-society geographers and other scholars working within the value theoretical framework, including political economists, to bridge current struggles over rent and over value. Thirdly, we emphasize that the value analytics is only imposed as long as capitalism is the dominant mode of production and,

therefore, beyond capitalism we do not need either alternative valuation systems or value but rather a new vocabulary to redefine social needs and social wealth.

5. Matt Huber (Syracuse University) mthuber@maxwell.syr.edu Title: Ecology at the Point of Production: Climate Change and Class Struggle Abstract: Much of ecological Marxism is premised on the idea that environmental politics is something distinct from class (traditional socialist) politics. Environmentalism is constructed as a new social movement as the left has embraced a strategic turn toward building a movement of movements to take on capitalism. The field of ecological Marxism has proposed several competing revisions of traditional Marxist theory that reflect this: the second contradiction, metabolic rift, world ecology, and many more. Meanwhile, the right wing argues environmental politics is a form of class politics against ordinary working people that will cost jobs and economic competitiveness (while advocating policies of deregulation and austerity that enrich and enlarge the power of corporate capital to destroy the environment). Guess who is winning this struggle? This paper argues that in order to win the climate struggle we also see ecological politics as class politics (focused on the relations of production). I critique three decades of ecological Marxism that consistently locates ecological politics outside the point of production. I illustrate this critique by arguing climate change as rooted in two classical aspects of Marx's understanding of capitalism: (1) surplus value and exploitation is rooted at the point of production (2) a primary historical contradiction between capitalism's increasingly socialized form of production and the private forms of property and wealth appropriation. Overall I argue for a recovery of ecological politics as class politics whose ultimate goal is to contest capital's control over production and create the conditions for material security and freedom for the working class. References  
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## **In Search of an Alternative Tradition: Marxist Literary Criticism, Hindi Literature, and Namwar Singh**

**Snehal Shingavi (University of Texas, Austin)**

The recent passing of the Marxist literary critic, Namwar Singh (1926-2019), provides us with an opportunity not only to reflect on his contributions to Hindi literary criticism but also to interrogate the effects on a global Marxist literary critical tradition that has yet to engage seriously with criticism unavailable in Euro-American languages. Namwar Singh's most important book, *Doosri Parampara ki Khoj* [In Search of an Alternative Tradition], tries to lay out the problematic of a literary tradition that is only just coming into existence and influenced simultaneously by a global traffic in translation (what we might call the world literature problematic) and the absorption of various vernacular languages into Modern Standard Hindi (what we might call the class struggle problematic). While Namwar Singh's work predates the introduction of terms like intersectionality into Hindi criticism, his utilization of Lukacsian categories, especially totality and humanism, made him sensitive to the fact that literary traditions in formation were sites of intense class struggle to preserve or destroy a legacy of resistance to exploitation and oppression, primarily in the forms of caste and gender. By returning to the work of Namwar Singh, this paper hopes to use the debates about the formation of a Hindi literary canon to address the questions of world or global literature and combined and uneven development by tracking the nation as the site where a conflict over extracted surplus was imagined. Despite his reliance on a problematically Hindu tradition, Namwar Singh ultimately develops a theory of canon formation which depends more on the consequences of class struggle than on the anxieties of influence of the great masters, whether local or international.

## **Back To The Body**

**Edna Bonhomme (Max Planck Institute for History of Science), Chanelle Adams  
( )**

Everyone is poisoned, but not in the same way. Since the rise of industrialization, inorganic toxins have integrated themselves into our food, water, and bodies—with some compounds assimilating into our flora and fauna. This paper examines the ways that toxins—under capitalism—have produced chronic diseases, thus producing new hierarchies of life. Using a historical materialist lens, I will map out the ways bodies undergo (de)toxification and how toxicity has become ubiquitous in our biosphere and produced new bionic beings.

## **Degrowth and Antiproduction: Toward an Ecology of Limits**

**Corbin Hiday (University of Illinois at Chicago)**

In this essay, I turn to a perhaps curious collection of nineteenth-century thinkers in order to theorize the necessity of embracing an ecology of limits. I examine the disparate, but constructive convergence of writers like William Stanley Jevons, Thomas Malthus, John Ruskin, and William Morris around ideas of finitude, exhaustion, decay, and regression. Importantly, for all of these thinkers, these various concepts of limit emerge in relation to ecology, while enmeshed within dominant nineteenth-century ideologies of progress. The Age of Coal functions as the foundation for this essay, one possible marker of our contemporary climate extinction, fueled by extractive capitalism. I interrogate the long history of debates around progress, development and its potential foils such as degrowth and anti-productivism. In his book, *Capitalism and Desire*, Todd McGowan discusses the necessity of reconceiving nature, and envisions a social order departing from the productivist tendencies of nineteenth-century thinkers, Marx included: It is not a society of unleashed and unlimited productivity, as it is for Marx. Instead, the egalitarian order involves a recognition of a necessary limit that will not only function as a boundary to its growth but that will simultaneously constitute growth as a possibility (156). What might the constitution of the social look like outside the realm of capital's growth imperative? How do we embrace ecological limits while refusing to cede the narrative to ecofascists and neo-Malthusians? How is this vision necessarily a psychic and material challenge? I grapple with these questions regarding our present, while also looking toward a more egalitarian order. As Adorno writes near the beginning of *Minima Moralia*: Only by virtue of opposition to production, as still not wholly encompassed by this order, can men bring about another more worthy of human beings (15).

## **Extinction Rebellion and the Commodification of Environmental Protest**

**Francesca Kilpatrick (University of Brighton Funded by ESRC South Coast Doctoral Training Partnership)**

The Extinction Rebellion protest movement presents itself as being of the people, championing collective control of the decarbonisation process through citizens assemblies, and vocally opposing capitalist overproduction and western consumption practices. Whilst these ideologies are not new within the history of social protest, Extinction Rebellion has attracted unusually high levels of media attention and participation since its inception in November 2018, particularly from the white middle classes (Hayes et al, 2018). A key Extinction Rebellion strategy is provoking mass arrests, which have been criticised as mere performances of resistance, complicit with state power mechanisms in their capitulations to police forces (Critical Legal Thinking, 2019). This performance becomes part of the representational image or spectacle as described by Debord (1970). Debord argued that social life has been reduced to representations or appearances of lived reality only, and



that these images become commodities to be fetishised by contemporary society and the mass media. This paper explores how environmental protest is commodified by Extinction Rebellion for consumption by the middle classes. This was tested through research analysing Extinction Rebellion press releases, promotional materials, written text and visual images. The analysis was then clarified and compared against interviews with people who were drawn to public protest action for the first time by Extinction Rebellion. Preliminary findings indicate climate change is marketed through narratives based on depoliticised threats such as biodiversity loss and air pollution, which alienate voices of marginalised communities. Through Extinction Rebellion, environmental protest becomes a commodity affordable only by those with significant social and financial capital.

## **SOCIAL REPRODUCTION AND FEMALE SEASONAL AGRICULTURAL WORKERS: THE TURKISH CASE**

**Ozlem Tezcek (Ordu University/TURKEY, Assistant Professor, Economics Department, Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences)**

Kind Request for Marxist Feminist Stream: The long history of capitalism has started with the enclosure of womens reproductive activities as well as land dispossessions. Silvia Federici argues that many of the specific features of the transition to capitalism (such as the witch hunts, and the new Enlightenment Cartesian model of the mind/body relation and the body as machine) can be explained as part of the reorganization and disciplining of womens reproductive labour and peasants productive labour. The dispossession of agricultural producers/households from the land has long been a condition of capitalist development. The main contention of this paper is that such dispossession has in fact serious effects on gender division of labour in social production and reproduction processes. In this regard, the complex social interaction between capitalism and patriarchy has been differentiated through time and space. In reference to David Harvey, through the neoliberal state policies, the new capitalist accumulation process has been operating since the 1970s and new types of dispossessions have occurred in all around the world. These include the commodification and privatization of land and the forceful expulsion of rights to the commons; commodification of labour power and the suppression of alternative, indigenous forms of production and consumption, etc. (Harvey, 2004: 74). These new type of dispossessions also have some certain gender aspects i.e. effects on social reproduction process as well as production process. In this paper, it will be focused on social reproduction conditions of seasonal agricultural female workers in Turkey. Specifically, the results of qualitative and quantitative surveys conducted with 200 landless women peasants in Ordu Province will be presented in detail. References Bhattacharya, Tithi, (2017), How Not to Skip Class: Social Reproduction of Labor and the Global Working Class inside Social Reproduction Theory edited by Tithi Bhattacharya, Pluto Press, pp. 68-93. Harvey, D. (2004), The New Imperialism: Accumulation by Dispossession, Socialist Register, Vol. 40, pp. 63-87. Federici, S. (2004), Caliban and the Witch, Autonomedia. Kandiyotti, D. (1988), Bargaining with Patriarchy, Gender and Society, Vol.2, No: 3, pp. 274-290.

# Projekt Ideologie-Theorie and Ideological Forms of Praxis

Otto Kyyrnen (Tampere University; University of Jyväskylä)

The Marxist discussion regarding ideology is a complex one. At least three viewpoints have long been discussed: ideology can be considered either as a neutral phenomenon of consciousness (e.g. Marxism-Leninism); as a critical phenomenon of consciousness (e.g. false consciousness); or as something neutral that somehow constitutes consciousness (e.g. Antonio Gramsci; Stuart Hall) (Koivisto & Pietil 1996). However, all these traditions seem to come across severe impasses. In my presentation, I provide a thorough analysis of the fourth option proposed by Projekt Ideologie-Theorie (PIT), who understand ideology as something critical that somehow constitutes consciousness (Haug 1983; PIT 1979; Rehmann 2013). PIT trace the concept of praxis, lying at the root of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engelss thought, in order to understand the relation between praxis and ideology. The basic idea is that, since our thought-forms are inherently related to our praxis-forms, we should analyze how ideological praxis-forms result in the creation of ideological thought-forms. This is ultimately related to the separation between manual and mental labor, which alienates intellectuals praxis-forms from the immediately practical life, thus creating ideological articulations from above legitimizing the hierarchical social system. PIT make sense of this issue by applying ideas presented by such Marxists as Antonio Gramsci, Louis Althusser, and Klaus Holzkamp. In short, PIT follow Althusser in distinguishing between the ideological and ideologies. This is how they are able to define the ideological as a composition of ideological praxis-forms, that is, as the alienated social system as such. Then, the existence of particular ideologies is explained by applying the concept of restrictive action potency developed by Holzkamp, which argues that, in class society, humans endeavor to liberate themselves by controlling their own life conditions leads to the creation of perverted and mystified thought-forms. Holzkamps theory is also used to make sense of Gramscis ideas concerning language and common sense, which serve as essential building blocks for intellectuals ideological articulations. One of PITs merits is that they are able to apply Marx and Engelss original ideas to the analysis of present-day phenomena. This is to say that they embrace the notion of ideological powers (also ideological forms) in order to illuminate that, in the end, the ideological exists due to the existence of class society. That is, by overcoming class society, we can get rid of the ideological. It is exactly the goal of my presentation to provide a comprehensive account of this novel way of understanding the phenomenon of ideology. Literature Haug, Wolfgang Fritz (1983), *Ideologiset mahdit ja vastarinta*. Helsinki, Finland: Tutkijaliitto. Koivisto, Juha & Pietil, Veikko (1996), *Ideological Powers and Resistance: The Contribution of W. F. Haug and Projekt Ideologie-Theorie*, *Rethinking Marxism*, 9, 4059. Projekt Ideologie-Theorie (1979), *Theorien ber Ideologie*. Berlin, Germany: Argument-Verlag. Rehmann, Jan (2013), *Theories of Ideology: Powers of Alienation and Subjection*. Boston, MA & Leiden, Netherlands: Brill.

## Reading Transition: Crisis and Contradiction in Medieval and Early Modern Art and Literature

Jack Dragu (University of Chicago), Natalie Suzelis (Carnegie Mellon University)  
Luke Fidler (University of Chicago) Jules Joanne Gleeson (University of Vienna)

This panel seeks to bring together materialist analyses of transition from medieval and early modern art and literature, with a particular focus on environmental and political disaster, dispossession, class struggle, resource extraction, and sexuality. Drawing upon the Marxist transition debates and other historical theses regarding the uneven development of the capitalist world system from the crises of European feudalism, this panel connects literary form, representation, and mediation with dispossession, landscape transformation, and class struggle. This uneven development stems from two mutually constitutive forces: environmental reorganization and new methods of sociopolitical control. As Raymond Williams has detailed in *The Country and The City*, this process occurs alongside and even through literary and cultural history, with cultural production playing a key part in the obscuring the rural countrysides connection to the development of European capitalism. Karl Marx's account of the expropriation of the agricultural population from the land and the bloody legislation against the expropriated in the last section of *Capital* form a key part of Marxist analyses of so-called primitive accumulation; in this story, former agricultural laborers are first forcibly expropriated from the soil, driven from their homes, turned into vagabonds, and then whipped, branded, tortured by grotesquely terroristic laws into accepting the discipline necessary for the system of wage-labour.[1] This history, writes Marx, begins in the last part of the fourteenth century when serfdom gave way to an immense majority of free peasant proprietors who, for a short time, still enjoyed the right to exploit the common land, which gave pasture to their cattle, and furnished them with timber, fire-wood, turf, etc. [2] But what transformations, crises, and contradictions paved the way for this forced expropriation and other modal transitions? Knowledge of the longer political and ecological history behind the development of capitalism is essential to understanding the crisis tendencies of extinction capitalism. Understanding this longer history - the enclosures of the commons, the bloody legislation against the expropriated, class struggle, and ecological crisis - is essential to understanding the origins and tendencies of the capitalist world-ecological system. This panel will therefore connect the sociopolitical crises of feudalism to cultural analysis in order to better understand the emergence of capitalism as a world-historical system which has always been deeply connected to social and environmental disaster.

## Education and the factory of reproduction

Anna Curcio (Commonware)

The focus of my paper is the social reproduction. I will analyze what Romano Alquati call the reproduction of human capacity. In fact, the reproduction of capital as system and social relationship has always been central in the history of capital. Also, in the specific

meaning of re-creation of the workforce, the reproduction has always been central: the wage is the share of income destined for the reproduction of proletarians, and this particular type of unpaid work was mainly carried out by women. However, only in the last decades, and today with increasing intensity (despite the disinvestment on welfare), we can say that the reproduction of human capacity is acquiring centrality for the systemic reproduction of capitalism. This by virtue of some great tendencies, which I will propose for discussion: first of all, reproduction has become a direct place of valorization and accumulation of capital; secondly, the reproduction of the “useful” human capacity (for the purpose of valorization) has become the main work of most of the proletariat; thirdly, the reproduction is subject to a process of increasing industrialization. However, the reproduction of human capacity contains and perhaps reinforces its peculiar ambivalence: on the one hand, production of actors functional to existing social relationships, human capital, on the other hand I hypothesize that it is a field for the potential production of counter-subjectivity. My elaboration will be based on a process of militant inquiry in some factory of reproduction, in particular the school and the cooperatives. Here, within and against the process of industrialization of the reproduction, I will analyze reality, ambivalences and trends of this strategic field of political intervention.

## **Is There a Marxist Majesty? The Sovereignty of the One and the Republic of the Many**

**Omid Mehrgan (Johns Hopkins University)**

The first article of the 1848 French Constitution declares, The sovereignty resides in the universality of French citizens. It is inalienable and imprescriptible. No individual, no faction of the people, can attribute to itself the exercise of sovereignty. Compare this fundamental statement of all republics with the skeptical rebuttal by a defender of British monarchy, Robert Filmer in 1579: Where every man is his own monarch or governor, the people with their councils, assemblies, bodies of representatives will crumble away into the atoms of monarchy, which is the next degree to anarchy . . . A true representation of the people to be made is as impossible as for the whole people to govern. This impossibility has been no easy matter for much of the history of modern political thought from the Religious Wars to European Revolutions in 1848, and it continues to cause irritation and confusion today. This paper regards the relation between sovereignty and republic by casting it in terms of the relation between the one and the many as fundamental metaphysical categories of modern politics. To do so, I will draw on Bodin in order to supply the categories, on Hegel to present the conflict between the one and the many, and on Marx to offer the prospect of an answer. At stake is to show that thinking about sovereignty without thinking about the unity of a majestic will, no matter in what form, proves extremely difficult, if not impossible. Modern theories of politics ever since Jean Bodin rely on the basic premise that there is on the one hand the plurality of people, wills, laws, and things, and on the other the unity of the ruling will. This will is to be absolute and perpetual if it must be sovereign, according to Bodin, or one and undivided, personal, according to Hegel. The distinction between the one and the many corresponds to one between sovereignty and republic, between the state and the government, or, if you want, between God and his

angles. As we move from Bodin to Hegel and Marx, where political economy becomes the guiding discipline, the emphasis on the many, the multiplicity of needs and interests and claims, necessarily increases. And in our time with the rise of identity claims, it has grown at its most acute. Along with this increase, the relation of the one and the many turns into a critical question, which, the paper claims, is yet to find a compelling answer, theoretically and in practice no less. The modern claim to popular self-determination consists in thinking together the fact of the many and the apparently mythical necessity of the one, of a singular will to rule, of a unity in decision making. My goal is to show that Marxism has a theory of what Bodin calls majesty or sovereignty in tight relation to the economically organized modern societies with republican aspirations. Marxism has substantially contributed to turning this question into a daunting problematic, not least by proposing the idea of the dictatorship of the proletariat and of workers councils and more recently, of assemblies. But above all, it was Marx who for the first time radically questioned the unity of the sovereignty, the oneness of the Hegelian state, by claiming that, politically speaking, there is no such a thing as the one; all that exists are the many productive forces in bourgeois society. And yet, the political expression of this many must show itself in the form of a one. Are we forever bound up to the myth of the unified will of sovereignty ruling over citizens and noncitizen in well-divided sovereign territories?

## **Social Assistance as Political Containment in Contemporary China**

**Erdem Yrk (Ko University and University of Oxford), Burak Gurel (Koc University)  
Ali Bargu (University of Oxford, Department of Social Policy and Intervention)**

By providing social assistance to about 60 million poor people, the Urban and Rural Minimum Livelihood Guarantee Scheme (Dibao) of the Peoples Republic of China is one of the largest social assistance programs in modern history. This article aims to explain the relationship between the trajectories of social protest and the expansion of Dibao in China. We asked a basic question: what determines the provision of Dibao program? Specifically, does contentious politics play a role? To answer this question, we use two panel datasets that we have created (a social protest dataset and social assistance dataset). Our dependent variable is specified as the number of people in a given province that receive the minimum guarantee (Dibao) per month. We extract protest event information, our independent variable, from protest-related tweets collected and published online (often referred to as Wickedonna data after the alias of the creators of this repository) and the resultant database contains tweets documenting more than 70.000 protests. The textual data was then coded and analysed with the help of unsupervised and supervised machine learning algorithms. Our multivariate analysis identified a statistically significant negative relationship between monthly increases in labor unrest and Dibao recipients at the provincial-level. All models include covariates for disposable income, gross regional product, agricultural output, unemployment rate, population, monthly dummies, and use fixed-effects with clustered standard errors. We argue that this pattern has emerged after 2013, when Xi Jinping came to power, as the entire political logic of social assistance provision has been likely reversed from a more inclusive pattern. Unlike previous periods, this period is characterized by a general decline trend in Chinese social assistance, and in



particular in Dibao. The existing social assistance literature has been dominated by an emphasis on economic and demographic factor, which have yet followed a gradual development in China that would have normally predicted an expansion in social assistance in after 2013 as well. Yet, more strikingly, existing few analyses that look at the effect of contentious politics, i.e. protests, social unrest, social movements, have tended to establish a positive relationship between contentious politics and social welfare provision. In other words, the consensus in existing political explanations would have predicted an expansion in social assistance, because of the upward trend in protest movements in China since 2013. Our article challenges these two strands of literature, by bringing forward a punitive welfare explanation. Our analysis shows that higher protests lead to less social assistance, which would support the claim that Chinese state punishes the citizens that challenge the authority by limiting their access to social welfare. In order to account for the statistical association between labor unrest and Dibao provision, we presented an analysis of the Chinese Communist Partys historical approach to socio-political unrest. Here, we tried to examine why and how the CCP has devised and implemented the Dibao as a way of containment of unrest. As the processes of privatization of state-owned and collective enterprises, informalization and precarization of employment deepened and socio-political unrest rose in the second half of the 1990s, Chinese central government has likely considered the program as a measure of containment.

## **Welfare as Counter-Insurgency in Contemporary India**

**Erdem Yrk (Ko University and University of Oxford), Murat Koyuncu (Bogazici University) Burak Gurel (Koc University)**

What are the contentious political determinants of the largest workfare program in the world, the NREGA of India? We argue that the Indian government uses this program as a counter-insurgency strategy against the Maoist unrest. Our argument is based on a quantitative analysis that is conducted using a novel dataset that we created by merging at the district level a nationally representative household survey (Indian Human Development Survey-II) and Maoist incidents data (Dasgupta et al. 2017). In our multivariate analysis, we examine the effect of the number of Maoist incidents on our dependent variable, household level income generated from NREGA participation. Using the district-level variation of violent incidents, we show that higher intensity of violent conflicts leads to higher NREGA benefits. This result is robust when we control for many program-related factors and state level fixed effects as well as when we cluster the standard errors at the district level. Also, different models with similar dependent variables and independent variable yields similar results. In addition, propensity score matching analysis shows that Maoist violence is associated with higher NREGA provision. This finding provides strong support for the claim that NREGA is used by the state to contain the Maoist insurgency. This finding is an important contribution to the growing literature on anti-poverty programs in the Global South. This literature suffers from a predominance of structuralism, materialized by an overemphasis on demographic and economic explanations and by an under-exploration of contentious political factors. If politics is considered, it is in most cases related to electoral dynamics. Some scholars consider how



anti-poverty programs diminish the level of contentious politics, such as terrorism or radicalism, which appear as dependent variables. Our analysis is one of few studies that illustrated the reverse relationship, i.e., how contentious politics affects anti-poverty programs. The existing literature shows that there is ample room for politically-motivated discretion in the local implementation of the NREGA program. This raises the question of whether the containment of Maoist insurgency is a key motivation for the discretionary implementation of the program. We know that Indian government has refrained from presenting the NREGA as a program designated only toward the Maoist zones of influence. On the contrary, NREGA has been presented as a welfare program to address the problem of rural poverty across India, not just in the Red Corridor. However, as we demonstrated in the paper, several government reports and speeches of state officials suggest the strategic use of welfare provision (including the NREGA program) as a counter-insurgency method against Maoists. Indian governments' modifications of the NREGA also suggest that this is the case. The available evidence suggests a possible use of NREGA as a counter-insurgency strategy against the Maoist militants based on geographical targeting and local level discretion.

## Utopia, degrowth, and ecosocialism

Aaron Vansintjan (Birkbeck, University of London)

This panel will explore the links and tensions between utopian thought, strains of ecosocialism, and the degrowth movement. Climate breakdown, presented to us as a crisis of the modern world-system, has brought forth a wide diversity of leftist and socialist proposals. From the Green New Deal to 'half-Earth' to socialist ecomodernism, there is a willingness to 'think big' and envision a desirable, liberatory future. In the tradition of Gorz political ecology and feminist ecosocialism, the degrowth movement, for its part, has pushed forward the need to include collective, political deliberation of limits and questioned the colonial and patriarchal conditions for social-ecological reproduction that enable wealth rooted in (a no matter how green) productivism. Critics on the left argue that any call for limits goes against the goals of communism: to improve on the human condition, to go beyond capitalism rather than react against it. In this panel, we will explore the role that limits (to growth, but also to utopias and to communist futures) may have in any utopian project for an ecosocialist future. Drawing on science and speculative fiction literature, philosophy, Marxist and post-Marxian thought, political ecology, world ecology, decolonial thought, and feminist political economy, our panelists will seek to put forward the necessity for politicizing limits in any desirable socialist system and discuss alternative conditions for cohabiting the Oikos. Troy Vettese (chair), New York University, [tg208@nyu.edu](mailto:tg208@nyu.edu) Barbara Muraca (virtual), University of Oregon, [Barbara.Muraca@oregonstate.edu](mailto:Barbara.Muraca@oregonstate.edu) Liberation from the Addiction of Limitless Growth: Degrowth as a Concrete Utopia against Neoliberalism Rut Elliot Blomqvist, Gothenburg University, [rut.elliott.blomqvist@sprak.gu.se](mailto:rut.elliott.blomqvist@sprak.gu.se) Through an analysis of how unlimited economic expansion is seen as limiting human freedom in indigenous Smi poetry, I sketch an understanding of the relation between limits and liberation that can inspire degrowth visions of the future. Anna Saave-Harnack, University of Jena,

harnack@posteo.de Two basic pillars for ecosocialist utopian theory-crafting: standpoint epistemologies and a practice first approach  
Aaron Vansintjan, Birkbeck College, University of London. avansintjan@gmail.com  
Futurist communism and degrowth utopianism: a review of recent debates  
Emanuele Leonardi, Centre for Social Studies, University of Coimbra, lele.leonardi@gmail.com  
Bringing Class Back In: Autonomist Marxism as a Bridge between Ecosocialism and Degrowth  
Sam Bliss, University of Vermont  
What role do markets play in utopian thought and desirable futures?  
Bengi Akbulut, Concordia University, bengi.akbulut@gmail.com  
Rojava, the state, and utopia  
Giorgos Kallis, Autonomous University of Barcelona, giorgoskallis@gmail.com  
Topic TBA  
David Ravensbergen, York University, dravensbe@gmail.com  
Topic TBA  
Vijay Kolinjivadi, Universit du Qubec en Outaouais, vijay.kolinjivadi@mail.mcgill.ca  
Time, temporality, and degrowth

## **The potentials and challenges of left populism in Turkey: The Case of Peoples Democratic Party (HDP)**

**Muzaffer Kaya (Potsdam University)**

In spring 2015, we witnessed the unexpected rise of the Peoples Democratic Party (Halkların Demokratik Partisi, HDP) which was founded by the Kurdish Liberation Movement together with the radical left of Turkey, against the Erdoğan's authoritarian rule. In this article, I will employ contemporary literature on left populism to explain HDP's rise as an alternative left hegemonic project against neoliberal authoritarianism that Erdoğan represents. After discussing the historical context within which HDP emerged and grew, I will evaluate its discourse and strategies based on the conceptualization of left-wing populism. Lastly, I will discuss the challenges that HDP confronted after June 2015 elections and the differences of Turkish context from the Western European one for a left-wing populist strategy.

## **Soviet Marxism and Indian Literature: Stalinist Compromises and Unrealized Potentials**

**Craig Brandist (University of Sheffield)**

The paper discusses the development of the idea of World Literature in Soviet Marxism with particular reference to India. While Soviet historical narratives of the 1930s and after overwhelmingly succumbed to the rigid, unilinear perspectives of Stalinist dogmas, Soviet philology retained a more flexible and critical character when dealing with the literature of the colonial world. Nevertheless, the encasement of philology within the Stalinist historical and political perspective prevented the full potential of such perspectives to be realized and facilitated the caricatured dichotomies of postcolonial theory. The development of Soviet scholarship on modern Indian languages and literatures in the 1920s and 30s will be discussed, highlighting the achievements of Aleksei Barannikov's work on the sociological dimensions of Indian languages and literatures in particular. Attention then moves to the

revival of some of these ideas in the 1960s and 70s, when typological parallels between the European Renaissance and Enlightenments and specific periods in the history of modern Indian literature were considered in relation to socioeconomic structures. These developments are considered in the light of current research, and the potential of such work for future research on world literature evaluated.

## **Global attack on the local class. Gazes from the steel industry to the updating of the dialectical relationship between capital and labor in the era of global corporations**

**Rubn Matas Gara (National Autonomous University of Mexico)**

The concentration and centralization of capital that gave rise to the creation of today's transnational corporations, brings with it new topics in the discussion of capital-labor antagonism. In this paper I reflect on two major themes: 1) the formation of the working class on a global scale; 2) the resistance of workers and their unions from their workplaces at the local level to the creation of initiatives and actions that seek a global reach. The reflections are based on my current doctoral research, which deals with the most important corporation in the global steel industry, the largest steel producer that extends its operations to 60 countries. In this corporation we can find signs of a global strategy of control of work and submission of the worker with application at local level, according to specific characteristics of the countries where it operates, but sharing the dual objective of increasing exploitation and dissolving all the indications of class consciousness. Through interviews with workers and union leaders, and review of the union archive, in this paper I analyze the implementation of this global corporate strategy in two Latin American countries: Brazil and Mexico, and with the struggle and resistance of the Steelworkers and their unions.

## **Working the Womb: Womens Reproductive Rights and the Politics of Labour**

**Paromita Chakrabarti (DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH HR COLLEGE OF COMMERCE AND ECONOMICS UNIVERSITY OF MUMBAI INDIA)**

The paper discusses the recent shocking reports on the sugar cane industry of Maharashtra, a western state in the Union of India, which raise important issues for understanding womens oppression and exploitation in conditions of neoliberal economic development. Women who work in the sugar cane fields as cutters have been instructed to remove their ovaries if they wish to be employed. Cane contractors according to the report in BusinessLine published in March 2019 have decided not to hire women who have periods, in the field, as they claim not be able to bear the costs of allowing women to take breaks to deal with their menstruation. Punitive fines are imposed on women who take such breaks. Their unwillingness to hire women who menstruate has had a frightening

impact on the reproductive health of rural, poor, particularly lower caste women, who seasonally migrate from their draught affected villages of Marathwada to the sugar cane belt of Western Maharashtra for work. At least 50 percent of women between the ages of 25 to 45 have had to undergo hysterectomy for which advance payment was made by the contractors, which would then be deducted in instalments from their wages. The nexus between doctors who perform the surgery and the contractors, reveal that hysterectomy is big business for both. The women who undergo surgery become living working machines paying through their organs to keep their jobs. This clearly illustrates the inextricable link between contemporary forms of capitalist exploitation and control of womens fertility and autonomy in the developing world. Theoretical perspectives needed to analyse these questions and which can inform effective organisation to combat such practices will be considered.

## **New Finance Capital: Production, Finance, and States after the Crash**

**Kyle Bailey (Department of Politics, York University, Toronto, Canada), Scott Aquanno (Political Science Program, Ontario Tech University, Oshawa, Canada) Stephen Maher (Department of Politics, York University, Toronto, Canada)**

The fallout from the 2007/08 Financial Crisis and Great Recession the longest and deepest since 1929 has greatly exacerbated the contradictory pressures of (global) capital accumulation and (national) legitimation characteristic of 1980s transitional neoliberalism and its Third Way rebalancing during the long 1990s (1992-2007). Predatory austerity, privatization, and bank bailouts pursued by capitalist states have generated a thoroughgoing legitimation crisis of neoliberal policies and institutions, giving rise to ideological ferment, social misery, and dislocation from the bourgeois centre that have fostered the conditions for far-right authoritarian and fascist politics to attract mass support from disenchanted sections of both the middle and working classes. In this way, the election of Trump as US President, the growing prominence of the far right in Europe, and the rise of authoritarian governments in India, Turkey, and Brazil have seen financialized global capitalism in both the North and South embark on a new crisis phase of authoritarian neoliberalism. This panel critically examines emergent forms of capitalist organization and their attendant contradictions in the wake of the 2007/08 financial crisis and great recession. It asks, firstly, whether extreme concentration and centralization in the financial sector, the growing structural power of passively managed investment funds, and the financialization of non-financial firms during the post-crisis period have inaugurated a new finance capital i.e., a new phase of capitalist development marked by an historically novel institutional fusion of finance and production under the dominance of abstract money value. Secondly, to what extent has the process of finance-led restructuring initiated by activist investors and supported by private equity funds been shaped by a parallel restructuring of state monetary policies and institutions in response to post-crisis conditions? And lastly, given the thinning bases of popular consent to capitalist rule underlying the weakening of neoliberal hegemony after the crash, growing authoritarian repression of resistance, and new political challenges to austerity and privatization from

both the left and right, to what degree have leading fractions of capital sought to maintain cohesion and secure a modicum of legitimacy from the exploited by invoking discourses of 'accountable', 'inclusive', 'long-term', 'multi-stakeholder', patient, 'progressive', 'responsible', 'sustainable', or trust-based capitalism as the apparent cure for the systems ills? Presentation Abstracts

**New Finance Capital I: State Restructuring and Financial Control in the Post-Crisis Period**  
Scott Aquanno (co-authored with Stephen Maher) The period since the Great Financial Crisis of 2008 has marked a new phase of capitalist development in the United States: a new model of finance capitalism. This is above all characterized by an institutional fusion of financial and industrial capital, both within non-financial corporations as well as between the financial sector and industrial corporations. Though this formation was gradually evolving over the neoliberal period, the Great Financial Crisis marked a qualitative shift. This was indicated by a sharp increase in concentration and centralization in the financial sector, the historically unprecedented shift toward passive investment funds, and the rise of activist investment funds seeking greater involvement in corporate governance with the passive support of the broader concentration in the financial sector. The role of the state in stabilizing markets during the crisis, and in seeking to contain future episodes of volatility, was an especially significant factor in this restructuring. This paper argues that this system of financial superintendence by the state monetary apparatus developed after 2008, involving the hyper liquification of the financial system, low borrowing costs, stronger financial regulation, post-crisis fiscal austerity and the consolidation of financial institutions, as well as new modalities of state and corporate institutional integration. This altered the business practices of key financial firms, and contributed to the emergence and stabilization of a new form of the separation of economic ownership and control. The paper shows that the management of the crisis through such policies and strategic institutional innovations opened access to new pools of capital at the same time that it closed previously attractive investment models and ushered in a low growth, low interest rate environment. This created strong demand among activist investors, supported by the structural power of the giant passive private equity firms, for a more direct role in the governance of non-financial corporations and led to a shift away from neoliberal polyarchic financial management.

**New Finance Capital II: Corporate Reorganization and the Dominance of Money-Capital**  
(Stephen Maher) Stephen Maher (co-authored with Scott Aquanno) In the period since the Great Financial Crisis of 2008, a new phase of capitalist development in the United States has stabilized, which we have called a new finance capital. As with the classical finance capital period, from 1880 to 1930, this is above all characterized by the institutional fusion of financial and industrial capital. However, the new finance capital has not simply been the product of financiers becoming industrialists, as had been the case in the 19th century, but also the obverse: industrial managers evolving into money-capitalists. The latter occurred through the financialization of the non-financial corporation that took place over the neoliberal period, which entailed the reorganization of the firm from a system of production to a system of investment. Rather than overseeing concrete processes and operations, the role of top managers within corporate organizations was increasingly to distribute investment among a portfolio of competing business units. General managers

within industrial firms increasingly approximated money-capitalists. Thus the fusion between finance and industry has developed between the financial sector and industrial corporations as well as within non-financial corporations. This drove the expansion and rising prominence of corporate financial functions, which was critically supported as well by the rise of the financial sector to which they were closely linked marked especially by the rise of the CFO from the 1960s to 1990s. At the same time, financial institutions became more active in the governance of industrial corporations. Concentration and centralization meant that institutional investors owning the largest blocks of equity could not merely sell shares of underperforming firms lest they depress the value of their own portfolios. More active forms of institutional discipline on management had to be developed, which were eventually regularized as investor relations and consolidated under the CFO. In the wake of the extreme concentration in the post-crisis era, a vanguard group of activist investors with larger portfolios than ever before have also begun demanding seats on Boards of Directors. In a pattern reminiscent in some ways of the classical period of finance capital from 1880-1930, this has once again led to the emergence of Boards as critical venues wherein corporate control is organized and expressed. This has occurred in the context of the sharp rise in concentration and centralization in the financial sector and the historically unprecedented shift to passively managed investment funds. Far from working at cross-purposes, these strategies have been complementary, as activist investors are passively enabled by the structural power of large private equity firms. Moreover, both have been reinforced and supported by the internal financialized restructuring of the non-financial corporation. This has resulted in an institutional fusion of financial and industrial capitals under the supremacy of money-capital: a new finance capital.

**Revaluing Capitalism for the Long-Term? Soulful Corporations, Shareholder Power, and the Ideology of Inclusive Capitalism** Kyle Bailey This presentation explores patterns of big business mobilization in the wake of the 2007/08 financial crash and amidst capitalist globalizations intensifying legitimization crisis. Fearing that the growing numbers left behind by the unwinding of neoliberalism's minimal class compromise will lead capitalism to be scapegoated for massively escalating social inequality and injustice, leading fractions of the capitalist class have cohered around a hegemonic project of inclusive capitalism as the apparent solution to the systems multidimensional economic, social, political, and ecological crises. Inclusive capitalism aspires to empower non-financial corporate executives and their managerial cadres against the capitalist threat to capitalism posed by financial short-termism. In so doing, its advocates aim to foster the conditions for a new wave of ostensibly long-term, sustainable, and inclusive capital accumulation in the world economy by redefining the purpose of corporations as one of creating shared value for shareholders and stakeholders alike. Two key policy-planning groups of the new inclusive capitalism are the Coalition for Inclusive Capitalism and Focusing Capital on the Long-Term. Through an examination of these two organizations, it will be argued that whereas inclusive capitalism claims to oppose shareholder value in the name of a multi-stakeholder vision of capitalism where corporations are truly responsive to social and environmental concerns, it nevertheless functions first and foremost to neutralize, pre-empt, and co-opt demands for more radical transformation advocated by labour and social movements. Beneath the ideology of a sharp antagonism between finance and production lies an attempt to cement a renewed class alliance within the power bloc a new form of finance



capitalin which asset owners, asset managers, and industrial corporations collectively reshape capital markets in the name of further subordinating labour, nature, and society to the financialized logic of global capital accumulation. To advance beyond Third Way social democracys embrace of financialized global capitalism, the left today cannot settle for merely compensating those left behind by neoliberalism but must pose genuine worker-centred socialist alternatives that challenge the exploitative capitalist system which generates these inequalities, degradations, and oppressions in the first place.

## **The Labour Party: can it handle Extinction Capitalism and the fascist threat?**

**Simon Hannah (Labour Party, Momentum)**

Jeremy Corbys leadership of Labour created space for a resurgence of the Left in Britain and a beacon of hope internationally for the possibility of a radical transformative government in a major imperialist country. However Corbynomics a loosely defined term in any situation seems to revolve around a revival of social democratic and Keynesian policies. Whilst this has some international traction, for instance with the Green New Deal from the Democrat Left in the USA, Marxists have to analyse whether the policies coming out of Labour on the environment are sufficient to meet the radical demands of the age, in more blunt and brutal terms, can the Labour left put forward a programme of policy and action that can save the planet and defeat the far right? A critique of this would start with question over how internationalist Labours programme is; the role of trade unions like Unite in ignoring climate change issues in favour of jobs; the question of whether there is sufficient economic planning to guarantee an equitable distribution of resources in a period where there is potential a need for a dramatic shift in personal consumption; whether the programme is radical enough on challenging capitalism as a system of parasitoid ecological destruction; and so on. The key question of reform or revolution is posed for Labour is it a greening of capitalism (arguably the upper limits of the Green New Deal), or is it something more fundamental that must be posed? In addition to Extinction Capitalism there is the scissor crisis of the rise of the authoritarian right (Trump, Bolsonaro, etc), climate change denying political leaders now in charge of countries where environmental politics are fundamental to the future of the planet. Labours strategy for dealing with the far right is to make public statements of moral and political opposition, and domestically to reassert a social democratic programme to tackle low wages, precarious housing and other factors that it believes contribute to the rise of far right ideas. The Panel will consist of three activists who will analyse the key themes and develop socialist arguments around the central modalities of strategy, policies and the potentiality for radical visions of transformative change. Simon Hannah will base his contribution on his research on the history of the Labour Left (*A Party With Socialists In It: A History of the Labour Left*, Pluto Press 2018) He will examine the nature of Labours political strategy and on what basis it might be improved and deepened in the face of the twin existential threats facing humanity. Seema Syeda, co-author of *Creeping Fascism: what it is and how to fight it* (PRRUK, 2019), will examine the international basis of the right wing authoritarian threat in the context of patterns of fascistic development in the UK and the labour movements

response. Asad Rehman, chief executive of anti poverty charity War on Want will be discussing the launch of the new Extinction Rebellion Democratic Socialists initiative, an attempt to link up the climate change fight with the Labour left and exploring the policies around the Green New Deal.

## **New frontiers in the commodification of carbon: What is new about negative emissions?**

**Wim Carton (Lund University, Center for Sustainability Studies (LUCSUS))**

One of the emerging frontiers in climate politics is the supposed need for large-scale carbon removal, also called negative emissions. Most scenarios produced by the IPCC rely on such negative emissions to achieve the climate targets agreed by governments. This is despite widespread concern among scientists that carbon removal on the scale assumed by the IPCC is unfeasible, and that buying into this mitigation approach could have far-reaching consequences for food security, biodiversity and climate justice. The promise of negative emissions is eagerly being adopted by vested interests keen to prolong the extraction of fossil fuels, and some efforts are under way to turn negative emissions into a tradeable commodity. It feels like we have been here before. This paper critically explores the recent history of, and emerging trends in discussions on negative emissions and asks if what we are witnessing is a new round in the commodification of carbon. It explores similarities and differences with earlier efforts to commodify the sequestration of carbon, for example through carbon offsets and emissions trading, and asks: what, if anything, is new about negative emissions? The paper traces the emergence of the negative emissions concept out of a particularly neoliberal approach to climate governance and highlights how neoliberal assumptions about the speed and form of mitigation have become internalized in mainstream climate models. The paper concludes by expounding the important role that Marxist political economy has to play in formulating a historically-conscious critique of negative emissions as the latest instance in a wider political economy of climate change denial and mitigation obstruction.

## **Primary forests management and climate change mitigation in Turkey**

**Antoine Dolcerocca (Middle East Technical University)**

Recent research shows that forests will be of critical importance in mitigating the impact of climate change and transitioning towards a carbon-free economy. However, forest management in Turkey and EU remains largely productivity-oriented to meet the various needs for timber. This greatly reduces the potential impact of forest conservation and growth on climate change. In order to propose a carbon-capture-oriented model, this project examines the property regimes regulating forested areas in Turkey, assesses its success in terms of conservation, particularly when it comes to primary forests, and compares and contrasts it with other regulatory systems: the German coppice system and other community/commons-based models worldwide. The literature on the commons and

experiments have shown the limits of both top-down and community-based resource management in forestry and concluded that multi-level actor cooperation is more likely to result in successful resource conservation. This paper identifies existing or potential institutional arrangements for forest management in Turkey in order to develop a carbon-neutral economic model in preparing for the transition to socialism.

## **Neoconservatives, neoliberals: two responses to LGBT politics from the right**

**Colin Wilson (None)**

Right-wing responses to same-sex desire have varied greatly in the global north since the 1970s. Two broad positions can be discerned. The first is that of Thatcher and Reagan, adopted as a reaction to the women's and gay liberation movements of the 1970s. These sexist, homophobic and transphobic politics, with the support of the religious right, have dominated the US Republican party up to today. They have been adopted in an even more extreme form by parties of the far and fascist right such as the BNP in Britain and Golden Dawn in Greece, echoing the Nazis. Since the 1990s a second position has developed, embraced by parties of the right and centre. This position has focused on granting LGBT people formal equality before the law, including protection from discrimination. The EU has made the adoption of such policies a condition of membership for countries of the former Eastern bloc. British Conservative Prime Minister Cameron took the initiative to introduce equal marriage, which Barack Obama supported in his second term. Meanwhile, individuals and groups on the racist right such as Pim Fortuyn in the Netherlands and the EDL in England identified homophobia as typical of Muslims, and claimed to stand in solidarity with LGBT people as part of their Islamophobic politics. This paper makes some initial attempts to examine these two political approaches. It seeks to do so by addressing questions including: To what extent has there been a real change of views on the right? To what extent are we seeing a superficial presentational change in response to changing social attitudes? How did the EU come to take a position on LGBT rights, at the same time as its policies became increasingly neoliberal? What effect has this had on struggles internationally over sexuality and gender? Melinda Coopers recent book *Family Values: Between Neoliberalism and the New Social Conservatism* argues that it is useful to distinguish between a neoconservative politics focused on traditional family values and often religion, and neoliberal politics advocating free markets and a reduced welfare state. Is the distinction between neoconservative and neoliberal politics the same as that between the first and second positions described above?

## **Social Science, Mental “Illness”, Emotional Regulation and Ideology**

**Ari Ofengenden (Tulane University)**

The talk will then look at the interlocking industries and antinomies that try to address the psychological externalities of capitalism in the form of depression and anxiety. I will

look at the both the ideological function as well as emotional regulation of undertaken by interlocking industries of pharmaceuticals, meditation, cognitive behavioral therapy and behavioral economics and other technique designed to put the contemporary subject back on “track” from the lethargy and inaction of depression and anxiety back toward meaningless production and consumption. I will end with examining what alternatives the depressed and anxious subject has to medication, meditation, normalizing therapy and self-help books.

## **Affect and agency in the face of climate chaos**

**Lina Marlene Silberzahn (Sciences Po (Paris) - Political Theory)**

This contribution explores how the perspective of ecological collapse and the emotion it sparks impacts westerners political agency. Building on an analysis of the role of fear in European environmental movements, it seeks to offer a contribution to the axis of the general call that focusses on “denial, apathy, anger and melancholia in the face of climate crisis”. Following the affective turn, emotions have been rehabilitated as essential drivers of human behavior, especially in the realm of politics (Goodwin, Jasper, and Polletta 2001; Lordon 2016; Massumi 2015). Scholars and activists have particularly emphasized the necessity of practicing and triggering positive emotions and hope to sustain political action in dark times (Anderson 2006; Lear 2008; Solnit 2016; Zournazi 2003). Environmental movements haven't been insensitive to these learnings. As the information deficit hypothesis gets increasingly discredited, they search for more affect-, narrative-, and image-centered means of mobilization regarding ecological issues. However, the impact of negative emotions, such as fear, anger, and sadness remains highly controversial. The emotional responses triggered by ongoing and expected ecological catastrophes and losses can lead to political apathy, when they don't morph into political movements of denial or deferral (Adams 2017; Hamilton 2010; Norgaard 2011; Randall 2005). Additionally, many have warned against the manipulation of these emotions by actors with ecofascist tendencies. Yet, these negative emotions can't be ignored. Some have even argued there are something we must acknowledge and hold if we are to enact any kind of effective politics (Head 2016; Lertzman 2012). Back in his time, Walter Benjamin argued that social democrats had bridled the working class by referring to the promise of liberated grandchildren rather than on the image of enslaved ancestors (Benjamin 2013). To what extent do the refusal to trigger - and the inability to act upon - negative emotions regarding climate crisis impede our political agency? My analysis starts by assessing the limits to current European approaches to political climate mobilization, either based on an information deficit model or the desire to stay positive to avoid being labelled as doom-and-gloomers. It links these trends to the western culture of rationalism and compulsory optimism. I analyze how the desire to be optimist and rational turns into delusionary imperatives of happiness sustaining the current system (Ahmed 2010; Berlant 2011; Illouz and Cabanas 2018). How do we then act, live and mobilize on this damaged planet (Tsing et al. 2017), despite and with the negative affects it generates? Understanding the possibility of political action in our Era requires to embrace a conception of human agency as embodied, embedded, and affected. The second part draws on the writings of black

feminists and ecofeminists to explore alternative visions of what a fearful and angry body can do. While the former show how anger can become a source of political power (Chemaly 2018; Lorde 1981), the later provide key insights to understand how fear and despair can become part of new forms of belonging (Macy 1983; Starhawk 1989). These writings open up a tangible track to unfold what Deleuze and Spinoza called the power to be affected (Deleuze 1978; Hardt 2015). The last part offers insights about alternative ways of collectively dealing with negative emotions geared towards political action. It is based on empirical work about environmental groups. The tools and practices they have implemented to cope with and act upon the negative emotions related to the expected and ongoing climate chaos lay down the foundations of what we could call an emancipatory politic of fear. I argue that the elaboration of social settings where emotions such as fear, despair and anger are collectively dealt with and acted upon is essential to radical political action against climate chaos.

**Keywords:** Anthropocene; micro-politics; affect; agency; post-apocalyptic politics

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## **Historical Materialism on stage - An experience at the IX International Colloquium Marx & Engels**

**Monique Lima de Oliveira (Unicamp), Svio Machado Cavalcante (University of Campinas | UNICAMP) Fabio Mascaro Querido (University of Campinas | UNICAMP)**

In this communication we will analyse the Political Theatre performed in the IX International Colloquium Marx & Engels, held in 2018. The Colloquium is organized by the Center of Marxist Studies (Cemarx) of the University of Campinas (Unicamp), in Brazil. The center, created in 1996 by professors of the Institute of Philosophy and Human Sciences (IFCH), publishes two journals, *Critica Marxista* and *Cadernos Cemarx*, and organizes many other activities. The first Colloquium was held in 1999. In its ninth edition, besides the usual panels, roundtables and plenaries, for the first time we included Political Theatre plays. Taking these performances as its object, this communication addresses the importance of theatre to the broad spectrum of experience and to the relations between theory and praxis. It will also reflect on the relations between Marxism and Theatre in the present Brazilian political context.

## **The Party of the European Left and the Question of Popular Sovereignty within the EU**

**Nikolaos Nikolakakis (The British University in Egypt)**

In the midst of the financial crisis, the party of the European left (EL) and its key member parties, in their attempt to counter-balance the dominant Europeanist discourse, constructed a narrative that revolved around the concept of the domino effect that a 'government of the left' would bring about inside the EU. In January 2015 the electoral triumph of the Greek Coalition of the Radical Left (SYRIZA) presented with a significant opportunity to test this hypothesis. By the end of the summer of 2015, the SYRIZA-led government capitulated, despite having won a heated referendum with a very wide margin of votes just a week before. This presented the party members of the EL with a series of very significant dilemmas with regards to their stance towards the EU. On one hand, these parties have historically, ever since the Eurocommunist movement, critically supported the process of integration that presents an opportunity for transcending the national divisions of the working classes of Europe. On the other hand, the capitulation of SYRIZA, which was seen by the EL as a crude financial coup d'état, brought the question of the respect of popular sovereignty in the spotlight of the European radical left. Indeed, during the EL's 6th Conference, held in the aftermath of SYRIZA's capitulation the question of sovereignty was amongst the most debated ones. The present paper aims to shed light to the question of national sovereignty within the EL and its most important party members. The paper attempts, thus, to reconstruct the discourse that the EL attempted to construct that places national sovereignty in the centre of its alternative vision of a Europe of the peoples. The paper is based on empirical findings taken from a comparative study of the EL's most



important party members and the role of the EL in constructing a coherent discourse aimed at challenging the hegemony of mainstream Europeanism.

## **Migration as Adaptation to Climate Change? A Case Study of Urbanisation in Dhaka, Bangladesh**

**Anna Louise Plowman (SOAS University of London)**

The intensifying extremity of weather and environmental conditions associated with climate change is understood to contribute to pressures upon people to migrate from rural to urban areas. These pressures are particularly strong for low-income people engaged in agricultural livelihoods, who live in regions highly exposed to the impacts of climate change. A dominant approach to the issue of climate migration sees migration in relation to climate change as a form of adaptation to climate change. As such, migration is understood by its potential benefits for migrants, as well as for sending and receiving communities. Through this approach, migrants are often portrayed as entrepreneurs, as remitters who drive adaptation and resilience in their local areas, as transient workers in flux according to the demands of urban labour markets, and as beneficiaries of high urban incomes. This research departs from and contributes to a critical approach which understands migration in relation to climate change as a mode of proletarianisation, promoting capital accumulation and entrenching class divisions. Focussing on a case study of urbanisation in Dhaka, Bangladesh, this research draws on qualitative data, bringing insights from migrants, non-migrants (rural and urban), the private sector, local academics, government, civil society and NGOs. This data informs an exploration of the migration as adaptation narrative as it manifests in Bangladesh a state highly exposed and vulnerable to climate change, with rapid urbanisation and industrial growth.

## **Jeremy Corbyn: An intellectual, political, and social history**

**Matthew Myers (University of Oxford)**

My paper will explore the following question: What are the historical-structural conditions that produced Jeremy Corbyn as a political entity and Corbynism as a political phenomenon? I will look at various historical-structural determinants since the 1960s which shaped those of Corbyn's generation of left activists: widespread radicalisation of intellectuals and worker-intellectuals; the experiences of the two Wilson and Callaghan Labour governments (1964-70; 1974-79); changing intellectual influences within the Labour left (especially the decline of religion and religious adherence); peaks and troughs in influence and organisational capacity of the trade union and shop stewards movement; immigration and transfer of ideas, forms of militancy, and political imaginaries between former colonies and the metropole; the development of liberal, socialist, and communist approaches to internationalist questions from the mid-19th century; wider cultural transformations since the 1960s. I will also trace the intellectual, political, and social historical context of the late 1960s and 1970s left, tracing the "sectors" which would have

structured the thought of a left activist like Corbyn during the long 1970s and 1980s: forms of workers struggles and industrial militancy of the long 1970s; anti-colonial and post-colonial struggles; urban struggles of racialised communities; struggles internal to the Labour Left through the 1970s and 1980s; the specific British experience of neoliberalism and Thatcherite retrenchment; and international questions of war and injustices outside Britain. I will also outline the political and socio-economic conditions since the mid-1980s which made the Corbyn Project as it has been described - possible.

## Eco-socialist climate policy after the yellow vests

### Anders Ekeland (Statistics Norway)

The starting point of the paper is the reaction of the eco-socialist left to the yellow vest movement in France, exemplified primarily by the response from leading member of Attac in France, economist Maxime Combes[1] and Andreas Malm[2], author of Fossil Capitalism, but also the response of Melanchon and the Green Party is analysed. The paper argues that the left in France, in Europe and internationally is politically paralysed on the key issue of the price of fossil fuel, in particular the price of petrol for cars. The yellow vest movement is of course not caused only or primarily by Macrons tax increase on petrol, but it was the straw that broke the camels back. It the rise of the price of petrol that united very diverse socio-politico-economic groups into one movement. Which means that you are politically paralysed if you do not have long-term strategy for whether the price should increase or not. Because as long as fossil are cheap they will be used and no decrease, and certainly not a drastic reduction in emissions will occur. Since burning fossil fuels is directly responsible for almost 80 % of the emissions, the price of fossil fuel is the key price when it comes to climate policy. It is also the key political problem, since significantly increasing the price (= reducing emissions significantly) clearly hits the poor more than the rich and if the ruling elites tries to do that, there will be social unrest of a magnitude that the ruling elites fear more than anything. That is of course why they have not increased the price of carbon. The yellow vest movement just show that their fear was real. The price of fossil fuel is clearly the Gordian knot of climate policy. The price should increase, but that is politically impossible if it is not part of a just transition. The only way to increase the carbon price in a socially just way, the politically possible way to increase the price, is to combine it with strong redistribution policies. The most common way to do that is to implement a progressive carbon tax, where the tax revenue is redistributed in a Robin Hood way hurting the rich and benefitting the poor. While supported by some well-known eco-socialist like John B. Foster and Ian Angus, a progressive carbon tax is for most activists is a non-issue, i.e. a strategy they have not seriously considered. A few well-known eco-socialist, like Daniel Tanuro have come out clearly against a progressive carbon tax[3]. The paper also argues that the widespread belief on the left that regulation has no consequence for the price on fossil fuels is wrong. If the keep the oil in the soil, the coal in the hole movement was successful in reducing the supply of fossil fuel significantly, thereby significantly reducing the emissions, it would lead to a sharp increase in the price of petrol, gas, coal and according to carbon content all other goods and services. This general, energy price driven increase in the cost of living would hit the poor just as much as Macrons tax on fossil fuels

and be equally unpopular. The paper discusses in light of this the danger that actions like Ende Gelände will turn into heroic actions by a youthful elite of green activists, isolated from the working class, which is then brought under the political hegemony of right-wing populism. For an eco-socialist movement that will be catastrophic. [1] <https://www.rs21.org.uk/2018/12/04/the-yellow-vests-why-macrons-fuel-tax-was-no-solution-to-climate-chaos/> [2] <https://www.versobooks.com/blogs/4156-a-lesson-in-how-not-to-mitigate-climate-change> [3] See for example <https://www.jacobinmag.com/2017/04/climate-change-cop21-tax-dividend-cap-trade-emissions-capitalism/> response in <https://climateandcapitalism.com/2017/04/28/ecosocialists-debate-hansens-climate-change-exit-strategy/> and <https://www.jacobinmag.com/2018/10/carbon-taxes-climate-change-united-nations-report>, a response to <https://jacobinmag.com/2018/09/carbon-tax-divided-peoples-policy-project>

## The electric car: Way forward or a dead-end street?

### Anders Ekeland (Statistics Norway)

The electric car is a very controversial topic on the left. The title of the paper is reflecting the title of wellknown German leftist Winfried Wolfs latest book *Mit dem Elektroauto in die Sackgasse. Warum die E-Mobilität den Klimawandel beschleunigt*[1]. Winfried Wolf have been for decades and still is one of the best informed and sharpest critics of car madness (*Autowahn*)[2]. Already in the mid-80ties Wolf was critical of the electric car. There are many on the left who argues along the same lines as Wolf, for example, eco-socialist and auto-worker, Lars Henrikson, in his book, *Slutkört* (End of driving, 2011) and more recently in an article in *The Jacobin* entitled *Can auto workers save the climate*[3]. The paper argues that the arguments against the electrification of transport are too myopic, that is way too concerned about showing that the electric car has a bigger carbon or not significantly enough smaller carbon footprint today, instead of looking at the situation when all electricity is renewable. If that's the case the electric car and a fossil car will both be green in production, but only the electric car will be green in use. At the end of his book Wolf indirectly admits this, when writing that in his desired scenario, his *Verkehrswende*, being a drastic reduction of transport and most transport being on rail and public, one can imagine that the cars that are still needed are electric[4]. Secondly the paper agrees with all of Wolfs correct and important arguments against car madness fossil or electric; but what happens if the left and the environment movement are not able to reduce the number of cars, in particular in countries with big populations like China, Brazil and India? Isn't it in that very realistic scenario better that the cars are electric? In other words: why not electrification in parallel with the fight for a drastic reduction in the number of cars and transport volume? When irreversible climate change is around the corner, the timing of policies becomes a major, controversial question. The paper also argues that if you are serious on reduction of transport first, electrification if necessary then you must be a strong advocate of carbon pricing, that is increasing the price of fossil fuel, including gasoline. Because in many, if not most countries, the car is clearly the cheapest mode of transportation, in particular if the car has three or more passengers. Very cheap or free public transport

might not compete as long as driving is cheap, given the freedom and comfort of the car. If fossil fuels were taxed the electricity would much sooner become 100 % renewable. The political problem of increasing the price of fossil fuel is of course that it hurts the poor more than the rich as the yellow vest movement recently have made everybody understand. The price of fossil fuel is clearly the Gordian knot of climate policy. The price should increase, but that might lead important sectors, quantitatively and politically speaking, of the working class under the hegemony of right-wing populism if a price increase is not combined with Robin Hood redistribution policies. The petrol price just mentioned in passing by Wolf and most other e-car sceptics. Likewise, two- and three-wheel electric vehicles are not discussed much. China has at least 250 million electric two wheelers, would it be better if they were fossil? Is not the light electric vehicle (e-bike, e-scooter) the best way of getting to the tube and railway station? The negative attitude to electric cars in most cases makes the critic blind to role of the light electric vehicles. A lot of the problems with car madness could be reduced significantly if people were nudged to use them instead of a five-seat car. [1] In English: With the E-mobility into a dead-end street, April 2019, Promedia [2] Wolf published a book in 1986 entitled Eisenbahn und Autowahn (Railway and car madness) [3] <https://www.jacobinmag.com/2015/10/cars-jobs-climate-change-auto-industry-ford-gm-lucas-aerospace-alternative-production/> [4] Und natrlich ist in einem solchen Gesamtkonzept vorstellbar, dass die meisten der verbliebenen Autos Elektro-Autos sind.

## Organizing resistance: The role of UGTT during the tunisian revolutionary process

HELA YOUSFI (Universit Paris-dauphine)

The work of organizing has fallen out of favour within many movement circles, where faith in a spontaneous rebellion and a deep suspicion of institutions, leadership, and taking power are entrenched. By definition, centralized structures were considered the embodying principles of repression and hierarchy. Some scholars such as Piven and Cloward (1984) advocate that organization could hinder effective mobilization. A new ideal type of collective action associated with the connective logic of these mobilizations has emerged from the analysis of the recent wave of social movements such as Occupy, Los Indignados and the Arab Spring (Bennett et al., 2014; Castells, 2012). This connective logic of action is defined as networks that self-organize largely without central or lead organizational actors, using technologies as important organizational agents (Bennett and Segerberg, 2012: 755). The tendency to acclaim the absence of political parties and to argue that horizontal networks of activists who improvise their strategy and tactics have replaced classic forms of hierarchical organization, essentially denied the various social and organizational dynamics that have emerged over the past two decades. Yet, if revolutionary and defiant slogans such as the Arab slogan People want the fall of the regime or the Occupy Wall Street slogan You cant evict an idea whose time has come have shown the considerable potential that exists for people to challenge the ruling class, they have also shown the limits of spontaneity. A growing debate about the sustainability and effectiveness of loose and horizontal networks of activism has emerged among some

activists and academics. The absence of an organizational form that could mobilize people on a larger scale and better challenge the ruling regimes was beginning to be seen as a weakness by growing numbers of activists. They were realizing the limitation of transitory structures such as steering committees and coordination boards that were focused on events rather than long-term strategies (Abdelrahman, 2015). The complex issue of organization is key to explaining the process that unfolded both before and after these so-called spontaneous movements. The growing dialogue between the fields of organization theory and social movement theory indicated the value of a common field-level approach and the centrality of the interconnections between organizations and social movements in the exploration of the new emergent phenomena (Davis et al., 2003; Weber and King, 2014). However, key questions remain unanswered. Despite the general consensus regarding the mutual dependence between formal organization and the so-called spontaneous mobilizations in determining the outcome of social movements, we lack a deep understanding of how different dimensions of organizing are linked and operate. We also lack detailed empirical studies focusing on the organizational contexts that foster the integration of social movements goals and sustain spontaneous participation. Empirical or theoretical work on the intra-organizational processes of change when formal organizations adopt the causes of social movements is also scarce (Yu, 2012). This article seeks to unpack these questions by drawing on the emergent dialogue between the fields of organization theory and social movement theory. To accomplish this goal, the paper provides a detailed examination of the complex role played by the UGTT (the Tunisian General Labor Union) in the Tunisian revolution through a personal ethnographic journey. This examination aims to explore the central position occupied by the UGTT in the protests and the related revolutionary dynamics. As an ethnographic topic, the UGTT is most relevant to reflecting on how we capture the multilayered organizational reality behind the events that unfolded during that time in Tunisia.

## **Leftovers Live presents: Strategic Readings of Marx in 2019**

**Jordy Cummings (Red Wedge Magazine), Isobel Plowright (Columbia University)  
Katie Feyh (Syracuse University) Aaron Jaffe (The Juilliard School)**

A significant among of Marxian research over the last decade has pertained, primarily to the critique of political economy, the value form, crisis theory and the like. Members of the Leftovers discover group encourage a return to strategic readings or Marxs philosophical and political texts, meaning readings pertaining to the specificity of praxis, both on the level of inquiry and the forcefield of struggle. How we develop our theorizations, whether of culture, ecology, identity, the state and so on, have the old mole burrowing away in the background. In this panel we enter this hidden abode of theoretical practice to examine the specificity of our drawing on and deployment of the classics. Revisiting the very means with which Marx discovered his own politics, to his discovery of capitalism and private property as the prime fetter to human emancipation, engaging in practical debates with regards to eco-socialist practice and anti-racism, this panel aims to encourage both revisiting and appreciating the totality of Marxs continent of knowledge. We aim to move beyond seeing the less famous texts as proverbial leftovers.

Paper 1: On 'Old' and 'New' Materialisms: A Strategic Return to Marx, Engels and Lenin  
 Author: Katie Feyh  
 New materialism emerged in philosophy and many related disciplines in response to the excesses of the discursive turn in structuralist and post-structuralist theory and in distinction to purported reductionism, representationalism, and teleology in classical Marxism. While new materialists seek to understand and describe the same phenomena as those working in a classical Marxist (dialectical and historical) materialist vein, they are hindered by the legacy of theoretical antihumanism and aleatory materialism in producing understandings of the world conducive to revolution. Human existence, for new materialism, is largely the passive, objective, and unreflexive materialization of nonhuman motive forces, which appear largely as constraints on our activity. Given the hubris of liberal Enlightenment humanism and the subjective idealism of the discursive turn on one hand, and vulgar or mechanical materialism, reductionism, and crude determinism in some varieties of Marxism on the other, it is to new materialists credit that they are thinking through the relationality of the objects of the world (including humans) that affirms the dignity of the nonhuman world. Its emphasis on the value of nature echoes classical Marxists insistence that we can only continue to exist if we do so in harmony with the rest of nature. Yet its abrogation of human agency obscures the specifically human role in addressing and solving the crises resulting from our activity. In this paper I propose a strategic reading of Marx's Theses on Feuerbach, Engels Dialectics of Nature, and Lenin's Philosophical Notebooks through the creative line in Soviet philosophy from Vygotsky through Ilyenkov toward recovering Marxist materialism for practical use in thinking and action. These classical texts are far from incompatible with the complexity, uncertainty, and relationality to which new materialists attend. These texts enable a needed return of the activity of thinking from the domain of individual professional intellectuals to the social human in collective practical activity. Thus they can help us think beyond the disempowering conclusions of theoretical antihumanism and posit function, reference, purpose, and value (paraphrasing Deacon, *Incomplete Nature*, 2011) in human activity as key components of the revolutionary transformation of society.

Paper 2 Marx's Notion of "Truth" and its Strategic Orientation  
 Author: Aaron Jaffe  
 This paper argues that Marx's notion of truth undergoes very significant shifts from 1842 to 1843, and that these moves form the bedrock of Marx's subsequent political commitments. Further, it argues that the notion of truth at play in Marx's turn to political struggle provides a valuable strategic framework to this day. Briefly, Marx's shifting notion of truth provides the key to appreciate his rapid succession from being a kind of Hegelian left-liberal, to then a purely ideal communist, to ultimately developing the radical possibility of communism via a politically charged materialist conception of history. When Marx holds, in March of 1843, that present philosophy in its aspirations to freedom can only earn its truth at the union of nature and politics, he rejects both that philosophical truths could persist in their own independent realm, and that there could be anything true in merely rhetorically-charged criticisms of existing political conditions. In other words, philosophy achieves its truth in practice that changes conditions. Since changing conditions requires practical interventions on the basis of expert knowledge, truth finally becomes a product of the interwoven forces of social enquiry and the revolutionary pursuit of freedom. This Marxological intervention suggests not only that Marx's famous 11th thesis on Feuerbach was substantively in hand by 1843, but more meaningfully, that critical philosophers



attempting the self-clarification of the struggles and wishes of the age achieve success not in effectively communicating mere facts, but in motivating practical orientations towards an expanding horizon of freedom.

Paper 3: Historical Materialism vs. Stagism: A Strategic Reading of Engels  
Author: Isobel Plowright  
In April 1884, Friedrich Engels wrote to Karl Kautsky about the difficulties of writing his manuscript, which would become *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State*. He feared that the text would fall under the scrutiny of the Anti-Socialist Laws passed only a few years before in Germany. Engels based his study on Marx's annotations of anthropologist Lewis Henry Morgan's 1877 text, *Ancient Society*. The letter to Kautsky detailed this project: There would be no point in writing it if I merely wanted to give an objective report on Morgan without treating him critically, without utilising the new results and presenting them in connection with our views and the conclusions already reached. Our workers would gain nothing by this. Engels envisioned his intervention on history of the family as an explicitly political proposal. Published in 1877, Morgan's *Ancient Society* consists of classificatory systems for the transition between stages of savagery, barbarism, and civilization. The book outlines the development of different family forms, closely linked to the development of the state. In order to account for the settler colonial nature of the American state in the formation of the family, Marx and Engels' annotations on *Ancient Society* should be read critically on the basis of categories of historical time. By building on anthropologist Audra Simpson's argument that Morgan's earlier work uses a form of backstreaming, this paper will argue that historical materialism should be grounded in a critique of the civilizational and stagist model of historical understanding espoused by Morgan.

Paper 4: Bruno Bauer, Class Reductionist: A Strategic reading of *On the Jewish Question* in 2019  
Author: Jordy Cummings  
This paper largely comprises what is being called a strategic reading of *On the Jewish Question* (OTJQ), one of Marx's most misunderstood texts. When it is not being condemned, even by some Marxists, as using unfortunate language, it is mostly drawn upon as an exemplar of Marx's distinction between social emancipation and mere political emancipation. From this angle, the lesson is simple enough that even if political emancipation is insufficient, in this case for Jews in Prussia, it must not be opposed in the name of total emancipation. What is often forgotten, however, is that Marx and Bauer were writing about strategy, for the Left, for the radical intelligentsia. In seeing that OTJQ is not merely Marx using the circumstances of a debate with one of his Young Hegelian contemporaries, one sees how this text can be read strategically today. The prime lens through which to strategically read OTJQ in 2019 is as a reference point with regards to debates around identity politics. Bauer's position, beyond his exposition, is proverbially called out by Marx, in the spirit of Heine, who riposted to anti-Jewish thought that people that they knew Jews as they had seen their beards. That is to say, Bauer's text is primarily theological, as opposed to practical, writing social relations off of theology, not of really existing Jewish people. Bauer, like today's class reductionist critics of identity politics, thinks that Jewish emancipation is impossible and perhaps a sidetrack given the specificity of the Jewish experience, something Marx does not deny. Marx firmly opposes the very premise of opposing particular emancipation in the name of total emancipation, as the two forms are co-constitutive. It is here that we can engage a strategic reading. When we hear those on

the Left deny the salience of particular struggles- for example, for reparations for African Americans - towards a narrow reductionist notion of class, a notion deprived of the identity we hold, the skin we are in, the medium by which we live our working-class lives. As such, it is here that we hear Bruno Bauers opposition to the particular struggle for Jewish emancipation. A strategic reading of OTJQ will thus help show, not just the relevance of this text in general terms, but its applicability to our current context, and thus developing tactics, both within and beyond the Left, at balancing the general and the particular when formulating theory and praxis.—This panel is sponsored by Leftovers'Leftovers is a free ranging Marxist online discussion group, focusing on unitary theories of capitalist domination, Queer Communism, and other materialist analyses of gender and race. We've provided a forum for wide-ranging discussions of transmarxism, vying approaches to Marxist historiography, Social Reproduction Theories, and other debates of relevance to contemporary communists. Leftovers Live 2019 is our third appearance at Historical Materialism Conferences, and we've sought to involve both regulars, and people who might otherwise not attend the event.

## **Class, the labour process and Exploitation**

**Bob Carter (University of Leicester)**

Class, the labour process and exploitationBob Carter and Paul BrookUniversity of LeicesterAbstractThe decline in trade unions and worker militancy over a number of decades has in part resulted in an increase of inequality in developed capitalist societies. There is increasing evidence that there is beginning to be widespread recognition and social discontent stemming from growing disparities. Relatively little of that discontent, however, is manifesting itself a resurgence of trade unionism. One reflection of this is that the concern about inequality is largely about the distribution of income and wealth, and away from tradition Marxist emphasis on its generation through exploitation. These different perspectives very much colour the characterizations of class structure and socialist strategies, and more, concretely between those that emphasise a social struggle of the 99% against the 1%, on the one hand, and those that look at the construction of classes through the material interests that are framed in the capitalist mode of production. In this latter, levels of income do not determine class relations, rather the social relations of production produce not only capitalists, but a series of roles and functions that are performed on their behalf by managers and others with no immediate interest in the transformation of the system. This paper critically examines the overly narrow economic approach to class (such as Dorling (2014) before reiterating the innovative, but much ignored approach of Carchedi, to class that allows a further critique of contemporary radical and Marxist approaches (Dumenil and Levy 2018; Das 2018) that fail to examine the relationship of the labour process and exploitation to class relations.

# Conceptualizing Migrant Labour in Global Capitalism: The Relevance of Marx's Concept of Stagnant Surplus Population

**Ebnem Ouz (Bakent University, Department of Political Science and International Relations)**

Critical studies on the question of how to conceptualize migrant labour in global capitalism are dominated by two main approaches. The first and more popular one, which is most vocally articulated by Guy Standing, conceives migrant labour as part of the precariat, a newly emerging class comprising the rapidly growing number of people facing lives of insecurity. Despite the merit of drawing attention to the empirical aspects of recent changes in the lives of migrant workers, this approach is analytically and politically misleading as it reproduces the false consciousness surrounding the relationship between native and migrant workers by defining precariat as a class apart and distinct from proletariat. The second approach conceives migrant labour as a part of relative surplus population and/or its sub-category reserve army of labor, defined by Marx as a population of greater extent than suffices for the average needs of the valorization of capital. As opposed to the first approach, this conceptualization has the merit of viewing native and migrant workers as part of the same class category. However, most of the existing studies that follow from this approach treat migrant labour as a part of relative surplus population in general, without discussing its relationship to the four sub-categories of relative surplus population defined by Marx as floating, latent, stagnant and pauperized populations. In other words, the literature limits itself to discussing migrant labor in terms of the dual distinction between active and reserve army of labour. When we take into account the multiple relationships between the four sub-categories of relative surplus population, however, we can have a better understanding of how native and migrant workers are related in the process of global capital accumulation and have a more clear answer to the question of why it is not immigration but capitalist competition itself which deteriorates the conditions of both sections of the working class. According to Marx, the floating population refers to the workers who are expelled in times of economic contraction and rehired during times of economic expansion, whereas the latent population refers to those segments of rural population who are proletarianized in the process of capitalist transformation. The stagnant population consists of workers who are employed in jobs with below average pay and dangerous working conditions with no job security. Finally, the pauperized population forms the lowest sediment of relative surplus population comprising lumpen proletariat and those workers with an incapacity for adaptation to capital's constant changes. This paper will argue that contemporary migrant labour can be conceived as a part of stagnant surplus population. This conceptualization can provide us with a multidimensional understanding of the relations between native and migrant workers, as well as the question of why refugees as politically restricted migrant workers have become so central in the global capital accumulation process. The paper will conclude with a discussion of the political implications of this approach with reference to the case of Syrian migrant workers in Turkey.

## Flammable Capitalism

Alejandro Pedregal (Aalto University)

This presentation is part of an ongoing research for an artistic project dealing with the relationship between both the actual and the symbolic destructive potential of fire and capitalism. It follows the cases of three fires that took place in June 2017 over a span of a few days: namely, the wildfires in the Portuguese forest that killed 66 people, the fire in a mall in Lima that killed two workers under semi-slavery conditions, and the fire of the Grenfell Tower in London that killed 72 people, mostly poor workers and immigrants. The presentation means to expose the relationship of these three fires with a series of key aspects related to life under capitalism: the dispossession of the means of production as a seminal factor in the displacement of the population from the country to the city affecting the abandonment and degradation of the first; the subjugation of working conditions to the production and reproduction of capital; and the commodification of every human need, subjected to the dominance of the market resulting, consequently, in the reification of human relations. The exploration of the causes and consequences of these fires and their meaning links them to other historical ones such as the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire in 1911 or the Indonesian forest fires in 1997-98, just to name a few that serve to expose the relationship between the amoral cycle of capitalism and the destructive features of fire. And additionally, in this regard, under the current climate disaster we live in, the connection between fossil capital and the increasingly regularity of El Nio/La Nia phenomena is one of the key aspects to probe. Ultimately, the presentation will rescue the symbolic realm of fire in the Promethean myth as an allegory of modernity with two meanings in dispute: on one hand, as a representation of progress in the teleological capitalist sense of it; and, on the other hand, as a portrayal of enlightenment in the socialist emancipatory sense, as explored by Marx. By inquiring the meaning of this link between fire and capitalism in a symbolic level, this abstraction appears as an illuminating aspect for understanding the philosophical significance of this connection.

## The Methodology of Understanding Marx's Concept of Justice

Xiaoping wei (Chinese Academy of Social Sciences)

Did Marx's critique of capitalism involve a judgement of distributive justice? This question was aroused by the dispute that started in the 1970s that based on US analytical Marxist Allen Wood's argument, which lasted for decades, from Western country to China under certain circumstances. But if we follow the track of Marx's thinking, we see that since the earlier time of Marx's critique of capitalism, this dispute already appeared then. Marx's theory formed to some extent in critique of the viewpoints of the Young Hegelian, National Economics and so on. The present article tries to clarify some key points of this dispute by tracking Marx's critical thinking from the point of the historical dimensions and the normative dimensions, the juridical judgement and the value judgement, the theoretic dimension and reality dimension. Especially based on the text of new MEGA.

## Marxism and Social Movement Theory

Jeff Goodwin ()

For a number of reasons, Marxism has had very little influence within the field of social movement studies in recent decades. For their part, very few Marxists have engaged with the vast accumulated scholarship or theoretical perspectives of this field. This panel examines how Marxism can contribute to a better general understanding of social movements, including labor movements, by providing a number of crucial theoretical resources that are missing from mainstream social movement theory. Marxist ideas about class struggle, class power, and the capitalist state are especially important for understanding social movements, but have received very little attention from mainstream scholars. Panelists:

Jeffery R. Webberj.webber@gold.ac.ukDepartment of Politics and International Relations, Goldsmiths, University of LondonPaper title: Resurrection of the Dead, Exaltation of the New Struggles: Marxism, Class Conflict, and Social MovementAbstract: This paper offers reflection on Marxist theory in the narrow domain of social movements and social-movement studies. It offers a brief survey of international class struggles over the last few decades to situate the discussion. It then focuses on the problem of capitalism for social-movement studies, and the particular issue of capitalist totality. It argues that an expansive, processual, historical and temporal conception of class struggle needs to be at the centre of any adequate Marxist approach to social movements, and shows why and how this is so by delving into some contemporary debates over dominant forms of collective actionstrikes and riots. It also highlights the dialectical relations between production, reproduction and social reproduction, and how the latest revivals of Marxist feminism might guide us through the morass. Finally, it suggests that struggles across these interrelated domains can be linked through an infrastructure of dissent.

Katy Fox-HodessKaty.Fox-Hodess@sheffield.ac.ukLecturer in Employment Relations, Sheffield University Management SchoolPaper title:Bringing the (Relatively Autonomous) State Back In: A Critique of the Concept of Labor's Structural Power from the Perspective of Marxist State TheoryAbstract: This paper provides a critical re-reading of Beverly SilversForces of Labor from the perspective of Marxist state theory. The central concept of Forces of Laborstructural power, defined as the power a given group of workers possess by virtue of the organization of the labor process and their position in the economic systemis found to suffer from an economistic bias that diminishes its predictive potential. Instead, the state and broader class struggle in the society are found to be crucial elements shaping the ability of workers in any given instance to utilize their power at the point of production. These insights are applied to a re-reading of Silvers analysis of labor conflict in the global automobile industry, along with examples from the authors own research into contemporary labor conflict in the ports, to demonstrate the greater predictive power of a theorization of structural power as simultaneously grounded in economy, state and society.

Eric Blancericblancsf@gmail.comDepartment of Sociology, New York UniversityPaper title:The U.S. Teachers Strikes and Social Movement Theory: A Critical AssessmentAbstract: For the first time in four decades, the United States has been hit by a strike wave. The

teachers strikes that have spread from West Virginia to Los Angeles have won important victories and posed a sharp alternative to austerity and privatization. This paper will argue that mainstream social movement theory, on the whole, is ill-equipped to make sense of the emergence, internal dynamics, and development of this historic upsurge. The re-emergence of mass strike action poses the need to develop theories and categories better suited to analyzing political economy, class conflict, and organized labor.

Jeff Goodwin [goodwin.nyu@gmail.com](mailto:goodwin.nyu@gmail.com) Department of Sociology, New York University  
Paper title: The Political Economy of Social Movements  
Abstract: This paper reviews the myriad ways in which capitalism matters for labor and other social movements. First, the dynamics of capitalism and its political effects matter enormously for what mainstream social movement theorists call political opportunities and indigenous organization as well as for cultural factors (framing, repertoires, ideology, emotions, etc.). Class struggle and class formation also matter crucially both for and within social movement organizations, all of which necessarily have a class politics or class habitus, including not just labor movements but also movements based on nationalism, race and ethnicity, sexual orientation, and gender identity and expression. The ways in which specific movements alternately engage in or eschew class conflict is central to their historical evolution.

## Marxian Reading Methods after the “Return to Marx”

Sean O’Brien (Birkbeck, University of London), Amy De’Ath (King’s College London) Samuel Solomon (University of Sussex) Laurel Uziell (Invert Journal)

This panel develops a series of new Marxian interpretive methods for reading literature and other cultural media after the post-2008 ‘return to Marx,’ including the uptake in value form theory in the Anglophone world, the recent resurgence of theories of social reproduction in Marxist Feminism, and the emergence of new modes of queer Marxism.

Papers: 1. Sean O’Brien, “Precarity and Representation: Reading in an Age of Value in Crisis” My contribution to this panel begins from the premise that precarity a largely misunderstood phenomenon amongst both Marxist and non-Marxist theorists alikename a crisis in the reproduction of the capital-labour relation for which literary interpretive frameworks have yet to account. In the wake of what Robert Brenner calls the transition from long boom to long downturn, the global devaluation of the commodity labour power that necessarily follows from this transition strips the worker of the capacities that adhere to the bearer of abstract labour. Crucially, this process by which proletarians are divested of the commodity labour power does not result in a newfound independence from market forces. Where the process of proletarianization not only dispossesses the worker of the direct means of subsistence, but also endows the working body with the commodity labour power thereby creating the figure of the free worker able to exchange their labour power for a wage on the open market and thus secure their social reproduction the declining demand for labour gives rise to a precarious subject bereft of the capacity for social reproduction through capital accumulation. Building on the Marxian figure of a surplus population gradually expelled from the cycles of capital accumulation, I argue that



precarity poses a problem for representation, since its subjective appearance takes the form of invisibility and disposability, superfluity and waste. Thus, in the nameless narrator of Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* (1952), in the riot poetics of Gwendolyn Brooks, Amiri Baraka and Diane di Prima, and in the leftovers of the industrial proletariat that populate the pages of Kurt Vonnegut's *Player Piano* (1952) and the wasted landscapes of films like Harmony Korine's *Gummo* (1997) and Ashley McKenzie's *Werewolf* (2016), we find life as surplus. And this representational problem, in turn, requires a dialectical mode of interpretation able to account for a subject negatively rather than positively determined by capitalism, as Carolyn Lesjak writes. If the proletarian subject of capitalist modernization recognized itself in social(ist) realism and the Bildungsroman, then the entrenchment of what macroeconomists call secular stagnation suspends not only traditional political forms tied to economic expansion and growth, but also an entire series of cultural forms and genres that developed to narrate and critique capitalist development in its expansionary phase. Referencing a range of literary texts and visual media, this paper will offer an outline of a new Marxian interpretive framework for the age of value in crisis.

2. Amy DeAth, *Literary Study and Marxist Feminism* Marxist Feminism has provided us with some of the most expansive and illuminating analyses to date for understanding the dynamics of capitalist reproduction beyond the remit of the wage, especially when it comes to gender and race: what hidden forms of gendered or racialized experience support capitalist production, for instance, while being kept outside of it? To approach capitalism in this way requires thinking from the perspective of a totality, which poststructuralist feminisms, with their emphasis on difference and particularity, have tended to reject. This paper therefore proposes a systematic reading method of thinking totality that, far from ignoring unmeasurable particulars, works to draw out those dimensions of capitalist mediation that cannot be thought in the language of structure. My approach draws on a Marxist concept and a method germane to thinking from the perspective of the whole: first, the concept of real abstraction, the active process by which capitalist abstractions, never reducible to a single place or time, nonetheless exert palpable force over lived social relations; and second, the method of systematic dialectic, an expository procedure that begins from the perspective of totality precisely to reveal, rather than obscure, the local shapes of systemwide antagonisms. My paper puts this method into practice through readings of contemporary poetry by the Anishinaabe poet Marie Annette Baker and the German-British poet Lisa Jeschke. A Marxist Feminist approach shows how their work can mobilize the historically non-conceptual aspects of poetry to feel or sense the way capital mediates the reproduction of race and gender in simultaneous, dynamic, and contradictory ways. My readings therefore highlight the deep historical reservoir of formal techniques and problems on which these poets draw to stage the reign of what Marx called domination by abstraction: in subjective terms, the sense that one's life is intimately shaped by forces that somehow always feel elsewhere. Yet the political clarity of my reading method shows how these poems give concrete shape to the feminist adage that the only way out is through: Annette and Jeschke are making art that senses determinations by the value-form where they are otherwise at their most illegible.

3. Sam Solomon, "The Poetics of Everybody?" This talk will consider the implications of Holly Lewis's recent book *The Politics of Everybody: Feminism, Queer Theory, and Marxism*

at the Intersection (Zed, 2016) for poetics. Lewis rejects the assumption that a politics of distinctly queer desire and identity is inherently radical and argues for a revolutionary overthrow of capitalism and with it of regimes of differentially valued body production. In this talk, I will test out Lewis's conclusions in the context of poetics, asking how poetic making might take part in generating a critique of political economy that works through and from the assumption that capitalist accumulation relies on the accumulation of sexually differentiated (feminized) bodies. I ask what poetic and rhetorical methods might be useful for such an investigation, focusing on the affordances and limits of focuses on address and diction which are often understood to effect rhetorical inclusion and exclusion by way of desire and repulsion, and I question the adequacy of what I consider to be liberal-formalist assumptions.

4. Laurel Uziell, "Poetry Against Wages Against Housework" The sequence of inversions which open Silvia Federici's *Wages Against Housework* - They say it is love. We say it is unwaged work - can arguably be seen as emblematic of the project of social reproduction theory (SRT) as a critique of gendered divisions of labour under capitalism, and as a feminist critique of Marxism on its own terms. However, were one to read these lines - lineated and set above the text proper - as apocryphal, it may provide an entry point into formulating a (comradely) critique of the poetics of much social reproduction theory, both in terms of the limit-points of its analysis and the forms of struggle which cohere around these insights, and from which they emerge. Central to this poetics, in a way which feeds into SRT and its practical manifestation in the social strike, is a form of reframing, of making visible forms of (gendered) social life in their relation to the directly market mediated sphere of strictly value-producing labour. Yet at the same time, such reframing has a tendency to foreshorten the possibilities of critique (and thus of practical demands), in a way which tends towards recreating determinate meanings for its objects. Zoe Sutherland and Marina Vishmidt identify this tendency within SRT as a process of renaturalisation [which] occurs when a particular repressed social category is both reified and valorised as immanently resistant to what is dominant. While a crude definition of the work of poetry and of a critical theory of society would be its capacity to defamiliarise or denaturalise, I would like to make the argument that a Marxist poetics must remain vigilant against the foreclosure of meaning, in a way which is differentiated from a purely linguistic argument for the endless play of signifiers. My argument will thus be twofold: on the one hand I will argue that much can be gained from an attention to (Marxist and feminist) social theory by attending to its poetics, that is to its structuring metaphors and its ironies, or lack thereof. On the other hand, through a reading of the poetry of Anne Boyer, I want to address the ways in which poetry can provide urgent critical insights for feminist struggles precisely in its capacity to make space for the contradictions of lived experience which systematic theoretical work cannot address; the painful knowledge that a relation can simultaneously be love and unwaged work.

## **Privilege and responsibility: personal environmental action and its exclusionary tensions**

**Karijn van den Berg (Aberystwyth University, PhD student)**

Recent environmental reports such as the IPCC report (October 2018) have been suggesting a role for the individual in combatting climate change. Social media, celebrities and corporations are presenting ethical and sustainable consumption as trendy and viable practices in the context of increasing environmental issues. By moving such political engagement to the personal sphere several tensions arise regarding privilege, exclusion and modes of action. In this paper I discuss some of these tensions as highlighted through interviews with transnational environmental activists and organisers. I argue that most exclusionary tensions start with personal environmental actions premise on the individual, and the ways such practices assume individual responsibility in a both neoliberal and anthropocentric way. Activists perspectives, however, open up not only critiques of personal environmental action, as well as some ways to rethink these practices. I will discuss these perspectives to explore what an opening up of personal environmental action might look like that both considers different types of practices outside of the dominant Global North image as well as ones that are less individualist and less situated in the consumer sphere. I take on a relational approach embedded in feminist political ecology to argue that if personal environmental action is merely considered as individual(ist) practice, premised on immersion in the consumer sphere, exclusionary tensions occur regarding the affordability of such consumer practices. The focus will then predominantly be on which individuals can participate in such practices (categorizing individuals according to their identity lines of privilege). Therefore, presuming or accepting a singular form of personal environmental action always already excludes certain subjects and practices. However, if reconsidered more relationally there is potential for a wider recognition of forms of personal environmental action as not necessarily embedded in state or market, to recognize a wider and more diverse array of practices and practitioners.

## **Canada and the 'crimmigration' fix in the post-recession recovery**

**Jessica Evans (Ryerson University, Sociology)**

This paper proposes a preliminary investigation, at a theoretical level, to the following questions: how do we understand the expansion of carceral immigration policy and spending in Canada, despite evidence that undocumented immigration has decreased in the last decade? Furthermore, how does the carceral turn in immigration policy affect a reconstitution of citizen subjectivities, and with what consequences for the generation of increasingly hostile and racist popular politics? Drawing upon the insights of Ruth Wilson Gilmores Golden Gulag, I interrogate the relationship between crisis, capital accumulation and carceral spending as it has most recently manifest: in the post financial-crisis ballooning of carceral immigration infrastructure and budgeting and the popular legitimization of a politics of xenophobic and racist nationalism.

## **The Green New Deal does not solve the Ecofascist problems: the urgency of post-developmentalism.**

**Guilherme Almeida de Souza Prado (Universidade Federal do ABC (Federal University of ABC)), Jose Paulo Guedes Pinto (Universidade Federal do ABC (Federal University of ABC))**

The crisis of 2008 associated with the peak of world oil production showed the world the limits of the exploitation of natural resources by the capitalist mode of production and systemic domination. On the one hand, neofascist attempts to get out from the crisis, such as the Bolsonaro and Trump governments, have accentuated the “development of destructive forces”. For both, nature is seen as an obstacle to growth, global warming would be a lie and the fact that death is advancing at full throttle against all forms of life is something to be ignored, in what we call Capitalocene. Also, its neoliberal and austere measures for the lower classes serve to sustain the opulence of the upper ones, constituting a project of inequality with growth. To face this deadly view, it is common to see “progressive” growth exits such as the so-called Green New Deal. This type of proposal would be more palatable to workers, since economic growth would soften the class struggle, despite maintaining the extraction of surplus value. We argue that these proposals are equally devastating for the reproduction of life and that the only viable way out of the crisis necessarily involves building a program of transition for billions of people that transcends the domination and imperial lifestyle of capitalist modernity. Buen Vivir (good/well living), Degrowth, nature’s rights, the reduction of working hours, minimum income and maximum income are just some of the components that can build an anti-modern exit in the face of the final crisis of modernity.

## **Humankind makes itself, but not as it pleases?**

**Marcus Bajema (independent researcher, PhD in archaeology from Leiden University)**

Althusser’s recognition of an aleatory current in philosophy has great potential to add to the recent Marxist debates on ecology and long-term history. These discussions have noted the influence of Epicurus and other ancient thinkers on Marx’s view of nature. Yet the radical implications of this have not been sufficiently thought through, and this is precisely where the notion of aleatory materialism can be of use. For the anti-teleological perspective of the ancient atomists also entails a specific view of the relation between humans and nature. One that furthermore shaped their conception of the history of humankind from its beginnings to the Greco-Roman states in which they lived. Clear resonances of this perspective can be found in Marx’s notion of Stoffwechsel and his conception of technology. In this paper I want to explore this similarity from the perspective of the anti-teleological view of history, as captured in Althusser’s notion of the encounter. One pertinent question arising from this concerns just how much control humans can really exert over history,

given Spinoza's recognition of the propensity for the imagination to predominate over the philosophical understanding of nature and humankind.

## **A Dialectic of Refusal and Relation: Mapuche Narratives of Self-Recognition in, against and beyond the Colony**

**Saskia Fischer (Researcher, RECollective, Athens)**

This paper responds to Kumar et al's call for greater attention to the complexity of identity as it figures in contemporary conditions (2018). Based on ethnographic fieldwork with a Mapuche radio station in Patagonia, it draws on the work of Fanon, Gramsci and Argentine anthropologists, in order to tackle the sticky question of interiority (Proctor, 2018) as it pertains to identity and political subjectivity. It considers Mapuche comunicadores (media makers) narratives of subjection and political awakening, which they refer to as the process of self-recognition (autoreconocimiento). With Fanon, media makers stressed the importance of understanding not only the objective, but also the subjective dimensions of settler colonisation, and one of the goals of their organising was to nurture autonomous capacities for self-recognition. Within this wider project, the representation of a Mapuche subject position or identity held an important place. In my discussion, I highlight two aspects of the comunicadores narratives. Firstly, that the journey of self-recognition was recounted as involving both positive and negative movements, a dialectic of refusal of colonised subject positions, and relation with the identity of the Mapuche as a people. Secondly, that Mapuche identity was not represented as static or unitary, but rather as a process constituted by the changing relations and experiences of those subjects who claimed it. It was thus firmly rooted in the material, embedded not only in social relations but also in relations with territory. Narratives of self-recognition represent forms of collective theorisation that are created in the course of struggle. As such, they provide valuable descriptions of the workings of colonisation and de-colonisation, and of the relations between political subjectivity, identity and representation. In a context of intensifying environmental devastation, enclosure and racism, and with the ever deeper reach of capitalist technologies of the self and the politics of identity they cultivate, the question of how we nurture resistant subjects requires urgent attention. Through an engagement with concrete practices and theories such as those of Mapuche comunicadores, one can move beyond the rigidities that persist within Marxist approaches to identity, and begin to define lines of inquiry that speak of and with struggles.

## **From the Soviet Union to the Middle East: Womens Engagements with Social Reproduction, Nation, Patriarchy, and anti-Colonialism**

**Massarah Dawood (York University), Olena Lyubchenko (York University)**

This paper will explore the relationship between race, class, gender, nationhood and religion in light of the connections that were made historically in the context of the Cold

War, anti-colonial struggles, and in the Soviet sphere of influence. We focus on the political exchange between women in the anti-colonial movements in the MENA region, specifically, Iraq and the Committee of Soviet Women, as part of the Soviet Unions solidarity with, and political and economic support for, anti-colonial struggles; where land is central. This exploration opens up a set of questions around women movements: How did they conceptualize womens emancipation in relation to anti-colonial struggles and nationalist projects? How did womens emancipatory thought that developed in the Soviet Union translate to Iraq? Accordingly, what kind of feminism emerged in Iraq and beyond and how was it situated in relation to Soviet imperial politics? How did the Soviet and Iraqi women conceptualize nationhood, issues of land, imperialism, class, and patriarchy and, in turn, challenge it? In line with the theme of the conference, we want to understand the ways in which womens emancipation was articulated in relation to land, social reproduction, and sovereignty (Federici 2004). We aim to address the contradictions involved in the Soviet modernization project in relation to land, both internal to the Soviet Republics, but also exported as part of the project of support for anti-colonial movements, implicating women and their livelihoods in a particular way, in both cases. Our paper intervenes in existing transnational feminist thought in light of these historical connections and lessons. Accordingly, the paper will challenge traditional perspectives of the Cold War, highlighting gender as an important dimension within anti-colonial struggles in the third world and the Soviet political and potentially imperial, by different means project.

## **Economies of Salvage in China Mieville, Mridula Koshy, Chen Qiufan, and Hwang Sok-yong**

**Paromita Patranobish (Ambedkar University, Delhi)**

As a product, symptom, allegory, and measure of the post capitalist condition, man-made waste occupies an important place in narratives and imaginaries produced within contemporary capitalist regimes. Waste's global dynamics and vectors of flow, its indelible molecular imprint on large scale planetary processes, its capacity to reorganise populations and stratify space, its determinant role in the politics of rights, recognition, community, labour, mobility, and identity, have made it a key signature of the Anthropocene. Constituting and inscribing the spectral margins of capitalisms surplus economy, waste not only alters the physical character of the ecosphere through the conspicuous consumption and appropriation of natural resources and non human habitats at unprecedented rates, what Anna L. Tsing calls salvage accumulation, and the conversion of vast terrains of geological strata into toxic landfills, waste is also hardwired into the very ideological fabric of how global capitalism manipulates, positions, and reifies bodies, capacities, and emotions to create disposable subjects and engineer vast geopolitical disparities. One critical response to capitalisms garbage culture has been to reinstate the vitalism of trash, approaching its obsolescence and recalcitrance as sites for inaugurating alternative materialist object oriented ontologies that dethrone the anthropological subject and its instituted binarisms and provide us with new ways of thinking about agency, expression and affect. (Bennett 2009, Morton 2016). However any attempt to reconfigure the social, economic, and epistemic value of waste needs to take into consideration capitalist



processes that engage with waste through obfuscatory utopian rhetorics of recycling, greening, and sustainability. Taking these theoretical interventions as points of departure, this paper wishes to examine the politics of waste in four literary works, China Mieville's *Railsea* (2012), Mridula Koshy's *Bicycle Dreaming* (2016), Chen Qiufan's *Waste Tide* (2013), and Hwang Sok-yong's *Familiar Things* (2017). My paper will perform a comparative reading of the multiple significations of capitalist waste and how these generate particular configurations of labour, aspiration, affect, and community in these works. From Mieville's steampunk inspired construction of salvage as a possible materialist alternative to the tunnel vision of abstract aggrandising philosophies, Koshy's depiction of the different economies of work and survival created around waste in a third world country where practices of caste oppression intertwine with modern capitalist forms of scrap trading and manual scavenging, Quifan's dystopian Silicon Isle in remote China that serves host to the toxins and biochemical hazards of global corporate technological garbage, and Sok-yong's inflection of the politics of dumping through a larger history of totalitarian and neo-imperialist hegemony, in all four novels, waste becomes the ground for the narratives engagement with the problematic of a specific post capitalist landscape implicated in various kinds of ecological crises, and allows for the emergence of intersectional vocabularies of resistance that acknowledge the critical conjunctions between class, caste, ethnicity, and gender. Through a cross genre, cross cultural examination of the fictional uses of waste as a trope with which to interrogate the very apparatuses of its production and distribution, and as a literary figure with specific cognitive and sensory effects, I wish to highlight how industrial, technological, and digital debris in the four novels serve as sites for opening up dialectical struggles between the visible and invisible, memory and oblivion, the human and the nonhuman, discard and reclamation, oppression and resistance, and reality and utopia.

## **Political affect in radical political action: Reasserting Gramsci in Mouffe**

**Lukas Slothuus (University of Edinburgh)**

Understanding and defending political affects such as hope and despair is crucial for radical politics. Social transformation requires being able to both imagine and effectuate itself. Only fatalistic conceptions of politics require neither, such as technological or economic determinism. Once a space for agency is established, motivating the radical forms of political action that can help bring about such transformation requires an understanding and practice based on both reasons and affects. Yet much critical theory and radical philosophy unconvincingly circumscribes affect. For instance, the role of reason is too central in both early and contemporary Frankfurt School critical theory. One figure who manages to successfully incorporate an account of affect in her theory of radical politics is Chantal Mouffe, in her later work. Although Mouffe significantly improves on understandings of the importance of political affect, her account nevertheless falls short. Indeed, as this paper shows, she purges the most Gramscian elements of her account, to the detriment of its appeal. It is in fact precisely a return to Antonio Gramsci's account of political affect that can help provide the theoretical and conceptual tools for developing an

account of the relationship between political affect and reason, and consequently how these impact radical political action. Because she instrumentalises affect, she maintains the hierarchy between reason and affect that runs through critical theory. The poverty of both discursive and rationalist accounts of politics is brought out by Gramscis conception of opinion-formation and the relationship between knowing, understanding, and feeling.

## **On the Liberal-conservatism in Brazil**

**Savio Machado Cavalcante (State University of Campinas (Unicamp)/ So Paulo, Brazil.)**

This communication will present a Marxist analysis of the political alliance between conservatives and liberals, expressed in the platform that won 2018 Brazilian presidential elections. Conservatives aim to create or change a set of rules, policies and institutions in order to establish what they see as a normal standard in terms of morality, family bonds and sexuality. Liberals, in turn, aim to invert the social-democratic dimension expressed, in Brazil, in the Federal Constitution of 1988 which forces the State to provide public services, mainly social security. To address this political force, this communication will a) describe the social agents and class interests behind the alliance, i.e., ask not only who governs, but also for whom it does; b) understand why neoliberalism needs conservatives moral approach to win elections and reform policies and c) identify which social class or stratum is more likely to ideologically support the liberal-conservatism alliance.

## **THE MOTION OF TIME IN SPACE: THE GLOBALISATION OF DEINDUSTRIALISATION**

**Alexis B. Moraitis (University of Warwick)**

Deindustrialisation constitutes a major policy concern in the advanced capitalist world with both the Left and the Right calling for ambitious reindustrialisation programs. At the same time, an increasing number of developing countries are undergoing a process of 'pre-mature deindustrialisation' which has put into question traditional theories of development that view industrialisation as a necessary step towards prosperity. A series of industrial and trade measures are announced by governments around the world to counter industrial decline. Deindustrialisation has become a truly global phenomenon which is a consequence of both the rapidly progressing productivity of industry as well as of the internationalisation of trade. This paper argues that this process is, in fact, best understood as a movement of time in space. Capital's tendency to compress socially necessary labour time results in high productivity standards which are imposed on individual nation-states by way of their exposure to the world market. To get their wealth validated on the world market, nations must conform to the productivity standards established globally through competition and paradoxically accentuate their deindustrialisation. Time travels in space as the most advanced industrial producers impose their levels of labour productivity to their competitors around the world. Deindustrialisation, and the social and regional

dislocations that accompany it, thus result from the compelling spatiotemporal dynamics of capital. The nativist and protectionist temptations to shield domestic industry and jobs from the blows of China and Globalisation are misguided. In a society where wealth is measured by the social productivity of labour, individual governments cannot reverse the deindustrialisation trend but only conform to it. Instead, the pacific coexistence of productive activity and the satisfaction of human needs requires a reconceptualisation of the social form of wealth.

## **The socialist calculation debate: 99 years on**

**Dan Greenwood (University of Westminster)**

The socialist calculation debate, which has fundamentally important implications for any vision of post-capitalism, is approaching its centenary. The debate was triggered by Ludwig von Mises seminal 1920 paper *Economic Calculation in the Socialist Commonwealth*. The paper raised a challenge concerning the feasibility of socialist planning to which socialists have yet to provide a fully convincing answer. It has become well established by Austrian School defenders of Mises that the early socialist responses, such as the well-known contribution of Oskar Lange, did not adequately take account of the dynamic complexity of modern economies that was emphasised by the Austrian argument. The relatively few more recent attempts to formulate a viable model of socialist planning still suffer from significant shortcomings as responses to the Austrian calculation argument. Others have sought to counter the Misesian argument on purely philosophical ground. While the Austrian challenge to socialism remains profound, recently developed computational techniques offer significant potential for addressing the highly complex, dynamic character of the calculation problem as articulated by the Austrian School. Indeed, the field of economic modelling is an area ripe for applying such techniques, which offer the capacity to address the longstanding challenge for the discipline of integrating macro and micro-level economic analysis. Such potential future developments could provide tools that would aid both policy-makers within capitalism, in the context of major challenges such as climate change, while also pointing to the possibility of an efficient, post-capitalist society and economy.

## **La marea verde: la demanda del aborto legal en la masificacin y politizacin del feminismo argentino**

**Andrea D'Atri (Pan y Rosas (corriente internacional feminista socialista) - Instituto de Pensamiento Socialista "Karl Marx", Argentina)**

La demanda del aborto legal tiene una larga historia en Argentina; sin embargo, podemos sealar tres momentos claves en que este reclamo actu como aglutinador del movimiento de mujeres y los feminismos. En cada uno, la confrontacin con los partidos polticos tradicionales fue inevitable. No slo con aquellos sectores visiblemente conservadores, derechistas o neoliberales que manifiestan su frrea oposicin a los derechos democrticos, sino tambin con los que se presentan como progresistas pero, en cada uno de estos

momentos históricos, privilegiaron sus acuerdos y compromisos con la derecha política o la jerarquía eclesástica. El primer momento fue en 1994, cuando el entonces presidente Carlos Menem pacta con la oposición (liderada por el ex presidente Raúl Alfonsín), la realización de una Asamblea Constituyente para modificar la carta magna. Las pequeñas organizaciones que trabajaban por la legalización del aborto encontraron, en esa coyuntura política, una oportunidad para difundir su lucha. Chocando contra los intereses y acuerdos de los partidos mayoritarios del régimen, amplificaron la voz de los sectores a favor de la legalización del aborto, aunque debieron enfrentar al progresismo que, finalmente, decepcionó a quienes depositaban en él sus expectativas. El segundo fue el que se abrió con la crisis orgánica de diciembre de 2001, dando lugar al florecimiento de asambleas vecinales, movimientos de trabajadoras y trabajadores desocupados y fábricas funcionando bajo control obrero. El feminismo, durante este período, se renovó con la incorporación de una nueva generación que comenzó a organizar sus propios colectivos juveniles. En este período, tomó nuevo impulso la lucha por el derecho al aborto, dando lugar a la formación de la coalición denominada Campaña Nacional por el Derecho al Aborto y al proyecto de ley que fue presentado al parlamento, durante más de una década. Esa década estuvo signada por distintas coyunturas, donde también predominaron los sectores que depositaron expectativas en el nuevo gobierno. Este, tomando algunas medidas progresistas, reestableció el orden institucional que había quedado en crisis después del 2001. Sin embargo, contando con mayoría parlamentaria y muchas diputadas y diputados favorables al proyecto de legalización, se negó al debate parlamentario, alegando que la sociedad no estaba preparada. El tercer momento que identifiqué es el que se abrió en 2018, cuando el gobierno de Macri permitió, demagógicamente, que se discutiera la legalización del aborto en el Congreso, lo que dio lugar a un movimiento masivo que se identifica como feminista. Su movilización consiguió doblegar a la Cámara de Diputados, obteniendo la media sanción de la ley. Sin embargo, la injerencia de la jerarquía eclesástica y sus pactos con todos los partidos tradicionales del régimen político se hicieron notar en el Senado, donde el proyecto fue rechazado. En la movilización del 8M de este año, la marea verde volvió a hacerse sentir con ímpetu, en un año signado nuevamente por la crisis, cuando todos los partidos del régimen, junto con las burocracias sindicales y la jerarquía eclesástica, intentan evitar los estallidos sociales, garantizando la paz social que el régimen necesita para atravesar el calendario electoral sin sobresaltos.

## Occupy Climate Change! Urban radical imaginaries and insurgent citizens in the age of authoritarian politics and disaster capitalism

Marco Armiero (Environmental Humanities Laboratory KTH Royal Institute of Technology, Sweden), Roberta Biasillo (Environmental Humanities Laboratory KTH Royal Institute of Technology, Sweden) Salvatore Paolo De Rosa (Environmental Humanities Laboratory KTH Royal Institute of Technology, Sweden) Ethemcan Turhan (Environmental Humanities Laboratory KTH Royal Institute of Technology, Sweden)

What do we mean with the expression Occupy Climate Change!? It seems that we are conflating CO2 emissions with the movement of Indignados in Barcelona, or Hurricane Maria with the We are the 99% mobilization. Someone could easily argue that these things do not match, that they donot belong to the same realm. No one has ever proposed to occupy either the ozone hole nor the sixth extinction. Such scientific facts must be treated with the protocols of the scientific method rather than occupied as if they were a public square or a factory. Actually, we are not the first ones to associate the Occupy movement with climate change. In 2012, the activists who were engaged in the Occupy Wall Street movement decided to react to the destruction brought to New York City by Hurricane Sandy, physically moving from the financial district to Brooklyn and Harlem, giving birth to the Occupy Sandy movement (Dawson 233-274). Nonetheless, the question is still open: why occupy? Occupy speaks, clearly, of a militant, political act. In the history of social movements, the act of occupying has been both a defensive and a prefigurative strategy. Workers have occupied factories to resist their foreclosure as well as to experiment with forms of self-management. Peasants have occupied lands against big landowners, resisting enclosures and expropriation and sometimes trying to build alternative communities on such re-appropriated land. More recently, Occupy has become the distinctive political practice of urban social movements which have chosen to re-appropriate public, often symbolically resonant, spaces in the city. From Plaza Catalunya in Barcelona to Gezi Park in Istanbul, from Wall Street in New York to Teatro Valle in Rome, urban movements have employed the practice of occupying public spaces as both a resisting and a prefigurative strategy. As these examples make evident, occupying climate change has this twofold aim: it implies to resist mainstream discourses which depoliticize the issue of climate change while proposing questionable techno-fixes, and to take control of the climate change discourse, enhancing a radical, we might dare to say, a revolutionary agenda. Although the struggles for climate change are happening everywhere, from Standing Rock to the Amazonia, we focus our paper on the urban scale. As the majority of humanity has moved to cities over the last half-century, the questions of the urban environment and of urban governance have become increasingly central to social and political conflicts across the Global North and South. In addition, with Right-wing populist governments in control of many national governments, struggles for economic equality, political inclusion, and climate justice have taken on increasing prominence on the urban scale. The growth of the Fearless Cities movement, not to mention more mainstream efforts such as C40 Cities Climate Leadership Initiative, all highlight the prominence of the urban

scale in contemporary struggles for climate justice and just transition. In 2018 the Swedish agency for sustainable development FORMAS funded an international project entitled Occupy Climate Change which aims to study grassroots and municipal innovations in Malmö, Istanbul, Naples, New York, and Rio de Janeiro. In this paper, we will present results from that project, focussing mainly on new and insurgent citizenship practices and new types of knowledge produced in those cities. In the paper, we will attempt to answer to the following questions: While racial/disaster capitalism is finding new ways of enclosure and accumulation under a more extreme authoritarian rule, which are the new radical imaginaries and insurgent practices of grassroots organizations? Is it possible, for example, to knit municipalist movements in various regions and countries together into a transnational eco-socialist movement?

## **The naturalization of the abandonment of mining sites in Mexico, a hidden history of social and ecological deterioration in capitalist accumulation.**

**Letizia Silva (Universidad Nacional Autonoma de Mexico)**

Mining in Mexico is a priority activity, which means that by law it can be performed in any population or environmental context. This priority has to do with the dispossession in the exploitation of the territory become much more evident, creating areas of sacrifice in favor of a supposedly greater good: public utility. The extractive production mode, appeals to measures such as subsidies or higher taxes, which shows how the State supports and defends these practices, no matter that it is non-renewable resources, and leaves the host entities dependent on the mining, because they are not being able to perform any other alternative economic activity. Derived from my current postdoctoral research, it is the interest of this paper to get closer to the actual conditions of the sites in Mexico where there was mining activity, to see how ghost towns were created: almost no population, vestiges of buildings and abandoned infrastructure, desolate and contaminated landscapes. There are examples where the dispossession was achieved for the appropriation of the territory in function of the usefulness of the mining capital, in a way so well achieved, that the abandonment of the mining is naturalized hiding the causes that led to the exodus of large populations before the impossibility of continuing with life in these places.

## **Climate, environment and Marxist history**

**John Frederick Haldon (Princeton University)**

Climate change, environmental degradation and migration define for many the contemporary human experience. Climate change affects human societies through diverse non-linear trajectories. Grasping the challenges that climate change presents and evolving appropriate policies that promote and support mitigation and adaptation requires not only an understanding of the science and the contemporary politics, but also an understanding



of the history of the societies affected and in particular of their cultural logic. History and archaeology have a well-established engagement with issues of premodern societal development and the interaction between physical and cultural environments; together they offer a holistic view that can generate insights into the nature of cultural resilience and adaptation as well as responses to catastrophe. Much attention and effort is focused on issues of societal resilience, and sustainability, and in particular planning for sustainable futures in the face of the sorts of environmental challenges, whether anthropogenic or not, faced by most societies today. Yet most of this work is done in relative ignorance of, or deliberate avoidance of, any historical insight. An appreciation of the way past social systems have responded, at all levels of social praxis, to environmental and climate stress factors is surely useful in thinking about possible coping strategies today. Recent research has been improving the precision of reconstructed past climatic conditions around the world, offering us the opportunity to explore fresh questions by using the past to learn more about the present and vice versa. The findings from both contemporary and historical case studies have the potential to influence policy makers, while increasing awareness of this often-unnoticed aspect of climate change among the general public. Historians who take environmental and climatic issues into account have often been accused of varying degrees of determinism or reductionism, so that evolving appropriate methodologies to avoid these traps has become an increasing priority. At the same time it is often difficult for those working within a historical materialist critical framework of analysis to see where such apparently extraneous factors can be fitted into a close social structural and social-economic analysis of class and power relationships. In this short paper, and using some historical examples, I will outline some ways both of avoiding environmental determinism or tokenism, on the one hand, as well as of working environmental and climate-related issues more closely into the fabric of our understanding of social-economic relationships.

## **Degrowth in times of financialised capitalism What potential for change?**

**Elena Hofferberth (University of Leeds)**

Degrowth paints the picture of a radical transformation of economy and society to tackle not only the looming climate breakdown but social and ecological crises on a wider scale. '[D]efined as an equitable downscaling of production and consumption that increases human well-being and enhances ecological conditions at the local and global level, in the short and long term' (Schneider, Kallis & Martinez-Alier 2010) this vision challenges some of the fundamentals of the current organisation of the economy. Yet, a systematic analysis of the transformative potential of degrowth in light of the current state of capitalism is still missing. Focusing on debates around financialisation, 'the rise of the rentier' and 'the commodification of everything', the paper posits that in order to truly address the roots of the global ecological and social crises certain issues need to be integrated into the degrowth analysis more comprehensively. These include in particular the realm of money and finance as well as issues of ownership. The paper proposes 'social-ecological definancialisation' as a process to accompany the movement towards a post-growth economy. Degrowth paints the picture of a radical transformation of economy and society

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## **"The state of the world, the state of the death of the world... the death of the state of the world": Transition and the State-Debate**

**Callum Sunderland (None), Lucy Freedman ()**

For all their differences, the two predominant contemporary tendencies in Marxist ecological thought, those associated with either 'world-ecology' or 'the metabolic rift', share at least one common assumption: the centrality of the state for a green transition. While some advocate significantly harsher measures, the Green New Deal is gaining increasing prominence as a mechanism through which such a transition could be achieved. Our concern, however, is that such perspectives often set out from an extremely abstraction conception of the state and its relationship to accumulation. On the other hand, we feel that criticisms of the GND from writers associated with the communisation perspective, while attentive to material constraints, foreclose too much. Drawing on contributions to the German and British state-debate of the 1970s and '80s, including previously unpublished conference papers, we intend to reframe the discussion of the role of the state, and affirm the pursuit of communist measures, through and against the state, for the abolition of the fossil economy and class society.

## **furthering authoritarianism: transformation of state-class relations in turkey in a comparative perspective**

**Aylin Topal (Middle East Technical University Department of Political Science and Public Administration), galip L. yalman (middle east technical university)**

this paper aims to contribute to the debate on the rise of authoritarianism in different countries. it intends to do so by exploring the reorganisation of social forces and reallocation of state power as exemplified by the Turkish case. it will attempt to revisit inter-capitalist class relations in order to develop a better understanding of different

modalities of reproduction of labour without economic and social security. this is where the gramscian framework gains saliency in understanding specific moments of collective will formation in the context of different ideological environment. it is pertinent to come to terms with the recent political developments in Turkey which could better be conceived as a shift from one authoritarian form of the state to another. this claims will be theorized in the light of the authoritarian turn experienced in several other capitalist countries such as Brazil.

## **Politicl Utopia as the “Noch-Nicht” of societies: A discussion of Ernst Bloch`s concept of Concrete Utopia**

**Magdalene Hengst (Goethe University Frankfurt)**

On an everyday basis, the concept of Utiopia has always been criticised for being impossible to achieve. The German Marxist philosopher Ernst Bloch established a new perspective on political utopian theory stating that Utopia can be realised and provides individuals with the power to act towards an utopian realty. He defined his concept of Concrete Utopia radically different to all other thinkers by connecting Utopia with marxist ideas of socialism. Nevertheless, he was deprecated for making the term Utopia imprecise and not usable anymore for an analysis of imagined societies. But is this critique legitimate? And what does a concept of Utopie need to provide? The paper will discuss if Blochs understanding of Utopia serves as a theoretical instrument to critizise current social contextbased on Blochs interpretation of Marxist thought. It will carry out arguments for the detachment of Blochs theory of a Concrete Utopia from its orthodox embedment. Therefore, Concrete Utopia is assumed to be compatible for current fights against existing power asymmetries. The paper demonstrates how the unique approach of Ernst Bloch and his focus on human agency can empower social movements who fight for a world free from domination and heteronomy.

## **Sovereignty in the Challenges to the Free Trade Dogma of International Economic Adjudication: A Marxist and Gramscian Perspective**

**Edoardo Stoppioni (Max Planck Institute for Procedural Law Luxembourg)**

One fundamental critique addressed to international economic adjudication lies in its asphyxiation potential for the sovereign right to regulate. The WTO judge and the investment arbitrator would have progressively developed tests and a general adjudication philosophy that unduly restricts States sovereignty and undermines their faculty to protect other forms of general interest (fundamental rights, environmental concerns etc.). This analysis will be twofold. The first purpose of this paper is to apply Laclau and Mouffes discourse analysis to international economic law adjudication (WTO dispute settlement and investment arbitration) in order to voice their how their neoliberal structural bias is

suffocating the sovereign regulatory space of States. The starting point of this investigation lies in the analysis of the neoliberal discourse of the adjudicator. The idea is to map the ideology of the judge via the neoliberal discursive elements used to operate their legal spaces. These elements show how the judge introduces a neoliberal ideology while presenting its actions as mandated by the text. This is clear in WTO case law, forging a particular use of the concept of market to commit the central judicial tests to the project of free-trade. Similarly, in ISDS, arbitrators reinforce the asymmetric logic of the system by creating pro-investor presumptions or evaluation techniques. Moreover, the paper will analyze how this neoliberal discourse becomes a particular hegemonic discourse. The aim is here to show that, because of their neoliberal economic agenda, the two dispute settlement mechanisms assert the supremacy of their normative space values over the international legal order at large in a common peculiar way. This will be shown demonstrating that the different linguistic tools converge in the aim of asserting hegemony. In order to do so, (neo-)Gramscian theories will be the fundamental intellectual lens to read the discourses. A second inquiry will take a more Marxist perspective. It will try to determinate whether this neoliberal and hegemonic bias, this free trade dogma of international economic adjudication, is purely judge made or whether it stems from a bias already existing in international economic treaties. Using Marxist international lawyers reflections, the paper will finish deconstructing this problem and wondering whether sovereignty is asphyxiated because of the free trade pattern of international economic regulation per se.

## **Rethinking Sovereignty in Cyprus: Archival Nationalisms or Competing Class Projects?**

**Celal zkzan (PhD Researcher in Department of Development Studies at SOAS.**

**Entry Year: 2017 September.)**

The negotiations to solve the Cyprus Problem envisage a united federal state where both sides give up their mutually exclusive claims for sovereignty in favour of a shared sovereignty. According to the mainstream narrative the root obstacle to solving the Cyprus Problem is the failure of two societies on the island, Greek Cypriots (GC) and Turkish Cypriots (TC), to coexist and share the sovereignty within a common political and legal framework due to competing and uncompromising nationalisms. The paper critically problematises this mainstream narrative with respect to the definition of and solution to the Cyprus Problem on five grounds: First, the assumption of competing nationalisms relies upon the unitary interests within each society, thus concealing the internal social and economic conflicts. Second, the notion of a mutually exclusive sovereignty between two societies is neglecting the mass and common workers' movement composed of GC and TC workers prior to the division of the island. Third, mutually exclusive and competing hegemonic class projects existed within GC and TC ruling classes specifically, not throughout classes, and could only be established at the expense of suppressing the common workers' movement. Fourth, the role of the Cypriot left needs to be taken into account in terms of its failure to translate the power of the common workers' movement into the political arena, thus paving the way for GC and TC class projects to become

hegemonic. Finally, the mainstream recipe for a solution to the Cyprus Problem essentially seeks to reconcile the interests of GC and TC ruling classes without taking into consideration the rights and demands of workers of both societies.

## **International Women's Strike - anti-capitalist feminist movement for the 99%**

**Dimitra Dermitzaki (Freie Universitt Berlin)**

With the crisis of neoliberalism reaching an undreamed peak likewise in industrialized countries such as Germany, gendered labor division, all kinds of gendered violence and gender specific aspects of migration and asylum move ever more into the public focus. In the face of growing right-wing movements and neo-fascist structures in the European continent, anti-capitalist movements considering gender, race and anti-colonial practices become inevitable. In 2018, the newly formed country-wide Womens Strike (Frauen\* und Queers Streik) in Germany reclaims >strike< as political means to enforce economic and social transformation. Since labor laws are highly gendered and racialized, mobilisation at the grassroots and reach out to women wage workers and migrants is an essential step in forming a mass feminist movement in an anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist tradition to break with old societal systems. This article examines the need and evolution of an anti-capitalist and anti-racist womens movement using the evolving Womens Strike as case study along with an analysis of the current stage of leftist political organizing in Germany, on the basis of a materialist theory of feminism. Aiming at the mainly used tool of >strike< to combat global inequality starting at the heart of the beast in world capitalist centres, the Womens Strike targets the heart of production created by the 99%. Considering the majority of wealth is created by visible and invisibly made labor of women in the low-wage sector and particularly migrant and refugee women, the question of which type of feminism we need in times of increasing precariousness becomes the center of focus. How can strikes be reclaimed for political reasons by working class women? How are gender, race and class intertwined in the context of German and European labor market, making strikes potentially highly effective tools in combating global poverty and gender specific violence? In which ways could a new feminist strike movement be inclusionary for migrant and refugee women beyond traditional labor union structures? In doing so, the article aims at providing an analysis of the current stage of anti-capitalist feminist movements in Germany and the role women-led political organising such as strikes play at changing society for a better tomorrow.

## **Is environmental crisis a crisis of capital?**

**Jakub Crcha (Bennington College), Shachi Mokashi (Bennington College)**

The aim of this paper is to scrutinise some of the underlying assumptions of the environmental left. More specifically, we wish to deconstruct the notions of crises of production, ecological appropriation, and spatial fixes. What are the relationships drawn

between the current environmental crisis and the development of capitalism? What assumptions have to be made in order for us to causally connect these two? The apocalyptic thinking on the left, often dangerously, assumes a deterministic position about capitalism's inability to revolutionise itself in light of the environmental needs of the contemporary condition. In other words, we appear to live through one of the Socialism or Barbarism moments, where the ramifications of our choice appear to have planetary effect. This paper argues that viewing the contemporary situation in such deterministic manner is not only analytically faulty, but potentially dangerous as we observe a steady rise of environmental movements proclaiming that it is either the Earth or the Capitalism that will eventually be sacrificed. This paper begins with viewing such assumptions as little more than wishful thinking on the left, and hopes to scrutinise the claim and complicate certain wide-spread simplifications with regards to the uneasy relationship between capitalism and environment(al degradation). This paper takes the existing debate between historical and new materialisms as a starting framework for developing working definitions of the critical terms environment, crisis, nature and by reconceptualising them through materialist deconstruction of the Human/Natural boundary develops a theory of relationship between the contemporary planetary condition and the crisis-ridden nature of the capital. If environment is imagined in a normative sense as a victim of the destructive forces of capitalism, then it is indeed appropriate to brand its contemporary state as critical. This paper challenges such ontological claims by positing that the relationship between capital and nature is no longer that of primitive accumulation and extraction—if it ever had been— but rather that, following Jason Moore, we must understand it as one of capitalism-in-nature. In short, this paper posits that the environmental crisis (in its descriptive form; meaning the actual development of a planet increasingly hostile to survival and thriving of some of its inhabitants) does not contain, in itself, an existential threat to the proliferation of the accumulation of capital and the capitalist mode of production. The last section of the paper illustrates the theoretical argument by analysing some of the prominent projects of the environmental left (such as the Extinction Rebellion) vis-a-vis the attempts to address the degrading environmental condition from within the capitalist paradigm (such as the entrepreneurial projects of billionaires like Elon Musk). This comparative analysis hopes to show that the most recent developments of capitalism are not in as starkly antagonistic relationship with the preservation of the contemporary state of the planetary ecology as the popular opinion on the anti-capitalist left often presumes, and that capitalism does, indeed, have its own horizon for an environmental future—albeit one that might result in an unprecedented dystopia.

## **Micro politics of care and re/organisation of social reproduction in the case of migrant eldercare work**

**Anita Pra (Care work, Social Reproduction Theory, Marxist feminism)**

Returning the activities of reproductive labour to domestic sphere while simultaneously increasing their commodification reflects the dual moment of re-privatisation of social reproduction characteristic for neoliberal capitalism (Bakker, 2007). As such, the ways social reproduction is organized have been dramatically changed, challenging the common



assumptions about household, workplace, production and reproduction. Based on in-depth interviews of six Croatian elder care workers employed in Germany and Austria within a live-in programme, I analyse what happens when home is doubled as a workplace having the human body as a working material. Since their daily routines are organized around personal needs and intimate relationships where workers consciously participate in navigating labour processes, there is a less chance of alienation from the final product (elderly) creating, thereby, spaces not directly dictated by market rationale and accumulating profit (Ferguson, 2017). Paradoxically, exactly these grey areas assure labour process to proceed smoothly revealing in that sense, the complex relationship between capital and reproducing human life, or the fact that labour power is re/produced non-capitalistically yet, essential for the capitalist mode of production (Vogel, 2013). Using the framework of social reproduction theory (Bakker and Gill 2003, 2006, Bhattacharya 2017, Ferguson 2017, Vogel 2013) this paper explores the ways caregivers deal with that contradiction, either by nuancing the levels of intimacy or implementing innovations in their work; creative impulses, that contribute not only to the reproduction of their clients, but the reproduction of the system as a whole. Framed like that, micro politics of care gain a different meaning with something to say about the organization of human life from the smallest detail, its dependence on discipline and rituals which, although crucial in sustaining capitalist relations has the potential to disrupt the same.

## **Manifestations of authoritarian neoliberalism in urban contexts**

**Aleksandra Piletic (Institute of Social Studies - Erasmus University Rotterdam)**

In recent years, research on neoliberalism has increasingly veered towards an exploration of emergent authoritarian moments within the broader project of neoliberal restructuring. While certain scholars have suggested that authoritarian tendencies might be viewed as natural and complementary to neoliberalism as a whole, others have placed more emphasis on the relative novelty of present-day authoritarianism and the socio-economic specificities which have given rise to it. This paper builds on existing theoretical contributions to the topic and seeks to propose an understanding of the impact of authoritarian neoliberalism on the urban scale. In particular, is it possible to theorize systemic authoritarian neoliberalism across different urban contexts? In other words, while we do speak of authoritarian statisms, is it also possible to theorize the existence of authoritarian urbanities? If so, what is the specific role have cities played in the articulation and/or contestation of authoritarian neoliberalism? In this paper, I use a historical materialist analysis to propose an understanding of the way in which neoliberal authoritarianism has, on the one hand, transformed cities into spaces of intense contestation of authoritarian practices, and on the other, spaces crucial for the establishment and entrenchment of authoritarian control. I argue that the minimization of the state apparatus combined with the deleterious effect of austerity urbanism over the last several decades has reformulated the role of the city, making it a crucial site for the articulation of authoritarian neoliberalism.

## **Rupture: Assessing the Recomposition of the Global Working Class**

**robert ovetz (San Jose State University, CA USA)**

My forthcoming edited volume of workers' inquiries into workers struggles in 11 countries around the world raises a number of analytical and methodological questions of how to assess working class composition. The proliferation of news reports, books, and studies of class conflict in recent years points to rising attention on a newly emerging cycle of working class struggle, the first in more than four decades. To evaluate the state of class struggle we can draw on analyses of the technical composition of capital, the social and political composition of the working class working, and the decomposition of working class power. I will provide an overview of the findings of the contributors to book using class composition theory.

## **"It is the form that no longer satisfies me" culture and politics in the work of Rosa Luxemburg and Eleanor Marx**

**Dana Mills (Oxford Brookes)**

Eleanor Marx, the foremost of socialist- feminism (Rachel Holmes, 2014), was a cultural pioneer; the true founder of 'Dogberries', fierce advocate for Ibsen, recited Masque of Anarchy in the first ever May Day and taught Shakespeare as part of working class education (perhaps because Shakespeare was her father's bible). Rosa Luxemburg was a lover of culture from childhood; whereas Goethe was her favorite to her mother's Schiller, she edited Korolenko's 'history of my contemporaries' while in prison, and music served an important emotional anchor in her life. Eleanor's radical approach to culture may seem completely different to Rosa's (Rosa had a more conservative taste in culture), and yet both women saw culture as an important vehicle in understanding political change. Moreover, both women were cautious in advocating culture for political manipulation, cheap propaganda; and understood the relationship was far more complex and nuanced. This paper proposes a comparative study of both Marxist- feminists' relationship to culture and politics drawing on their biographies, and comparing and contrasting their understanding of what can culture do for political change. The paper will move to a close reading of Luxemburg's introduction to her Korolenko opposite Eleanor's Shelley and Socialism (1888). Last, the paper will ask what can these two women's work teach us for our examination of culture and politics in this distinct moment of crisis in the 21st century?

## **Majority rule and popular sovereignty**

**Peter Hallward (Kingston University)**

From antiquity through to Rousseau, theories of popular sovereignty or direct democracy assumed that decisions approved by majority vote should compel compliance from dissenting minorities, notably from privileged or wealthy minorities. By connecting

popular sovereignty with the political empowerment of the proletariat, Marx likewise emphasised the authority exercised by the immense majority of society. As the Manifesto puts it, if all previous historical movements were movements of minorities, or in the interest of minorities, the proletarian movement is the self-conscious, independent movement of the immense majority, in the interest of the immense majority. Rather like Robespierre before him (virtue was always in a minority on this earth...), Lenin likewise saw no contradiction between a vanguardist approach to political organisation and respect for mass priorities: he will always reject out of hand any talk of establishing socialism against the will of the majority (A Basic Question, 21 April 1917), just as he will insist, all through 1917, that any attempt to seize power must first be authorised by clear majority support in the Soviets. A wide range of contemporary political thinkers, by contrast, especially in the wake of 1968, have tended to privilege various forms of minoritarian mobilisation (if not outright fragmentation and dispersal) and to condemn electoral democracy as a trap or distraction. Are the rejections of majority rule common to e.g. Deleuze, Badiou and Ranciere best understood as tenacious affirmation of revolutionary principles, or as tacit admission of their defeat? Under what conditions might we re-affirm the transformative power of majority rule?

## **Iceland collective agreements 2019: from radical mobilization to biurocratic consensus**

**Eliasz Robakiewicz (Department of Philosophy University of Warsaw)**

Labour conditions in Iceland are quite specific and in current times unique. Almost all workers in the country are unionized and their working conditions are regulated by collective agreements. Collective agreements are renegotiated every 3-4 years giving an incentive for working class to not only negotiate working conditions in the whole country but also get organized at national level. In 2018 and 2019 I was involved (field organizer, union journalist and translator) in organizing workers of second biggest union of Iceland Efling general labour union. After months of negotiations with Confederation of Icelandic Enterprise - Samtök atvinnuþéttmanna (SA) which represents collective interest of Icelandic capitalist class the agreement was not reached and we proceeded to organize strike actions. Strike actions were first voted by the workers and then executed by workers assisted by union organizers with great success (most likely the biggest strikes in two decades in Iceland). At the crucial time of strike it was undemocratically suspended by the chair of the union and only couple of days after the collective agreement was signed by the leadership of the union. The result was very disappointing to the most of the workers and organizers. It also putted and to process of democratization of union as workers felt betrayed by the union which in effect lost most of its credibility as a radical force. In my presentation I want to discuss two issues considering those events: 1) gender and racial questions in organizing - most of the workers who were protesting were precarious women workers in service sector mostly immigrants 2) democratic control in labour movement - implemented by organizers on the ground level (organizing in workplaces, elections for workers representatives, workers role in decision making process) and breakage of those procedures by union leadership which led to mediocre at best result of

the negotiations and end of democratization process 3) working class stratification - how class, race, gender and ethnicity affects position and willingness of certain working class strata to fight or cooperate with capitalist system of production and political system of control.

## V.I. Lenin, Philosophy/Science, Western Marxism, and Alexander Bogdanov

### Orsan Senalp

Biographies of Lenin that were published after 2000, except the one by Tariq Ali, felt obliged to give increasingly broader spaces to his rivalry with Bogdanov, which was started for the leadership of the Bolshevik faction in the early 1900s and went on after the October Revolution around the proletarian culture debate. James White's 2003 biography of Lenin needs to be set apart here, since he is actually one of the most important Bogdanov scholars who contributed enormously to the rehabilitation of Bogdanov going on since the 1970s. With the publication of *Red Hamlet*, the first full length English biography of Alexander Bogdanov by James White by the end of 2018, and upcoming translations of Bogdanov's original work, we finally can expect that the state of the understanding of the development of Marxism is about to change globally. In his 1978 evaluation, Perry Anderson was rightly asserting that the Western Marxists have not been further influenced by Alexander Bogdanov, and the split in Russian Marxism his thought represented. The impact of Lenin's offensive against Bogdanov was so effective that, most Marxist theorists of post-war era, certainly the most important and well-known names, did not even know about Bogdanov and his work. For instance Marcel Van Lindens 2007 exhaustive survey of Western Marxism and Soviet Union does not even mention Bogdanov's name once. This is an inconvenient truth because one would wonder how comes even Lenin-critical Western Marxists, would have not shown any attention to the work and ideas of the most important rival to Lenin and Leninism in Revolutionary Russia? The main reason for this was for sure the success of Lenin's last offensive at Bogdanov, launched in 1920. The campaign started against the autonomous position of Proletkult, and went on with the republication of Lenin's 1908 *Materialism and Empirio-criticism*, in 1921. Came after Lenin's 1922 article *On the Significance of Militant Materialism*, which honouring the renegade Plekhanov as the father of Russian Marxism and establishing Lenin as the true heir of Marxism. Lenin's campaign against the Proletkult, was continuation of his 1908 offensive against Bogdanov, for which he wrote the *Materialism and Empirio-criticism* in the first place. In 1923, Bogdanov got arrested in relation to his ideas influence on the oppositional group *Workers Truth*. As the maker and the supreme leader of the Russian Revolution, this time the impact of Lenin's book was enormous, both in Russia and abroad. The campaign soon fused with the broader Marxist-Leninism and Bolshevisation process, targeting the doctrinaire reconstruction of all communist parties that are members to the Comintern. Karl Korsch's 1923 *Marxism and Philosophy* and his 1930 *Anti-critic: The Present State of the Problem of Marxism and Philosophy*, Anton Pannekoek's 1938 *Lenin as Philosopher* (and Korsch's appendix to it *Lenin's Philosophy*), Althusser's 1968 *Lenin and Philosophy*, and Evald Ilyenkov's 1979 article *Materialism is militant and therefore dialectical* (dedicated to the

seventieth anniversary of publication of Lenins Materialism and Empirio-criticism), all are documentations of how suppressive impact of Lenins work on Bogdanovs work and ideas, in Russia and in the West. Starting from the early 1920s, with the intensive readings of these documents, the paper traces the demise of Bogdanovs name, as part of contemporary philosophy-science debates around Vienne-Berlin Circles on the one hand, and the early Frankfurt Institute on the other, until the rediscovery of Bogdanov in the 1950s started within in the context of the Cybernetics General Systems Theory discussions.

## **Pedagogies of Crisis: Movement Schools and Counter-Capitalism in the Twentieth Century**

**Eve OConnor (Harvard University, PhD Student in American Studies)**

Dissident schools have long accompanied left political movements, yet receive little theoretical attention from scholars. This paper draws on some historical examples in the United States to move toward a theory of the school as a revolutionary site. I draw primarily from Mississippi civil rights activists Freedom Schools program in 1964, along with various anarchist and communist experiments across the twentieth century. In conversation with these antecedents, I focus on one particular valence of their political and intellectual work: schools as crisis centers in the face of racial and economic violence. Reading histories of educational creativity as crisis response illustrates the unique imaginative terrain movement schools provide for economic and social alternatives. This essay thus explores how radical schools merge pedagogical and anti-capitalist activities for example, by practicing mutual aid, and by conceptually integrating political, intellectual, and emotional labor. Approaching radical schooling as a theoretical intervention, I emphasize several powerful and often neglected elements of mass mobilization: the essential relationship between affective analysis and left politicization, the importance of women and children to movement building, and the radical possibilities inherent in intergenerational political work. I simultaneously propose rethinking the school-as-form as a fundamental and underexplored avenue for contemporary left movements.

## **The Resistance Literature of Bonded Labour: Poetry and the Sub-proletariat in South Asia**

**Muhammad Nasir (Government Degree College Chunian, District Kasur, Punjab, Pakistan)**

The scholarship on progressive South Asian literature has often focused on the tradition of the Progressive Writers Movement (Mir and Mir 2006, Ali 2011, Jalil 2014). More recent work has examined how the Mazdoor Kisan Party sought to engage in a more vernacular literature for rural mobilization (Kalra and Butt 2013) and the Pakistani poets work during the time of the Zia ul-Haq military regime (Kalra and Butt 2019). However, these latter poets have often focused on the big politics of democracy vs. dictatorship, while writing

less about the struggles of some the most marginalized sections of South Asias labouring classes. My research breaks new ground by focusing on the rich resistance literature of Pakistans bonded (unfree) labour considered by the International Labour Organization to be a modern form of slavery. In this paper I will focus specifically on the poetry of Manzoor Niazi, an organizer and activist of the Bonded Labour Liberation Front (BLLF) and a member of the Mazdoor Kisan Party. I compiled Niazis poetry from journals published in the 1980s and 1990s, available now only in private archives. I discuss how Niazis poetry changed its attention from the free rural labourers and peasants toward unfree bonded labourers. I show how the poetry of bonded labour is closer in content to African-American literature on slavery and in form and content to the literature of Dalits (Untouchables) in India, than is the literature of the Progressive Writers Movement. Indeed, Niazi even uses the form of vernacular religious poetry to fill it with the content of a revolutionary bonded labour. I argue that the distinct idiom, style and aesthetics of the poetry of bonded labour is a consequence of Niazis organic connection to their lifeworlds and struggles. In conclusion, I point to the importance of recovering marginalized forms of literature produced by or in close conjunction with bonded labour in order to properly assess the contribution of Urdu and Punjabi poetry to a literature of resistance.

## **The Unhappy Marriage of Bourgeoisie and Feminism: Women, Islam and Class during Egypts Rural-Urban Transformation, 1982-1952 This paper will focus on turn of the century- from British occupation of Egypt in 1882 to Egyptian revolution of 1952. During t**

**Shan Yang (The American University in Cairo)**

This paper will focus on turn of the century- from British occupation of Egypt in 1882 to Egyptian revolution of 1952. During this period, Egypt has witnessed radical rural-urban transformation, the shift of population geographically, the stratification of society, and the rapid development of capitalism. The emergence of a generalized consciousness of womens rights feminism- has not only been mediated through everyday life experience in colonial time but also embedded in a shifting social classes structure, particularly the formation of bourgeoisie class. In this paper, I attempt at a class analysis in turn-of-the-century Egypt and its implications for women. I argue that the marriage of bourgeoisie and feminism seems doomed in Egypt, but not a happy one in many aspects: bourgeoisie was not a homogeneous group- the upper class and the petite bourgeoisie disagreed over many women issues based on concerns of their own needs and interests; bourgeoisie feminists as promoters of Egypt modernity and westernized value tended to coerce lower-class women into adopting modern practices, exemplified by education and job training programs; all prominent feminists during this period are nationalists and inevitably had absorbed feminism agenda into state construction. As a result, the marriage of bourgeoisie and feminism had inherent antagonism with paternalism characteristics. It proved to be a top-to-bottom construction project linking to a modern capitalist order.



## **Book Launch: Monopsony Capitalism: Power and Production in the Twilight of the Sweatshop Age (CUP)**

**Ashok Kumar (Birkbeck, University of London), Marina Vishmidt (Goldsmiths University) Robert Knox (University of Liverpool) Tithi Bhattacharya (Purdue University) Caterina Principe (Jacobin Magazine)**

Focused on the garment and footwear sectors which epitomise the leading edges in the advance of globalisation and the spread of vertically disintegrated value chains the book introduces a universal logic that governs competition and reshapes the chain. Simply put, deregulation produces high degrees of monopsony power, increasing the value share for the lead firm. This intensifies competition, exerts downward pressure, and winnows the number of suppliers able to compete. The result is supplier-end consolidation.

Consolidation increases the surviving suppliers share of value, which expands access to finance, facilitates self-investment, and raises entry barriers. In 2005, the regulatory regime that had once enforced a degree of spatial inflexibility finally dwindled to nothing with the phase-out of the MultiFibre Agreement. The subsequent emergence of market spatial inflexibility, which gives labour new openings, occurs with free, unrestricted flows between supplier and buyer. This book, by analysing workers collective action at various sites of production (China, India, Honduras, United States primarily, and Vietnam, Cambodia, Bangladesh, Indonesia secondarily) observes how this internal logic plays out for labour who are testing the limits of the social order, stretching it until the seams show, and making it possible for bosses to come to the proverbial table, hat-in-hand, to hash out agreements with those who assemble their goods. By examining the most valorized parts of underdeveloped sectors, one can see where capital is going and how it is getting there. These findings contribute to ongoing efforts to establish workers rights in sectors plagued by poverty and powerlessness, building fires and collapses. With this change and a capable labour movement, there's hope yet that workers may close the gap.

## **Infrastructures of Exclusion: Securing Circulation of Bodies and Capital in the Galilee and the Triangle**

**Ivana Bevilacqua (King's College London)**

Spatially-determined forms of racism have received wide attention from scholars who have examined marginalized communities and subjectivities on the basis of their uneven integration into capitalist systems of accumulation and distribution. This body of scholarship has devoted attention to both the larger spatial questions of core-periphery relations or the development of unequal forms of urban development - and the temporal dimensions of capitalist production or the effect of changing patterns of labour regimes in the organization of work. But while relevant in their own right, these insights are more likely to focus on the ways in which transport industry serves production; yet it is the productive capital of communication and transport industries analysed together by Marx that informs the materiality of circulation. Focusing my insight on the case of Israeli

settler colonialism, I analyse the ways through which space, like all social relations, has been internalised and normalised due to a hegemonic common sense. In particular, I am to demonstrate that habits of practice, based on the logics and anxieties of ethno-colonial divisions, foster the marginalisation and peripheralization of othered groups. But such forms of exclusion are re-produced not only by professional groups (urban planners, engineers, politicians), but also by occupants (mainly white Ashkenazi). Nevertheless, a struggle for space emerges from the periphery of the country, especially in the Galilee and the Triangle area. Focusing on contestations over the National Infrastructure Plan, this paper interrogates the power of roads in enabling Palestinians struggle for space in Israel. In so doing, I seek not only to shed some light on creative efforts for visibility at the margins of an ethnocratic regime, but also to implement a wider decentring agenda that would overcome the idea of the city as the main field for contention.

## **PANELS' TITLE: Artificial intelligence & work: Implications for class analysis**

**PHOEBE V MOORE (UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER)**

The rise of autonomous machines via artificial intelligence (AI) leads to philosophical questions that Marx engaged with in theories of objectification, alienation, surplus value, surplus populations, and perhaps most importantly, class. Ultimately, across the economy, technology and its integration may be leading to organisations that take on a life of their own. Human resource decisions are increasingly taken by algorithms, where new human resources techniques integrate machine learning to achieve a new technique called people analytics where data patterns are used to make workplace decisions for hiring/firing/talent predictions, creating significant threats to the possibilities of workplace organising and social justice. Sometimes, AI-based decisions lead to automating aspects of the workplace even in non-routine work, for example, in the case of wearable devices in factories that allow human resource calculations based on AI and location-management by GPS and RFID systems. In these ways and others, AI processes inform a number of decision-making processes and digitalised management methods that have led to significant changes to workplaces and working conditions. What will this mean for class relations? E.g., if non-routine work becomes automated, such as legal services, does that mean that only the wealthy will be able to hire human lawyers and the proletariat, access to very low level robot justice? Will people analytics be revealed as a class consolidator with its already evidenced discriminatory algorithmic decision-making tendencies across race and class lines? Will food soon be delivered by cobots rather than gig workers, leaving riders, who are often migrants and precarious, unemployed? Without physical assemblies for workers across platforms, sectors and countries, how can class composition be identified? What will this mean for workers enquiry and resistance?

## The “Greek Crisis” in Europe: Race, Class and Politics

Yiannis Mylonas (National Research University Higher School of Economics)

I propose to present an overview of my coming book that will be published during the late summer of 2019 by Brill (Leiden). The book summons the research that I have been working on since 2011, which focuses on the study of mainstream media representations of the so-called Greek crisis in Europe. The research is based on the analysis of popular newspapers, journals, as well as news and lifestyle websites from Greece, Denmark, and Germany. Relevant studies have shown that the mainstream media in Europe and elsewhere have heavily relied on official explanations and narratives of the Eurozone crisis (and along with it, the latest global economic crisis, which conventionally started in the USA in 2007-8), as this was articulated by the leading politicians of the most influential states in Europe (e.g. Germany) and the world (e.g. the USA), as well as by technocrats and mainstream economists. As far as the Eurozone crisis context is concerned, the media offered largely non-political explanations of the crisis, connected with culturalist, moralist and technocratic approaches to the causes of the crisis and its possible solutions. This way, the crisis was represented as a *sui generis* case, connected to the wrongdoings of specific states (such as those of the Eurozones periphery), which required reforms so as to correct their irregularities and return to normality. In doing that, the media reproduced many negative cultural and class stereotypes to explain the causes of the crisis and to legitimize the painful but reasonable and fair doctrines that were chosen to supposedly alleviate the crisis, such as austerity politics. In this regard, Greece, the Eurozone crisis epicenter, was mercilessly targeted by mainstream media of the European core states (like Germany and Denmark) in particular, and received a highly negative, and largely misleading, publicity over the crisis. This way, the Greek crisis was exceptionalized as a *sui-generis* case and systemic explanations of Greece's economic crisis as a mere symptom of a broader crisis of European and global capitalism, were undermined. A spectacular bashing of the Greek people, and especially its working class over their supposed guilt for inflicting a crisis in the Eurozone due to their alleged idle and profligate behavior, paved the way for austerity to unleash an unprecedented assault on the Greek citizens social, political and human rights while plundering public and private wealth under the moral pretext of honoring ones debt. At a public level, austerity also took on a punitive form for appeasing the hard-working Europeans who were supposedly helping Greece by providing her with bailout loans in exchange for austerity. To this regard, austerity was also presented as, not just rightful, but also, as the only available policy doctrine to overcome the crisis. The analysis of the Greek crisis media representations is based upon three interrelated, critical themes: race, class and neoliberal/technocratic politics. These main themes are further developed through the relevant critical theoretical advances and are analytically disclosed through discourse analysis perspectives.

## Nature's technology? Dialectical metabolism and the transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy

Andreas Roos (Lund University)

The fact that renewable energy technologies emerge as aspects of the capitalist mode of production have led to discussions on whether these technologies inherently operate as springboards to socialism. The theme of this paper arises in the context of several studies across different disciplines that have questioned this inherently emancipatory potential of renewable energy technology. It seems that the shift away from fossil fuels by the installation of renewable energy technologies may be more problematic than anticipated. The common thread across these studies is that the installation of renewable energy technology might increase or legitimize further ecological destruction and inequalities if not complemented by radical social reorganization. However, there are diverging opinions on this matter that partly stems from different conceptions of what technology is. This paper investigates the notable fact that major strands within philosophy of technology have not considered technology as primarily a material phenomenon but as something more of an idea. This has resulted in the (awkward) situation that the ontological and epistemological materialism that has proven crucial in understanding the extent of current ecological calamities is commonly absent in the conception of the most favored solution. This paper argues that a closer engagement with ontological and epistemological materialism is crucial for understanding the inherently political character of renewable energy technology and for chiseling out constructive ways forward at this critical historical moment. The paper concludes by proposing some questions of research for understanding whether renewable energy technologies truly provide the means to engage with the energy/matter substratum in a way that revolutionize human-environmental relations or whether renewable energy technologies are inescapably a phenomenon of the capitalist mode of production.

## Ernst Bloch in Comparative Perspective

Cat Moir (University of Sydney) Johan Siebers, Jan Rehmann

Ernst Bloch is the twentieth century's most prominent utopian Marxist thinker. Bloch never relinquished the will to utopia; he kept the flame alive when most of his contemporaries extinguished it, often on understandable grounds. To understand Bloch's utopianism, we need to grasp his thinking in comparative perspective: not just in relation to Marx, Engels, and the Marxists of his day, but alongside the myriad other thinkers with whom he was engaged, from idealists and romantics to (neo-)Kantians and the Frankfurt School. This panel explores Bloch's utopianism in comparative historical perspective in order to interrogate the value of his thinking for anti-capitalist struggles and conceptualisations of post-capitalisms today. Panelists: Cat Moir, Johan Siebers, Jan Rehmann

Hegelian Marxist or a Marxist Schelling? Ernst Bloch and the Matter of Socialism Cat Moir (Sydney) Ernst Bloch's intellectual project was, as Wayne Hudson (1982: 14) has

recognised, to realise the inheritance of classical German philosophy and culture in a rectified Marxist form. Analysing Bloch's Marxism means understanding his embeddedness in the traditions of German idealism and romanticism. Like many other Western Marxists, Bloch has often been described as a Hegelian Marxist, and there can be little doubt about the influence that Hegel, like Marx, had on his work. However, neither Bloch's Hegelian nor his Marxist credentials have gone unchallenged. Fredric Jameson (1971: 140) has argued that Bloch's Marxism is indebted more to Goethe than it is to Hegel. Meanwhile, as Detlef Horster (1980: 10) has noted, the view that Bloch has nothing in common with Marx has united so many otherwise divided Marxists. In other words, Bloch's relationship to both Marx and Hegel is neither straightforward nor uncontested. Jürgen Habermas asserted another view when he described Bloch as a Marxist Schelling in 1961. For Habermas, Bloch's philosophy was explicitly not a return from Marx to Hegel (1961: 313). In his view, Bloch's philosophy was pre-critical; it had skipped Kant, returning to the threshold of high speculation European philosophy had achieved with Schelling. Habermas denounced Bloch's uncanny hybrid of Marxism and romantic nature philosophy as a form of speculative materialism (323). Habermas aligned Bloch with the romantic and supposedly irrationalist Schelling against Kant and Hegel, whom he clearly read along post-Kantian lines. His view of Bloch would find echoes in the reception of his work for years to come, and still leaves its trace on it today. But was Bloch really the anti-Kantian, anti-Hegelian, naïve-romantic Marxian, messianic nature-philosopher that Habermas believed? In this paper, I compare the Hegelian and Schellingian influences on Bloch's speculative materialist ontology as developed in *Das Materialismusproblem, seine Geschichte und Substanz*. The concept of matter that Bloch constructs there draws on the resources of nature philosophy and idealist metaphysics in order to assert the material possibility of a socialist society. Combined with a view of human praxis drawn from the early Marx, Bloch's speculative materialism is an activist metaphysics (Hudson, 1982: 64) that aims not only to explain the concept of real possibility materialistically, but to motivate people to action. Ultimately, I argue that Hegel was at least as big an influence as Schelling on Bloch's speculative materialism. However, this reading of Bloch depends on understanding Schelling as more than merely a romantic irrationalist, and Hegel as more than a thinly post-Kantian metaphysician.

**Ernst Bloch as a Philosopher of Praxis** Jan Rehmann (Union Theological Seminary) About 60 years after the GDR government and party leadership excluded the "utopian" and "idealist" philosopher from "Marxism-Leninism", there is still a widespread tendency in Marxist and non-Marxist literature alike to portray Bloch's philosophy as 'idealistic', 'eschatological', 'mystical', 'speculative' etc. Against this tendency, I try to show that Bloch's philosophy of hope is best understood in the framework of a Marxist philosophy of praxis. Similar to Labriola and Gramsci, Bloch develops his dynamic concept of materialism from Marx's *Theses on Feuerbach*. His search for liberative elements in daydreams resembles Gramsci's project to identify the "healthy nucleus" of *buon senso*, from which people's *senso comune* can be elevated and rendered more coherent. Bloch's anthropology focusing on anticipation and hope is centered on the development of collective agency and is thus compatible with Marxist theories of action. His concepts of the >highest good< and of an >alliance technique< take up the young Marx' perspective of a reconciliation between humans and nature. Even though his "ontology of the not yet" oscillates between different

keys and was criticized as a teleology (e.g. by Adorno), it is primarily based on the concept of >open possibilities< that are to be grasped by acting subjects. It is thus to be interpreted in terms of what I propose to call (referring to the famous formula of Walter Benjamin) a >weak teleological force< of human agency. However, from a praxis-philosophical perspective, Bloch's philosophy is also in need of an update that overcomes some essentialist presumptions, pluralizes its teleology and connects his philosophy of hope with Marxist theories of ideology and hegemony.

HegelsLogik and Blochs Materialist Logic Johan Siebers (Middlesex) HegelsLogik is intended as a self-explication of the process of being, in which the concept, first set up as a split off in pure abstraction from the beings it gathers together, finally returns to itself and an absolute identity of being and thinking, of identity and difference, is established. The course of this process, as Bloch and others have noted, runs in many ways parallel to other accounts of leaving home to find it: from the exitus-reditus structure of classical metaphysics to Faust's journey. In historical materialism, much of the content of the Logik is maintained as the algebra of the revolution, but put back on its feet the idealism of the pure logical development of the concept being replaced by a materialism of real contradiction, struggle and evolution, which permits us to understand historical development and also the reason why the Logik was written, covered in the ideological veil of idealism. Marx understands Hegel better than Hegel understood himself. One way of reading Ernst Bloch's materialist logic (for which he used the term logos of matter) is to see it as a rehearsal of this Marxian inversion of Hegel's idealism. But there is a problem with the Logik which Marx's use of it does not solve: Being, Hegel writes at the beginning of the book, is the most abstract and most empty concept. It never loses its taint of the abstract, and the whole project is contaminated by it. Turning the philosophy back on its feet does not make it any less abstract, it merely shifts the focus within the same conceptual framework: a problem that has affected Marxist thought (and practice) in many, often detrimental ways. For a logical approach to concepts, intention and extension are inversely related. Being is no exception. For a metaphysical way of thinking, on the other hand, being is a peculiar exception to this principle: intension and extension of being are both maximal. A careful reading of Bloch's Logos der Materie will reveal that Bloch does not so much exchange one abstract mode of thought for another, but that he puts at our disposal a way of thinking being concretely. This mode of thought is both a critique of all logical, abstractive reductions of what it means to be to an instance of a concept and an opening-up of a genuinely utopian view of the world. As a retrieval of an almost lost understanding of the radical difference between logical and metaphysical thinking, Bloch's notion of logos in matter has a crucial contribution to make to the reinvention of communism in our time.

## **Passing the Torch: Karl Kautsky, Rudolf Hilferding and Generational Change in German Social Democracy, 1902-1933.**

**William Smaldone (Willamette University)**

At the turn of the twentieth century Karl Kautsky (1854-1938) was at the pinnacle of his intellectual and political career. Founder and editor of German social democracies



leading theoretical journal *Die Neue Zeit* and, along with Eduard Bernstein, one of the executors of Marx and Engels' literary Nachlaß, Kautsky played a key role in the education of a generation of Marxist intellectuals in Central Europe and beyond. Kautsky's diverse works brought Marxist and social democratic ideas to a broad, working class audience and, again with Bernstein, his co-authorship of the SPD's Erfurt Program in 1891 put his stamp on social democratic politics for decades to come. As a friend and ideological guide to SPD co-founder August Bebel, and as a often-decisive voice in the intellectual and political debates of the growing movement, many considered Kautsky to be the pope of socialism. Kautsky turned fifty in 1904. Having already edited *Die Neue Zeit* for over twenty years, he was on the lookout for a successor. At the top of his list was Rudolf Hilferding, a talented young Viennese Marxist intellectual. Hilferding had made a name for himself by publishing a powerful rejoinder to Eugen Böhm-Bawerk's criticism of Marx's labor theory of value. Writing to his friend, Victor Adler, the leader of Austrian Social Democracy, Kautsky noted that Hilferding had made a very good impression on him, and by 1906 he was able to convince Hilferding to give up his medical career, to devote himself full-time to political economy, and to accept a job as an instructor at the SPD Party School in Berlin. After moving to Berlin, Hilferding's star continued to rise. A regular contributor to *Die Neue Zeit*, in 1910 he published his magnum opus, *Das Finanzkapital*, which was widely viewed as the fourth volume of Marx's *Kapital*, and he became editor of the party's flagship newspaper, *Vorwärts*. Hilferding and Kautsky remained personally and politically close. Following the outbreak of the First World War, they opposed the SPD leadership's pro-war policy and, in 1917, both joined the anti-war Independent German Social Democratic Party (USPD), in which Hilferding became a major political leader. With the ebbing of the German revolution, both supported the USPD's reunification with the SPD in 1922. Having lost control of the NZ in 1917, Kautsky remained an important figure, but his influence slowly waned. For Hilferding, however, the opposite was true. Since the NZ had ceased publication in 1922, the newly reunited party created a new flagship theoretical journal, *Die Gesellschaft*, in 1924, with Hilferding as chief editor. He had now achieved what Kautsky had foreseen twenty years before and officially stepped into his mentor's shoes. For the next fifteen years his would be one of social democracy's most important voices. This paper aims to examine the personal and political aspects of this process of succession. Little has been written about Hilferding and Kautsky's personal relationship or about how Hilferding's accession to the top spot represented a generational shift. Kautsky had mentored Hilferding at a time when Social Democracy had been excluded from power and had viewed itself as a revolutionary movement. Hilferding, on the other hand, achieved the peak of his influence in a context in which the party was called upon to govern. By examining their relationship and the development of their ideas over a generation of tumultuous change, the paper will shed light on how this generational transition shaped Weimar politics.

## **Capital in Time and Space: Housing Wealth, Financial Management and the New Logic of Inequality**

**Martijn Konings (University of Sydney)**

This paper aims to conceptualize the new forms of inequality that have been engendered by several decades of property inflation in large urban centres in Western countries. This needs to be seen in the context of Pikettys observation that returns on capital have outpaced economic growth and wages during the neoliberal era. Despite the widespread influence that Pikettys work has had, it has yet to be translated into a more general understanding of new patterns of class and stratification. Key here is to shift the focus from the 1% to the way in which the financialization of housing has reconfigured the social class structure more broadly. This process reflects a financialization of space, but equally of time, as the temporal management of liquidity structures is central to understanding the upwards march of asset prices and the specific forms of inequality and inclusion that they have created. Proposing what may be seen as a new materialist rather than an orthodox materialist perspective on the logic of capital, this paper will approach space and time not as external limits that capital aims to overcome, but instead conceptualize the selective logic of spatial and temporal displacements and deferrals as the very logic through which capital operates in the contemporary conjuncture. The paper will analyze how this new logic of inequality expresses itself in terms of different social identifiers.

## **The GMO shall not be refused. Talking back to the technosciences**

**Anneleen Kenis (Research Foundation Flanders (FWO) in affiliation with University of Leuven (Belgium) & King's College London (UK)) Barbara Van Dyck (University of Sussex (UK)) Andrew Stirling (University of Sussex)**

Starting from Marcel Mauss observation that one has no right to refuse a gift, this paper explores the politics of refusal in the context of GMO field trials in Flanders (Belgium). Focussing on the GMO field trials of the Flemish Institute for Biotechnology (VIB), we show that the business model of this strategic research centre with its triple mission of carrying biotechnology research, technology transfer, and the promotion of biotechnology through communication and lobby activities is aimed at fostering a climate in which innovations in the technosciences have to be accepted. The future is laid out without including the possibility of refusal. Consternation is great when the gift is not accepted. Irrational fears and lack of understanding or lack of familiarity are invoked to explain refusal. Language of precision, innovation, safety and control are deployed to re-assure the publics. Refusal is not considered a legitimate option. Yet, if farmers would accept the gift of GMOs it would mean the acceptance of their dispossession. This paper turns the focus of innovation studies on its head, questioning why it is that some technologies are not diffused and what is the role of resistance in this context? Starting from almost a decade of activist research within the Field Liberation Movement in Belgium and drawing on the work of autonomist Marxists like Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt as well as critical anthropologists like

Benjamin Ruha, David Graeber and Carole McGrathnan, the paper argues that the concept of refusal is key to understanding the contestation of GMO field trials. Refusal is a way of reclaiming agency; contesting what is normalized, imposed, and the fruit of injustice and unequal power relations. In that way, GMO field trials can become sites of resistance and spaces of rupture with socially and ecologically destructive agricultural systems. The paper reclaims the very possibility of refusal as a generative, strategic and deliberate move toward certain possible worlds and away from another.

## **Book Launch: New Insights on the Legacy of Rosa Luxemburg**

**Peter Leslie Hudis (General Editor, 'The Complete Works of Rosa Luxemburg.')**

**Eleanor Penny (Senior Editor, Novara Media Online; Editor, 'Red Pepper.')**

**Jacqueline Rose (Professor of Humanities, Birkbeck Institute for the Humanities)**

**Klaus Gietinger (Klaus Gietinger is a director, writer, and actor who is author of 'The Murder of Rosa Luxemburg')**

**Loren Balhorn (Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung, Berlin)**

Although Rosa Luxemburg's contribution to revolutionary theory has inspired generations of radical thinkers and activists, many of her writings on the revolutions she actually participated in—such as the 1905-06 Russian Revolution—has not been available in English. This deficit is being corrected by the issuance of 'The Complete Works of Rosa Luxemburg' by Verso Books, which will contain three volumes (of about 600 pages each) on her writings on the 1905 and 1917 Russian and 1918 German Revolutions. This panel will focus on the recently-published first of these volumes, covering 1897 to 1903, the new English translation of Klaus Gietinger's 'The Murder of Rosa Luxemburg,' which contains important material on the persons actually responsible for her tragic murder in 1919, and reflections on her overall life and legacy. Panelists will consist of Jacqueline Rose, Eleanor Penny, Klaus Gietinger, Peter Hudis, and Loren Balhorn.

## **“When my mum supports the post office is she supporting the capitalist state?” State, Capital and Social Reproduction With Colin Barker**

**Tithi Bhattacharya (Purdue University)**

Tithi Bhattacharya Neil Davidson Andrew Wright Chair: Gareth Dale This panel will explore the contribution of Colin Barker to Marxist theory. The papers aim to be a tribute to his work in two ways. First by looking back, at the body of his writing and highlighting the questions that he grappled with over the years. Second by looking forward, to see how far we can go on the research pathways he opened up. The main political-theoretical concerns that emerge from Colin Barker's work are constellated around three themes: state theory, social reproduction of labour power and social movements. The topics themselves speak to

Barkers restless Marxism. The first two themes are of course recognizable as arenas of work in Kapital that Marx began, or touched upon, but never completed. While social movement theory, remained for Colin, the level where the questions thrown up by theory would be resolved politically. Neil Davidson: An Overview of Colin Barkers Marxism Tithi Bhattacharya: Colin Barker on Social Reproduction: Social Reproduction Theory (SRT) has drawn attention to the reproduction of labour power in both the private sphere, within the kinship networks of the family, and in the public sphere, through socialized public services such as schools and hospitals. In this latter iteration SRT rubs against Marxist state theory and this paper tries to investigate that interface following from Barkers later writings. Andrew Wright: Capital, Value analysis, the state and the modern state system: The paradigmatic idea framing all of Colin Barkers work was an understanding of capitalism as a predatory system. Its Liberal forms negate even the best ideological delusions of Liberal ethics, in that they hide not only class oppression but also contest among nation states. Imperialism lives. Liberal globalism, and even an ultra imperialist condominium of nations is a false dream that capitalist society cannot deliver. And the reasons for this lies deep in the structure of capital and can even be divined in the value form. But it is not for any of the reasons often evinced by Marxist theories of Imperialism. Focus on these has led Marxists to imagine that, because the world no longer looks as Lenin or Bukharin saw it, that the springs of international contest are alien to capital's mature forms and to see why one needs to go back to the foundational concepts of value and capital. That is what Colin Barker had started to do and this work applies to some of the most important contemporary Marxist discussions.

## **The Informal Economy, The Homeworker, and the Value of Social Reproduction**

**Alessandra Mezzadri (SOAS)**

Starting from an analysis of the social reproduction debate, old and new, and focusing on the progressive rise and spread of the informal economy and informal labour across the planet, this paper argues that only more radical interpretations of social reproduction as also value-producing can advance our understandings of labour relations under contemporary capitalism, and the role that reproductive activities and realms play in processes of surplus extraction. The paper supports these arguments by drawing from empirical observations on Indias homeworkers and Women Workforce Participation Rates (WWPRs). The analysis concludes that debates on the relation between social reproduction and value creation must necessarily be embedded in concrete analyses of labour relations and practices. The paper also reflects on the subsversive role played by the homeworker in the global economy, illustrating continuities and differences with the processes of 'housewifisation' described by Maria Mies in the 1980s.

## Artificial intelligence & work: Implications for class analysis

PHOEBE V MOORE (UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER)

Two panels organised by Phoebe V MooreFor Workers' Enquiry StreamThe rise of autonomous machines via artificial intelligence (AI) leads to philosophical questions that Marx engaged with in theories of objectification, alienation, surplus value, surplus populations, and perhaps most importantly, class. Ultimately, across the economy, technology and its integration may be leading to robot rules and management techniques that take on a life of their own. Workplace increasingly taken by algorithms, where new human resources and management techniques integrate machine learning to achieve a new technique called people analytics where data patterns are used to make workplace decisions for hiring/firing/talent predictions, creating significant threats to the possibilities of workplace organising and attacks on social justice from the office arena to taxi driving. Sometimes, AI-based decisions lead to automating aspects of non-routine work like in the case of wearable devices in factories that allow calculations based on AI and location-management by GPS and RFID systems. In these ways and others, AI processes inform a number of decision-making processes and digitalised management methods that have led to significant changes to workplaces and working conditions. What will this mean for class relations? E.g., if non-routine work becomes automated, such as legal services, does that mean that only the wealthy will be able to hire human lawyers and the proletariat, access to very low level robot justice? Will people analytics be revealed as a class consolidator with its already evidenced discriminatory algorithmic decision-making tendencies across race and class lines? Will food soon be delivered by cobots rather than gig workers, leaving riders, who are often migrants and precarious, unemployed? Without physical assemblies for workers across platforms, sectors and countries, how can class composition be identified? What will this mean for workers enquiry and resistance? What does this mean for class analysis, when robot rules are emerging in workplaces from the streets, to factories, to 'wework' environments and impacting, seemingly, all workers today?

Panel I: (Chair Frank Engster)

Artificial Intelligence and Class Relations: A Historical Materialist Critique Phoebe V Moore Pm358@leicester.ac.uk This article presents a historical materialist critique of the history of ideas leading up to and during the eras of AI and critiques the contemporary AI summer where machines are ascribed autonomous intelligence. The history of the ideational manufacturing of human intelligence demonstrates a pattern of interest in calculation and computation, intelligent human and machinic behaviours that are, not surprisingly, ideologically aligned with capitalism and which are inherent for class related divisions of labour. The simultaneous series of machinic and technological invention and related experiments shows how machines facilitate not only the processes of normalisation of what is considered intelligent behaviours, via both human and machinic intelligence, but also facilitate and enable the constancy and intensification of capitalism and class division. Intelligent behaviours are identified as the capacity for quantification and measure and are limited to aspects of thinking and reasoning that can provide solutions to e.g. obstacles in

production and extraction of surplus value, based on the specific postulations and assumptions highlighted in this piece. Today, ideas of autonomous machine intelligence, seen in the ways AI is incorporated into workplaces facilitate workplace relations via intelligent behaviours that are: assistive, prescriptive, descriptive, collaborative, predictive and affective. The question is, given these now autonomous forms of intelligence attributed to machines, who/what is looking in the mirror at whose/which reflection?

Digital precariat Artificial intelligence, class relations and resistance  
Joanna Bronowicka and Mirela Ivanova, Researchers at European University Viadrina  
joanna@cihr.eu and ivanova@europa-uni.de  
Artificial intelligence and digitalised management techniques characterize the working conditions and everyday experiences of food-delivery workers. In big cities such as Berlin low entry requirements and enough urban surplus population make riders cheap and easily replaceable. Either self-employed or having short-term contracts, precarious gig-workers are also subjected to a thorough digital control. What can the working conditions and experiences of platform workers tell us about the changing notions of class membership? Do their resistance practices build on a shared (class) identity? Is alienation a relevant concept for understanding riders' everyday work life? In this presentation, we explore the relationship between precarious labor conditions of workers at food delivery platforms, automatic decision-making and resistance practices. Drawing on the case study of Deliveroo and Foodora food-delivery workers in Berlin, we have identified the elements of app-based management which amplify the insecurity and instability of already precarious gig-work. The conditions driving digital precarity fuel the need for practices of collective learning, gaming, reframing and contesting the algorithmic system. We explore the concept of 'digital precariat' to understand class relations at this increasingly automated workplace.

Room to move: Self-quantification, sousveillance and the shared curation of data  
Frederick Harry Pitts  
Lecturer in Management, University of Bristol  
fh.pitts@bristol.ac.uk  
Understanding class struggle as always-already mediated through the forms assumed by capitalist social relations, this paper explores the extent to which workplace AI, algorithmic measurement and control and other tools for self-quantification represent new mediations of class struggle that can be repurposed and wielded in support of worker organisation, representation and resistance. The paper reports on a research project working across critical social sciences and Human-Computer Interaction to explore the possibility of these new technologies of control for worker wellbeing and labour struggles. Where the managerial clipboard of the Taylorist factory saw established forms of measure used to both dominate workers and by those same workers to organise around and negotiate improvements in programmes of concerted collective bargaining - the 'room to move' that Marx identified in the abstraction of living labour as labour-time - there is a present need to reconstitute collective and politicised forms of measure in kinds of work where measures are less easily established, either because of the content or the form of the labour. The shared curation of data, the paper suggests, may represent one way to institutionalise a capacity for the data of quantification and self-quantification to be turned to the ends of what might be called 'workers inquiry' centring on what some scholars have called 'sousveillance': the bottom-up ability to



monitor managerial practices against and not in support of exploitation and domination in the workplace.

Panel II:(Chair TBC)

Technofetishism, workers inquiry and the centrality of knowledge for class relations Beatriz Casas Gonzalez PhD student and researcher at the Institute for Social Science Research, ISF Muenchen [beatriz.casas@isf-muenchen.de](mailto:beatriz.casas@isf-muenchen.de) Here, I address an apparent contradiction identified in our empirical research in two manufacturing companies in Germany, namely, a widespread sense of autonomy among workers whose agency is technologically constrained and/or utilised, as part of the mode(s) of labour control operating in the workplace. So, (how) does the use of technology influence workers perceptions of control, and what are its implications for class relations? I argue that this apparent contradiction responds to a fetishisation of technology. The interaction between workers and technology in the labour process disguises from workers (1) how the use of technologies is inscribed in different control strategies and (2) the class specific character of the operating technologies and mode(s) of control. Technofetishism is thus constitutive of class relations, not a misrepresentation thereof. It favours capital accumulation and power and hinders workers from understanding and intervening in the transformations of the labour process. This calls for workers inquiry to unveil and break down technofetishism and to foster political organisation that responds to the technical composition from which technofetishism emerges.

'As I ride through the shadow of the silicon valley: Gig-work, class and the city' Adam Badger PhD Student, Royal Holloway, University of London

[Adam.Badger.2012@live.rhul.ac.uk](mailto:Adam.Badger.2012@live.rhul.ac.uk) The growth of the so-called gig-economy has been meteoric throughout much of the world. From bedrooms and basements in the Valley, these firms have become prominent players in the global economy, taking in millions of workers world-wide who engage with them as paid labour across a spectrum; from full-time work, to top-up money or rainy day fund building. Whilst critical academic and policy insights have taken snapshots of these organisations (and the lived experiences of work they engender) crystallised at a specific place and time, little sustained work has been done to establish the ways in which these platforms perform urban manifestations of class in the capital. Based on nine-months of covert ethnographic fieldwork working as a cycle courier in London, it looks to address two key issues. Firstly, to develop early considerations of valley culture, connecting the funding circles and assets of ultra-high-net-worth individuals and funds to the atomised day-to-day labours of workers; positioning riders as simultaneously suffering exploitation for their labour, and expropriation for the data this labour produces. Secondly, the paper will change scale to address the ways in which class and gig-work play out in urban space; connecting Silicon Valley to the beach beneath the street. How is it that riders continually form conceptualisations of class in the city through the undertaking of their work, and how is their own class position wrapped-up in the labour?

Paper 3: TBC

## **Book Presentation: Latin American Marxisms in Context: Past and Present**

**Peter Baker (University of Stirling)**

Book presentation - the idea is that several contributors will discuss the work, their chapters, and open up to a more general discussion. We will count on three of the main editors: Peter Baker, Roberto Pareja and Irina Feldman. We will also extend the invitation to co-editor and author Mike Geddes, and authors Britta Matthes, Nicols Lema Habah and Laura Lema Silva. Their participation is still TBC but we are confident that at least two of them will attend.

## **The Problem of Hegemony: Capitalism and Latin America**

**Peter Baker (University of Stirling)**

This paper proposes to engage with critical Marxist theory and historiography surrounding the main debates over the development of capitalist relations in Latin America and its relationship in particular to the problem of the nation and the state. It will argue that two axes of these arguments can be identified in key tenets of dependency theory, on the one hand, and of the criticism of dependency and world-systems theory, on the other, in scholars such as Robert Brenner. By focusing on these debates, we will identify a problematic nucleus around the question of the origins of capitalist relations and how to conceptualise them in the Latin American region. Focusing on Bolivia and theorists such as Ren Zavaleta Mercado, this paper will suggest that the question of hegemony opens a pathway for thinking about the specificity of so-called combined and uneven development and its relationship to both state and nation. It will conclude by suggesting how such perspectives open up a number of problems for understanding the transformation of capitalist relations in the shift from national-popular states to neoliberal governance throughout the region since the 1970s.

## **A la Revolucion por la Poesa. Revolutionary poetics and Roque Daltons response to the Revolution in the revolution?**

**David Munoz Alcantara (NAES& Aalto University of Finland)**

Along the winding pathways of guerrilla forces and liberation movements, revolutionary poetics transits a diverse and embodied archive of political vanguard to embrace a difficult critical articulation between practice and theory, between will and law. The intersection between imagination and concept that revolutionary poetics foregrounds, also exposes an infinite contradiction of a form inside a form at the core of the struggle for signification. From within revolutionary processes, militant writing exposes poetics as methodological operations to embrace discontinuity for an operative event to radically transform society, where self-critical knowledge is in constant emergence, therefore constantly mobilized as

each new situation calls for new methods. Scientific accounts of these processes are forced outside their comfort zones and faced with the indivisibility between the collective force and the event as proof. From within the languages of revolutionary articulation, poetry mobilizes not only as symbolic the sense of impact onto the bodies and the imagination of difference debated throughout negation and inconsistency. The article will explore these processes by addressing the work of Roque Dalton, and intersect through the debate of double agency an internationalist dimension of libertarian aesthetics. Further, it will introduce the counter position of Dalton to Rgis Debray 1967 text Revolution in the Revolution? through Daltons 1970 demarcations to this question in theory and praxis.

## **Proposal for a Book Launch SPONSORED by Pluto Press OPEN MARXISM 4: Against a closing world, Pluto Press, London New York (2019)**

**Ana Cecilia Dinerstein (Department of Social and Policy Sciences University of Bath)**

Book Launch The publication of the first three volumes of Open Marxism in the 1990s has had a transformative impact on how we think about Marxism in the UR of capitalist domination, arguing that money, capital and the state are forms of struggle from above and therefore open to resistance and rebellion. As critical thought is squeezed out of universities and geographical shifts shape the terrain of theoretical discussion, the editors argue now is the time for a new volume that reflects the work that has been carried out during the past decade. Emphasising the contemporary relevance of 'open Marxism' in our moment of political and economic uncertainty, the collection shines a light on its significance for activists and academics today. The chapters explore value theory, critical theory, hope, democracy, prefiguration, crisis, the state, revolution, subjectivity, Zapatistas SPEAKERS (2 hour-slot)

Ana Cecilia Dinerstein (Co-Editor and author) is Reader in Sociology, Department of Social and Policy Sciences, University of Bath. She is author of *The Politics of Autonomy in Latin America: The Art of Organising Hope* (Palgrave, 2015) and editor of *Social Sciences for Another Politics. Women Theorising without Parachutes* (Palgrave 2016). A.C.Dinerstein@bath.ac.uk

David Harvie is associate Professor of Finance and Political Economy, School of Business, University of Leicester. He is one of the co-editors of *Commoning with George Caffentzis and Silvia Federici*, London: Pluto Press (2019, with Camille Barbagallo and Nic Beuret) david.harvie@le.ac.uk

Chris O'Kane teaches Philosophy, Politics and Economics at John Jay College of Criminal Justice, CUNY. He is co-editor of *The SAGE Handbook of Frankfurt School Critical Theory*, Los Angeles, London, New Delhi, Singapore, Washington DC, Melbourne: Sage, 2018, with B. Best and W. Bonefeld. theresonlyonechrisokane@gmail.com

Frederick Harry Pitts (author) is a Lecturer in Management, School of Finance, Economics and Management, University of Bristol. He is author of *Critiquing Capitalism Today: New Ways to Read Marx*, Palgrave, 2017) and co-author of *Corbynism: A Critical Approach*, Emerald (2018), with Matt Bolton. fh.pitts@bristol.ac.uk

Marcel Stoetzler is a Senior Lecturer in Sociology, School of History, Philosophy and Social Sciences, Bangor University, UK. He is editor of *Antisemitism*

and the Constitution of Sociology, University of Nebraska Press, 2014 and Beginning Classical Social Theory, Manchester University Press, Manchester (2017). m.stoetzler@bangor.ac.uk

## **Decolonisation between labour, love and the nation: feminists and the politics of work and care in independent Egypt**

**Sara Salem (London School of Economics), Mai Taha (American University in Cairo)**

Egyptian feminists were extremely active in imagining radical futurities during Egypt's moment of decolonisation. Much of this radical imagining focused on questions of work, care, and social reproduction. Focusing on the context of Egypt during the 20th century, we look at different historical moments during which debates on care work and motherhood cropped up and ask what these debates tell us about broader questions of capitalist reproduction. Beth Baron and other feminist writers have shown how Egypt was centered in the national imagination as a woman and a mother. While the imagery of the mother served the national consciousness, it effaced her labour at home, subsuming it under the allusive category of love. Using film, literature, and prose, the paper looks at multiple moments in modern Egyptian history to draw connections between social reproduction and changes in capitalist production, particularly working from the assumption that race and imperialism, class, nation and gender are co-constitutive. Moreover, we explore how Egyptian feminists positioned themselves vis-a-vis these debates and what this can tell us about the radical politics of feminism and the anticolonial project.

## **Book Launch: The Making of Capitalism in France**

**Xavier Lafrance (Universit  du Qubec Montral), Charles Post (Graduate Center and Borough of Manhattan Community College of the City University of New York) Chris Isett (University of Minnesota Twin Cities) Michael Zmolek (University of Iowa)**

Very few authors have addressed the origins of capitalism in France as the emergence of a distinct form of historical society, premised on a new configuration of social power, rather than as an extension of commercial activities liberated from feudal obstacles. The Making of Capitalism in France offers the first thorough historical analysis of the origins of capitalist social property relations in France from a 'political Marxist' or (Capital-centric Marxist) perspective. Putting emphasis on the role of the state, the book shows how the capitalist system was first imported into this country in an industrial form, and considerably later than is usually assumed. It also demonstrates that the French Revolution was not capitalist, and in fact consolidated customary regulations that formed the bedrock of the formation of the working class. Discussants will critically assess the value of the argument put forth by the book and the author will respond to their comments.

## **AI Capitalism and Communist Prospects**

**Nicholas Dyer-Witheford (University of Western Ontario,)**

With recent dramatic advances in machine learning, advanced capitalism is gripped by a frenzied interest in artificial intelligence (AI). Bourgeois commentators are divided between computer scientists, predicting an imminent jobs apocalypse, and mainstream economists asserting a business-as-usual model in which technology driven productivity gains lift all boats. But Marxists too are split on the implications of AI. This paper reviews three left positions. Sceptics minimize the consequences of AI, because of doubts about either its ultimate technological feasibility, or about a stagnating capitalism's capacity to muster the requisite productive investments; in this view, machine intelligence demands no fundamental change to class struggle strategies. Accelerationists on the other hand see AI as opening massive new opportunities for postcapitalism via the dissolution of waged work and enlarged capacities for economic and social planning; they advocate socialist transition programs predicated on this technological basis. Against this view, abyssal critics identify AI as the latest stage in capital's cybernetic offensive against its proletariat, likely to further decompose an already disarrayed working class and multiply surplus populations, without any guaranteed emancipatory outcome. After comparing and contrasting these perspectives, and the passages of Marx on which each draw for canonical support, the paper concludes by briefly assessing the potential sources of resistance to AI-capitalism, and the significance such resistance assumes in each of the three communist optics it has examined.

## **Momentum, DSA and the return of the strategic question**

**Xavier Lafrance (Universit  du Qubec Montral)**

In the wake of the Great Recession of 2007-2009, Jeremy Corbyn and Bernie Sanders have given electoral expression to social unrest while also creating a new political space for the left. This new space has been invested by organisations such as the Democratic Socialists of America (US) and Momentum (UK) that have experienced rapid membership growth since 2015. While they have successfully seized different political opportunities, these organisations are also facing major challenges in their attempts to develop a new kind of politics that points beyond neoliberalism and capitalism. This paper will put forth a comparative analysis of the recent evolution of DSA and Momentum. It will focus on their organisational structure, their practices and campaign and the strategic debates that orient their activity. This comparative research is based on over 60 interviews conducted with Momentum and DSA members.

## Messianic Zionist colonisers Breeding a Red Heifer

Mosh Machover (None)

Since 1967, the influence of religion in Israeli Jewish society and politics has been increasing at an accelerating pace. This is driven to some extent by the strictly-orthodox parties whose constituency is growing for demographic reasons but to a greater extent by the modern-orthodox parties, which have mutated from the pre-1967 relatively dovish National-Religious fellow-travellers of the Labour Party into militant ethno-religious chauvinists, spearheading the colonisation of Palestinian lands occupied in 1967. In this article I discuss the role of this specifically Israeli brand of the Jewish religion in providing ideological legitimisation to the Israeli settler state and to Zionism's ongoing expansionist colonisation project, which may well lead to another major ethnic cleansing of the indigenous Palestinian Arab people. The Jewish Nation-State Law, enacted by the Knesset in July 2018, is addressed in this context. The most fanatic wing of the ethno-religious chauvinists aims to establish a renewed biblical Jewish kingdom. A key part of this plan is the building of a third Jewish temple on Temple Mount. This will require the disappearance of the Dome of the Rock and al-Aqsa mosque, the third holiest site of Islam risking a major regional and perhaps global conflagration. Formerly a lunatic fringe of Zionist settlers (the Jewish Underground of 1979-84, whose ringleaders were imprisoned on charges of terrorism), this trend has grown and, following the elections of April 2019, moved from the margins into the centres of political power. The activists are making preparations for the animal sacrifices in the temple, including breeding the indispensable red heifer. The increasing influence of Israeli ethno-religious chauvinism has contributed to a widening rift between Israel and growing sections of US Jewry, whose dominant brand of Judaism has moved in a very different direction.

## Theater of the Oppressed and Augusto Boal, a Marxist Journey

Geraldo Britto Lopes (Centro de Teatro do Oprimido)

This work is a search for understanding the methodology called the process of constructing Theatre of the Oppressed, now one of the most theatrical methodologies used worldwide. In order to better understand the Oppressed Theatre in this, I believe that nothing better to understand its past. Seeking to understand the process and the theoretical and practical precedents that were being created, discussed, discarded, leveraged, transformed. Which somehow has its historical path seeking the path of Augusto Boal, who was to systematize the methodology (as a way to proceed), not the biographical form, but parallel-cross but punctuating the stories and impregnation experienced by him and its direct and indirect partners since its introduction in the theatrical art in the 50s in Brazil, mainly via the Experimental Theatre of the Negro, and there also constituting this time. Going to your step in the United States where he had his "academic" at Columbia University, but not only already including their experiences with Langston Hughes, Harlem, Broadway theaters and off-Broadway, Actors Studio ending with his first direction of a play yours. After the arrival in Brazil, the Arena, the political and artistic debate, differences with PCB, other left



currents, naturalism, realism, Political Theater, Popular, epic, guerrillas to reach the first proposal, the first Technical Theatre oppressed that was the Theatre-Journal. How could this process, which influences the theoretical Marxist aesthetics - Brecht, Lukcs, Benjamin- and Latinos, the popular national debate, the Brazilian, universal, private- Abdias Nascimento, Antonio Candido, Roberto Schwarz. Because this salad is expressed and how the end was served and eaten. Seek open doors in some only open, others inside the house and come to the livingroom, the other rooms and even sleep on the beds. But present possibilities of inconclusive research but introductory perhaps provocative

## **Dependent modernisation: crisis and collapse**

**Luiz Renato Martins (University of So Paulo)**

Panel proposal of Pacheco, Grespan and Martins for the 16th HM Conference, Claps of Thunder: Disaster Communism, Extinction Capitalism and How to Survive Tomorrow, Central London, 7-10 November 2019; Key-words: dependent modernisation; ultraright rise in Brazil 2018-19; Workers Party; privatisation and neoliberal disaster; cultural and political resistance

**Dependent modernisation: crisis and collapse**

The Bolsonaro administration takes to its final consequences the model of associated dependency implemented in 1964 and reiterated throughout the New Republic, with specific adjustments of the Washington Consensus, introduced by the Plano Real (1994) and by the Cardoso government (1995-2002). The social turning (2003-2015) of the so-called New Republic by the PT governments did not alter such a model, contrary to some expectations. In fact, the PT dismantled the social movements' organisation built during the resistance to the dictatorship, inducing them to clientelism; in addition, the PT coopted its leaderships to bureaucratic positions, harming practices of struggle and organisation. However, the impossibility of overcoming the economic crisis in the short or medium term can awaken, besides new struggles, new leaderships that are not committed to the PT's political project of class conciliation. However, the government's resumption of elements of the so-called Brazilian miracle of the dictatorship's years, including environmental devastation and the mutilation of labour rights, projects the escalation of a series of social crimes and deepens of the neoliberal disaster. In the field of culture, privatisation accentuates the transformation of the visual cultural debate into a mere reproduction of clichés and authorial fetishism, whose roots, systematically following the logic of privatisation, go back to the collections constituted from the economic boom set up by the dictatorship. There, the rise of the ultraright bloc does not find today the critical cultural resistance that the coup of 1964 met, as pointed out in the historical essay 'Remarques sur la cultura et la politique au Brsil - 1964/1969' (Schwarz, *Les Temps Modernes*, 288: 37-73). In fact, the current scenario is of destruction and genocide, both in culture and society. Few signs seem to indicate otherwise. However, with the recent awakening of mass struggle in universities and schools, in defence of public and democratic education, it is possible that some critical impulse will gain strength due to the indirect vicinity of universities with art and culture circles. But the reconstruction of an anti-capitalist culture of opposition will require much more work and organisation than the currently existent. Also, for what regards mass struggle. Proponents Ana Paula Pacheco (University of So Paulo, Faculty of Philosophy,

Literature and Human Sciences): anapaulapacheco@usp.br; Jorge Grespan (University of So Paulo, Faculty of Philosophy, Literature and Human Sciences): grespan@usp.br; Luiz Renato Martins (University of So Paulo, Postgraduate Programme in Economical History and Postgraduate Programme in Visual Arts): luizmart@usp.br;

## **Roda Gigante [Big Wheel]: images from the bottom of a shipwreck**

**Luiz Renato Martins (University of So Paulo)**

LRMartins (see below for academic affiliation) individual paper proposal for the 16th HM Conference, Claps of Thunder: Disaster Communism, Extinction Capitalism and How to Survive Tomorrow, Central London, 7-10 November 2019; (Please note: this paper proposal belongs to the pannel Dependent modernisation: crisis and colapse, formulated by the proponents Ana Paula Pacheco, Jorge Grespan and Luiz Renato Martins, from the University of So Paulo, Brazil) Key-words: installation by visual artist Carmela Gross; Brazilian anti-art; dialectics of order and disorder; fraudulent modernisation and architectural clichs; totalising historical reflection; Roda Gigante [Big Wheel]: images from the bottom of a shipwreck In contrast to the chaos installed in Brazil by the ultraright government which leads the endemic Brazilian economic crisis to unprecedented levels of political peril and social genocide , the work Roda Gigante, an installation by visual artist Carmela Gross [March-June 2019, Porto Alegre], creates an acute criticism of the collapse of the process of dependent modernisation in Brazil, originated from the 1964 civil-military coup and reiterated by the so-called New Republic, even during the social turning in the Lula era. To this end, Roda Gigante set up an immense and meticulous scenic structure, based in the dialectic between order and disorder, in which hundreds of signs of the various and fruitless cycles of accelerated modernisation are spread over the floor, as if on a game board. From there, the objects are tied, through a network of 250 ropes of different colours and thicknesses, to the capitals of the neoclassical columns of the headquarters of a cultural institute controlled by a multinational financial group. The web laminates and decomposes the view of the monumental hall, leading the visitor to reflect on the links between the failed cycles of fraudulent modernisation and architectural clichs, inherent in the farce of puppet state and dependent oligarchies. The paper will analyse, based on images, the constructive procedures of Roda Gigante. It also aims to situate the work in the Brazilian tradition of anti-art, of a tragic tenor, resuming the threads of a totalising historical reflection which had in Hlio Oiticica's Tropiclicia and Glauber Rocha's Terra em Transe (Entranced Earth) their last emblematic epic moments. In fact, the decline of the civil-military dictatorship did not shake the privatist cultural model based on the hoarding of private collections since the 1980s. Thus, the visual arts in Brazil, subject to authorial fetishism, not only lost the teeth they had developed during the resistance to the 1964 coup, but also unlearned how to bite. Proponent: Luiz Renato Martins (University of So Paulo, Post-graduation Programme in Economical History and Post-graduation Programme in Visual Arts): luizmart@usp.br;

## **De-Enclosures: Undoing the Break with Nature and the Role of Centralized States**

**Michael Andrew Zmolek (University of Iowa)**

Prior to the first enclosures in England, customary law prevailed. Customary law was *lex loci*, local law, empowering village manorial courts to regulate tenures on cultivable land and to maintain common rights on the wastes and commons. The poetry of John Clares celebration of the local communitys connection to nature in this time prior to enclosures, has more recently been echoed in the work of writers like Silvia Federici, who has called for a re-enchantment of nature. Over five centuries, the enclosure movement up-ended and extinguished customary law in England through the assertion of absolute rights of property in land under Common Law, the kings law, state law, setting a model for emulation as country after country followed Englands example in transitioning to capitalism. Englands first mass proletarianization and transition to capitalism was thus enacted by and through a central state with a centralized legal system. Since the advent of neoliberalism some forty and more years ago, a new wave of enclosures has ensued, furthering the commodification of land. Once again, state sovereignty is at the center of the process as states claim eminent domain and justify vast sell-offs of lands and displacements of indigenous populations in the name of earning foreign exchange to maintain debt payments. This paper will explore the problem of how state sovereignty can be challenged so as to enable some form or return to local juris diction and re-expansion of the commons. Drawing upon insights from pre-enclosure writers, we will argue that the ever-expanding commodification of land is likely to continue unless there is a shift from majority public conception which fetishizes growth, GDP, monetization and commodification of land as objective standards of life quality to a return to a majority public recognition of a deeper materialism: our connection to and dependence upon the earth and the desperate need for new or revived forms of local stewardship of and protection of the land.

## **Struggling with the ocean grab: The political-economy of ocean-space and class differentiation in Southern Myanmar**

**Mads Barbesgaard (Department of Human Geography, Lund University & The Transnational Institute (TNI), The Netherlands)**

Following on the heels of reinvigorated scholarly and political debates around so-called land-grabbing over the past decade, fisher peoples movements and scholars have called for the need to interrogate similar dynamics over and in ocean-space under the rubric of ocean-grabbing. However, where work on land-grabbing has fruitfully been in dialogue with long-running debates on agrarian transitions and agrarian questions as approached through materialist political economy, the budding work on ocean grabbing tends to primarily be policy-orientated based on a normative critique of the impacts of grabbing on apparently undifferentiated fishing communities across the Global South. Drawing on a case from Southern Myanmar, this presentation aims to challenge and contribute in three ways.

Firstly, following seminal interventions reinvigorating the debate around the essential relation of modern landed property (Lefebvre 1991, Coronil 1997, Capps 2016, Campling & Havice 2014), the presentation shows how ocean-grabs need to be understood as enmeshed within broader political-economic struggles over the appropriation of rent in ocean-space. In focusing on rent, the presentation, secondly, brings together dynamics from both fisheries and offshore hydro-carbon industries, examining the multiple actors that become implicated in questions around control of and access to ocean-space: from the Thai state, to the Myanmar military regime, Ethnic Armed Organisations, local, Thai and other foreign capitalists as well as differentiated villagers. Finally, through a multi-scalar class-relational analysis (Campling et al. 2016), the presentation unpacks how these multiple forces come together in resultant processes of class differentiation in a particular small-scale fishing village in Southern Myanmar. In this way, the presentation seeks to contribute to the debate on ocean-grabbing by challenging both top-down simplistic policy solutions as well as bottom-up romanticizing social movement narratives of the resistance from fishing communities.

## **Political Economy of Signs for the Body: Plastic Surgery Disciplines in the Context of Consumer Society**

**Xiang Liu (School of Philosophy, Beijing Normal University)**

Starting from the proliferation and popularity of plastic surgery in consumer society, this paper attempts to analyze the philosophical mechanism underlying this phenomenon, especially the political economy of signs for the body. Through the media, consumer society output to each member not only the model of ego, but also the sight of the other. The author, citing Lacan's mirror-image theory, analyzes the plastic surgery as the result of the "self" being seduced by the mirror image, which is the alienation behavior under the gaze of "the other". Before the body was included into the symbol system, its status also underwent a series of changes in the history of philosophy: from the derogation to the discovery, and to the discipline and remodeling of the body. Jean Baudrillard clearly pointed out in his critique of symbolic political economy that we are gradually bringing the body into the vision of consumption and symbolic structure in the name of liberation, and behind this process is the operation of a whole body industry and the manipulation of commercial capital. This is exactly the "spectacle" that Guy Debord has predicted but never imagined, and every face and body in a consumer society is a part of that spectacle. Therefore, the new field of political economy, where it functions in some subtle and obscure form, is nothing but our bodies.

## **Mass Strikes and Social Movements in India and Brazil**

**Joerg Nowak (University of Nottingham)**

This talk explores new forms of popular organisation that emerged from strikes in India and Brazil between 2011 and 2014. Based on four case studies, the author traces the

alliances and relations that strikers developed during their mobilisations with other popular actors such as students, indigenous peoples, and people displaced by dam projects. The study locates the mass strikes in Brazil's construction industry and India's automobile industry in a global conjuncture of protest movements, and develops a new, non-eurocentric theory of strikes that can take account of the manifold ways in which labour unrest is embedded in local communities and regional networks. Given the turn to right-wing governments in India in 2014 and in Brazil in 2016, it is asked if the new forms of alliances are organised well enough in order to rebuild popular power in the face of authoritarian democracy.

## **On the Influence of Virtual Space on Contemporary Identity**

**Lei CHen (School of Philosophy, Beijing Normal University)**

The Virtual space and the Internet have exerted enormous influence on peoples life in the age of information. Their influence on peoples identity in particular is a hot topic within scholarly circles. The paper studies the influence of virtual space on identity in the Internet age from the philosophical perspective.

## **Althusser's Inhibition: Science vs. Form-Analysis as Epistemic Approaches to Marxism**

**Conrad Bongard Hamilton (Paris 8 University)**

Since his heyday as the prodigal son of the PCF in the 1960s through to his latter-day internment, Louis Althusser maintained a steadfastly deflationary approach to the question of the import of the value-form to his vaunted scientization of Marx's oeuvre. Indeed, in his 1969 preface to the first volume of *Capital*, Althusser states that Part I of the text where Marx, beginning from the elementary form of the commodity, dialectically unfurls the structure of the value is so deeply marked by the Hegelian pretension that thought must found its own beginnings by showing the auto-development of a simple totality that it ought to be set aside during a first reading. And in 1978, in *Marx in His Limits*, Althusser goes even further, declaring his allegiance with the criticism of Marx's value-form put forth by Pierro Sraffa's Neo-Ricardian School (thereby de facto advocating for a fairly transparent conception of value theory derived from Ricardo's embodied labour theory). Given the significance of both value-form theory and Althusserianism to present-day discussions of Marx's work, it is important, today, to re-pose the question of their relationship. Significant to note here is that Althusser's critique of the Hegelian injunction for thought to ground itself vis-à-vis the simple totality for it to furnish itself with a beginning is only overcome through his claim that science (as opposed to ideology) cannot do so, as its practical methodology will always come up against an epistemological vertigo should it try. This theoretical sleight of hand in turn allows Althusser to establish the category of a present/absent economic determination that, while capable of being overdetermined by secondary contradictions, nevertheless exists in a similar manner to Spinoza's God outside

the domain of rational interrogation or analysis. All of this points to a serious flaw in Althusser's work. Althusser critiques Hegel's thought as being beholden to an expressive causality that he attributes originally to Leibniz. He also asserts that the transformation problem is irresolvable in so far as it arises from Marx's misguided Hegelian/expressive attempt to separate out value and prices. But this is not only an incorrect reading of Hegel in the Science of Logic, Hegel in fact argues for a theorization of form as external and unessential that has more in common with Althusser's Marxist totality than with his straw man Hegel. It also treats the question of the transformation problem as open and closed in a manner that seems naive retrospectively (given the credibility enjoyed today by various efforts to resolve it that have emerged since 1978 TSSI, Shaikh, etc.) Against the totalization of the field of reality by the Althusserian economic DLI then, it makes sense, in 2019, to affirm the particularity of Hegelian form-analysis. And if we do this, it will also allow us to resituate the distinctly Althusserian anti-humanist problematic in relation to the value-form: specifically, by showing how the notion of the human or person derives not from phenomenology nor biology but from the matrix of the value-form itself (what Sohn-Rethel describes as the exchange abstraction).

## **“A Monstrous Collection of Commodities”: notes on Marx’ concept of Measurelessness**

**Jorge Grespan (University of So Paulo)**

this proposal belongs to the panel: “Dependent Modernization: Crisis and Collapse” with Luiz Renato Martins e Ana Paula Pacheco. Marx’s opening words in his critique of political economy, both in the 1859 version and in Capital in 1867 and 1873, herald a fundamental theme: the appreciation of value escapes control and tends to (bad) infinity. The purpose of my presentation will be to examine the various meanings of this loss of measure in the capitalist process of valorisation by relating them to the dialectical concept of bad infinity, as it appears in the recursive image of Sisyphus in Marx’s work. Both the tendency of capital to excessive accumulation and its opposite tendency to recurrent devaluation crisis are determined by the contradictory character of the relationship of capital to the labour force, which leads to the constant transformation of the limits of accumulation into barriers to be overcome. The result is the monstrous accumulation of commodities that capital produces and cannot always sell. In the presentation, the idea of monstrous, one of the possible translations of the German word *Ungeheuer* employed by Marx, will be understood precisely based on the dialectical concepts of bad infinity and measurelessness, as a real form of disfigured self-representation of capital. Only in this way can capitalism be explained as a world of simultaneous abundance and scarcity.



## Queer Liberation and Marx's Ecology

Holly Lewis (Texas State University)

In keeping with this year's theme on climate change, my paper will analyze how twentieth century conceptions of nature (i.e. Soviet/Eastern bloc, Fordist, neoliberal) continue to contribute to oppositional sexism. The paper will begin with an overview of various Marxist positions on nature and its relation to social ontology: the Engelsian/ traditional Marxist schema, the Western Marxist separation of the logics of natural and social phenomena, and the *neue Marx-Lektüre* criticism of the two aforementioned schools. I will then explore potential corrections through particular readings of Marx's notion of social metabolism as articulated by Bellamy Foster, Burkett, Malm and others, and alongside Heather Brown's dissection of Marx's use of the term *natural*. One of the cornerstones of anti-queer violence is the claim that homosexuality, trans existence, and feminine sexuality are mere constructions; whereas heterosexuality, cis existence, and maternal womanhood are natural. Moreover, twentieth century criticisms of consumerism (non-productive consumption) by both the left and its enemies marked housewives and high femmes as thoroughly coopted by capitalist ideology and therefore constitutionally frivolous and incapable of serious politics. I will argue that these underlying assumptions about our natures and our assumed roles in capitalist (anti-)ecology ground the misogyny, whorephobia, transphobia, and queerphobia we experience. Theoretical clarity on questions of nature and ecology are essential for developing queer Marxist interventions into reproductive burdens and surrogacy, sexist/homophobic/transphobic violence, and for better integration of trans, non-binary, and queer comrades, as well as cis women, into global Marxist movements.

## The Aesthetics of Post-Truth

luisa corna (Winchester University of the Arts), Fiona Allen (University of Exeter)

In recent years, the question of post-truth has become a central theme within political and public discourse. The term has been used to indicate a range of phenomena, from the fabrication of sensationalist news stories to the denial of facts and the emergence of conspiracy theories targeting individuals through social media. At the same time, the themes of truth and post-truth have also appeared in the art world. With reference to work of Forensic Architecture, Trevor Paglen and Metahaven, this paper will explore how the phenomenon of post-truth has exacerbated the existing distinction between relativism and the cult of authenticity. Moreover, it will seek to consider how this development has resulted in a shift from the political to the juridical, one in which the idea of political action in the arts coincides with the deployment of legal means. But how have the aforementioned artists responded to this juridically-determined conjuncture? What understanding of truth is at play within their work? What does their choice of aesthetic form reveal about their relationship to this phenomenon? To what extent does this development signify a new way of conceptualizing the relationship between the artist and politics? In attempting to answer these questions, this paper will draw upon a series of Marxist authors who address the

question of truth most notably, Adorno as well as historical materialist accounts of the relationship between truth and twentieth century artistic practices.

## Architecture of the disaster in the “Great Brazil” of the far-right

Ana Paula Pacheco (University of So Paulo)

APPachecos individual paper proposal for the 16th HM Conference, Claps of Thunder: Disaster Communism, Extinction Capitalism and How to Survive Tomorrow, Central London, 7-10 November 2019; (This proposal belongs to the pannel Modernizao dependente: crise e colapso.) Architecture of the disaster in the Great Brazil of the far-right In 1979, Brazilian critic Roberto Schwarz published an essay discussing the theoretical assumptions of the “dialectic of order and disorder”, a movement that underlies Brazilian Society and is connected in its cultural and critical tradition to a figure that, for more than a century, had corresponded to a national ethos of sorts: the malandro. Emerged from the folk tradition (of the trickster), and reinterpreted according to the materialistic penchants of pioneering critic, Antonio Candido, the malandro originates in the slave society, in which the poor free man is forced to live without work. The ability of finding alternative means with cunning, and of moving between “(established) order and (so called) disorder” to survive in the fringes of society, led to a peculiar way of being in a “young” society, less rigid with regard to law and rules of conduct and geared to a flexibility that would make it less violent than the main Capitalist nations. Based on evidences brought on by the murderous, persecutory and torture-friendly logic precipitated by the military civilian regime, then underway in Brazil (1964-1985), Schwarz detected the historical moment in which the ambivalence of the malandro became the prevailing ideology of the establishment, putting into question the illusions of the Brazilian national-developmental cycle. Before this idea became a fundamental part of Brazilian thought, Iracema (1974) a film by Jorge Bodanzky and Orlando Senna that takes place in the Amazon forest described with great critical potential the violence as a constitutive feature of the actions undertaken in the film by the Capital (including the state) and by a malandro worker, a parasite of poor people subjected to the hardships of precarious labor, who carries within himself the motto of the nation that takes off. This presentation will debate how the film illustrates the foundations of dependent modernization, the limits of the “nation formation” ideology, the mistakes made by the developmentalist left, as well as the prospect of labor destruction under the new global wave of capital accumulation started in the 1970s, in order to understand how the popular imagination and the resistance against the establishment became coopted during the 2018 Brazilian elections, leading the far-right back to power. Key words: dialectic of order and disorder; Brazilian Dictatorship; far-right.

## **The Symbolic Face of Revolution: Bourdieu on the Struggle from the Study of Social Class and Art.**

**John E. O'Brien ()**

By tradition, the focus on socialist revolution has been approached by concentrating on material inequalities and attacks on justice due to the capital concentrating function of the western political-economy. As shown today not only by natural environmental destruction but by an alarming escalation in diverse forms of personal violence, the West is in crisis due to the contradiction of capitalism. Accompanying those personal symptoms of structural alienation, rising voter apathy coupled with rebellious manifestations against neo-liberal arrangements exposes public frustration about governmental inertia. These actions underline awareness that radical change justified exclusively on material exploitation of labor, for the privilege of few is perhaps necessary but not sufficient to mobilize support for major social change. Something more is needed and the purpose of this paper is to approach the problem from the side of the symbolic expression of meaning by which personal social relations are woven into impersonal social institutions. This draws into focus the workings of critical consciousness of species-being that are denied, derailed, obfuscated by the ideological smog of communication that accompanies the menacing capitalist mechanisms. The work of French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu is used to demonstrate how the resources of human consciousness that carry the critical potential for judgement and creativity, can play as important a role in propelling modification in institutional forms as might control of technical-material resources. In support of our position, we draw evidence both from his early study of social class as well as his later work on art. There he describes how mental constructions put into action (shared beliefs, attitudes, values, language, generic spiritual orientations), in confrontation with institutional forces, deploy a symbolic energy that plays a formative role in the expression of institutional arrangements, and can exercise a revolutionary power for modifying them. The French Yellow-Vest movement will be used to illustrate the tie between Bourdieu's critique of symbolic revolution with the awakening of critical consciousness for popular movements including the environmental movement, and the structural problems of transforming a perpetual-rebellion into a permanent-revolution.

## **Resistance and alternative political lifeworlds in the Middle East and North Africa**

**Sara Salem (London School of Economics), Elia El Khazen (SOAS, University of London) Sophie Chamas (University of Oxford) Brecht De Smet (Gent University) John Chalcraft (London School of Economics)**

Questions of resistance continue to be of immense concern to scholars and activists in the Middle East and North Africa. From the uprisings of 2010/2011 across Egypt, Bahrain, Tunisia, Syria, and Yemen, to the current and ongoing uprisings in Sudan and Algeria, there continues to be urgency around the question of anti-capitalist politics and the imagining

and creation of alternative political futures. This panel aims to excavate knowledges and practices around the notion of counter-hegemony, focusing specifically on how movements, scholars, activists and intellectuals across the region understand the present and imagine the future. The panel addresses questions of how the past, present and future shed light on pressing issues such as capitalist crisis, identity politics and its discontents, imperialism and neo-imperialism, and biopolitical forms of control. From popular protest and transnational activism to crises of migration and counter-hegemony, we aim to think through the current context of resistance in the region, and what it means for the future.

## **Capturing the Socialist Imagination: The Idea of a Socialist State in the Early Twentieth Century Anti-Colonial Movements in Malaya**

**Imran Mohd Rasid (Research Fellow at Strategic Information and Research Development Centre (SIRD))**

The intellectual history of the Malaysian left is still severely underdeveloped. While literatures recording their political activities and engagements are vast, only a score of articles were dedicated to analyse and trace the evolution of Leftist ideologies in the light of their own concrete contextual challenges. This paper aims to rectify this gap in the literature by engaging in a close examination on how the idea of a Socialist State has evolved and debated among some of the widely influential Malayan leftist anti-colonial movements like Parti Komunis Malaya (Malayan Communist Party), Parti Kebangsaan Melayu Malaya (Malay Nationalist Party), and Kesatuan Melayu Muda (Young Malays Union). When confronted with the prospect of obtaining Independent Malaya from the British in 1930s, the leftist movements began to deliberate about the possible creation of a socialist state, one that will address the specific political and economic challenges of colonial capitalism facing them at the time. This paper will argue that two important determinants plays an important role in shaping their imaginative projection of a Socialist state; (a) contestation between two competing ideological strands, Socialist Marxism versus Reformist Marxism; (b) the contrast between two different forms of struggle, armed resistance versus democratic participation. This paper draws from various archival materials - reports of internal meetings, pamphlets, news columns, magazines to reconstruct the many variants of socialist imagination of a modern state that appeared in the early twentieth century among the leftist movement.

## **Teaching the Teacher: Learning Intersectional Strategies from Work-Class Students and Other Members of the Global Precariat**

**Jocelyn Wills (Brooklyn College, City University of New York)**

During the Spring of 2017, in response to concerns about the ways in which Trumpism had increased feelings of vulnerability at Brooklyn College, City University of New York, I had the privilege to collaborate with students who wanted to organize student-led, student-

centered panels focused on Teaching the Teacher about the many struggles they have faced since the economic meltdown of 2008. One of the most diverse student bodies in the world, and crossing the boundaries of race, religion, and nationality, the vast majority of Brooklyn Colleges students nevertheless share a critical commonality: as representatives of the working poor, most juggle their educational desires with the need to hold down two or three part-time jobs just to put food on the table, pay increasingly exorbitant housing costs, and help their parents who also work multiple jobs to make ends meet. Nearly 50% of our students experience food insecurity on a regular basis; 14% of them have been homeless within the past year; and austerity politics have hit students of color particularly hard. Despite the many pulls on their time, and the stresses they face, our students organized a two-day Teaching the Teacher event that show-cased the power of working-class and intersectional solidarity, and confirmed the importance of both listening to and learning from as well as engaging with working-class students to amplify the voices of the global precariat, to strengthen their power as activists committed to building stronger social movement unionism. Ten student panelists (five each day) spent about 10 minutes each sharing their experiences, concerns, and suggestions. They then led/moderated a wider discussion, seeking stories from student members of the audience. Faculty members in the audience listened, learned, and left the panel discussions with a better sense of how work with rather than lead students in activism. Although I had already worked with students on Teaching the Teacher events associated with rising tuition costs at CUNY after 2008, the 2017 event reaffirmed that working-class students actively seek faculty expertise in their disciplines of choice, but that they have forcefully demonstrated that they have the kinds of knowledge needed to help faculty members become better scholar-activists. Working-class students have increasingly forced full-time faculty to recognize our own privilege relative to their contingent colleagues as well as others in our larger community, and to acknowledge that students have more expertise in struggle and feelings of vulnerability than we do, that we have much to learn from students who intuitively understand the need for intersectional solidarities that can overcome divisions both on campus as well as beyond it. Drawing on the transcripts that have memorialized the two-day event, my paper will discuss what we all have to learn about student struggles and strategies, and what we need to do, collectively, to create more inclusive, welcoming, and nurturing activist environments, so that we can provide dignity and respect to all members of our larger communities. At CUNY, we also have the opportunity to think more deeply about our historic mission to provide a high-quality educational experience for all New Yorkers no matter their socio-economic background and current circumstances, and to protect the most vulnerable members of the global precariat. The vulnerable on our campus include the students who led and participated in 2017's panel discussions, who forcefully made connections between their own individual experiences and the collective issues vulnerable groups face, the austerity politics of neoliberalism, environmental destruction and climate change, capitalism, economic inequality, and the global precariat, and what we need to survive a precarious present and future: Muslim students targeted by the NYPD in the wake of 9/11 and because of their involvement in various anti-surveillance movements as well as BDS; members of the LGBTQ community; Student Organization for Every Disability United for Progress (SOFEDUP); student activists concerned about our crumbling infrastructure and the mental and physical health toll taken on those who inhabit our under-funded environment, including those affected by Hurricane Sandy, climate change, and other forms

of creative destruction; students of color involved in Black Lives Matter, indigenous movements, and other anti-racist groups; students affected by sexual violence and harassment, including those who have served in the American military, and among those who have since come forward as part of the Me Too Movement; and Latinx students, both documented and undocumented, forced to navigate an increasingly hostile environment under global fascism. My paper will also explore the collaborative research project that a decades worth of Teaching the Teacher events have inspired: the creation of an archival collection of student activism to commemorate Brooklyn Colleges centennial in 2030 and on which future students, faculty members, and the larger community can draw for lessons and inspiration. Although Brooklyn College has student activist collections covering the years prior to the introduction of escalating tuition costs in 1976, we still need to know more about the past 45 years, and how working-class students have built different forms of solidarity over time. I look forward to discussing the project with others attending this years Historical Materialism Conference.

## **Black Marxism Vs the Black Radical Tradition**

**Chris Newlove (N/A)**

Concepts associated with the work of Cedric Robinson such as the Black Radical Tradition, Racial Capitalism and Black Marxism have become common currency among academics and activists alike. This paper will critically revisit the concepts above as presented in Robinsons most influential book Black Marxism. While aspects of Robinsons discussion of the Black Radical Tradition such as the role of religions and cultural norms in black revolt are useful, his overall construction of the Black Radical Tradition as opposed to Marxism is based on a misreading of the work of W.E.B Du Bois and C.L.R James. The concept of Racial Capitalism highlights the enduring importance of racism to the reproduction of capitalism and points to the important question of whether racism predated capitalism. However, it is based on a reading of Karl Marx that distorts his views on free labour, proletarianisation and the role of violence within capitalism. This paper will argue (against its original use) the term Black Marxism can be used to refer to figures of black liberation that have creatively developed the Marxist tradition such as Du Bois, James and Fanon.

## **Defending living labour is an ecological struggle in itself**

**Stephen Bouquin (Professor in sociology Universit d'Evry Paris-Saclay**

**Centre Pierre NavilleJournal "Les Mondes du Travail")**

"We are not defending nature, we are nature defending itself" is a slogan that can be heard at many demonstrations against climate change. My statement is that the same can be said about struggles against moral and physical hazards, concerneing health and safety at work. Of course, in many cases, these issues are dealt with in a way that is compatible with further accumulation of capital, f.e. by delivering financial incentives and compensatory



payments or recruitment 'fresh' and disposable employees. But other traditions also exist among the labour movement, from the seventies up till now (ergonomics, reduction of working time, workers control upon working conditions, developing restrictive regulatory frameworks, etc). Our paper will articulate the ways trade unions deal with the present degradation of working conditions and the way we can conceptualise living labour and its defense as an integral part of the ecological struggle.

## Rethinking sovereignty and / as emancipation

**Panagiotis Sotiris (Independent researcher)**

The question of sovereignty has returned in contemporary debates, both theoretical and political. From the erosion of sovereignty that is inherent in the European Integration Process, to the emergence of various forms of populist movements that present themselves as champions of national sovereignty and the debates around borders and immigration, the very notion of sovereignty has become a contested terrain. Moreover, reclaiming popular sovereignty has become one of the demands of mass movements against austerity, especially in the European context. Is such a demand compatible with emancipation, or, to put in different ways, is it possible to think popular sovereignty in a communist horizon? Or, in contrast, every reference to sovereignty one way or the other undermines the necessary universalist element that a project of emancipation requires in order to avoid falling back into new forms of exclusion and in the long run oppression? To deal with these questions we will try to follow two different, yet interconnected paths. One is to go back to Spinoza's highly original materialist and relational conception of political forms and consequently sovereignty. The other is an attempt to rethink through Gramsci and his conception of the potential hegemony of the subaltern. In both paths the aim is to rethink the constant effectivity of social antagonism in the constitution of modern political forms, including the nation and the people and to rethink the possibility of a struggle for popular sovereignty that is, at the same time a struggle for social transformation. This links sovereignty to questions of democracy, de-linking from imperialism and collective experimentation. In such a perspective sovereignty ceases to be a neutral term and become linked exactly to the question of a potential hegemony of the subaltern. In such a perspective we are talking about an antagonistic emancipatory, democratic and transformative exercise of sovereignty, which is also a practice of emancipation as work in progress to borrow a phrase from Fr. Lordon. This also enables us to find the universalist element necessary neither in some abstract moral imperative, nor in a procedural conception of democratic rules of the game, but in the very material dynamic of struggles for transformation, in the traces of communism in any attempt to create new forms of unity of the people against capital. It is here, in such an agonistic conception of subalternity, as common condition and common struggle, that we can think required is a post-national conception of the people.

## Althusser's Revisions: Texts, Concepts, Positions

Despina Paraskeva-Veloudogianni (National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Department of Political Science and Public Administration), Warren Montag () Giorgos Kalampokas () Alexander Gorman ()

In this panel we will revisit a series of Althusser's main concepts, such as "ideology", "subjection", "overdetermination", and "encounter", focusing on some of Althusser's key texts, and especially "On the Reproduction of Capitalism", "Ideology and the Ideological State Apparatuses", "Contradiction and Overdetermination", and "The Underground Current of the Materialism of the Encounter". We aim at tracing possible revisions, stemming either from silences or contradictions, and indicating possible syntheses between these concepts.

Resistance, Revolution and the ISAs: On Two Texts by Althusser Warren Montag Despite the canonical status of Althusser's Ideology and the Ideological State Apparatuses in a wide range of academic fields in the English-speaking world, Sur la reproduction (On the Reproduction of Capitalism), the full manuscript, published posthumously in 1995 (and in English translation in 2014), from which Althusser extracted the ISAs essay, has attracted relatively little attention. This is particularly surprising given the significant differences not only in the scope of the two texts, but even more between the political and theoretical positions they articulate. Of these differences, none is more striking than that involving the questions of resistance, revolt and revolution. In the ISAs essay (60 pages), the word revolution occurs 10 times, in every case it referring to past revolutions: the French and the Russian. In contrast, revolution appears in On the Reproduction of Capitalism (218 pages) 280 times. In most cases, the longer text refers to revolution as a project, the project of a proletarian politics, and Althusser devotes an entire chapter to The Reproduction of the Relations of Production and Revolution. Further, while Althusser declares that while the Ideological State Apparatuses, Althusser reproduce the relations of subjection, in doing so they also produce ideological by-products, not only different from, but opposed to, the objectives they exist to carry out. The notion of by-product gives the original text a dialectical dimension by concretizing the inescapable emergence of contradiction even in the operation of the ISAs. Without these by-products, Althusser tells us, neither revolt nor the acquisition of revolutionary consciousness nor revolution would be possible. Althusser removed it completely from the ISAs essay, thereby allowing, or encouraging, it to be read as a functionalist account of capitalism. I want to compare the relevant passages in the two texts to determine both the causes and effects of Althusser's excision of struggle.

Tracing the Link between Legal and Educational Ideology Despina Paraskeva-Veloudogianni In Philosophy for non-Philosophers, Althusser underlines the fact that the secret of the capitalist state, residing in the relation between the immediate producer and the means of production, is expressed in the form of the legal relation, which is inseparable from legal ideology. Legal ideology is thus highlighted as the founding moment of bourgeois ideology, and hence of the capitalist state. As a matter of fact, the attribution of such a central role to legal ideology can already be observed in On Reproduction, where Althusser elaborates on the development and effects of the systematicity and the formalism of law. In

this manuscript, Althusser also highlights the central role of the educational ISA, stating that, at the dawn of modern capitalism, school replaced church in its dominant role, taking over the impartation of skills, of know-how, and of the *savoir-faire* necessary for the function of the capitalist relations. A few pages later, Althusser speaks of two instances of dominance, each in its sphere and role, referring to the educational ISA and legal ideology, and of a sort of connection that is beginning to emerge between them. It is interesting though to note that, in the excerpts of the manuscript published in 1970 as *Ideology and the Ideological State Apparatuses*, while the role of educational ideology is still accentuated, Althusser's elaborations on law are absent, despite the writer's declaration at the beginning of the essay that an analysis on law will follow. How should we interpret the omission of such an important theoretical element in the published text and what are the theoretical effects of this omission on the debates surrounding the Althusserian notion of ideology and ISAs? Is it worth returning to the Althusser's initial account to determine whether an inner relationship between legal and educational ideology can be found there or whether we should treat the omission of the elaborations on law as a correction of the initial manuscript, in which case we should accept the omission of law and restrict ourselves to the educational ISA? Can we even speak of legal ideology as the founding ideology of the capitalist state, while at the same time identifying educational ideology as the central ideology of our era, or has Althusser produced a contradiction acknowledged by him only through the omission of law from the later version?

Towards a concept of overdetermined encounter? Giorgos Kalampokas The concept of overdetermination has been usually read as a rather ambiguous concept in Althusser's work. Having been borrowed by Freud's psychoanalytic theory, it was used by Althusser largely around 1965 to describe the type of immanent causality which is inherent to social structures, as well as the perplexity (and complexity) of relations between different instances of the social whole, famously conceptualized as the lonely time of the last instance that never comes. It is in this respect that the concept of overdetermination was used to the formulation of what could be addressed to as Althusser's theory of the conjunction in the famous *For Marx* pages: in October 1917, all contradictions of the Russian social formation were merged in a rupture unity that made the Russian revolution possible. All in all, whatever its exact theoretical status may be, overdetermination seems to be present only in the premise of a structural world, a world full of structural causality, let alone a world of the Althusserian past; That of an early, structuralist, Althusser. On the other hand, encounter, has always been a concept grasped in somewhat of a liberal manner, perhaps in the way of an idealism of liberty as Althusser himself warns us in his introductory text on the underground current of materialism of the encounter. Elements of independent social descent, elements with no previous affinity, come together into a completely aleatory encounter that takes place into the void. A void, that is, a space empty of causality. But, what type of void can that be? Is there a historical void ever possible or is it that Althusser suggests a philosophical void; A void in respect to a structure that has not yet emerged? So, can there be any theoretical validity to an attempt of bringing together these two extremely strong Althusserian concepts, or such an attempt can only suggest a play with words? In this paper, we will try to provide such a reading, where overdetermination and encounter are brought together under a possible new conceptualization; that of the overdetermined encounter, which, we argue, can perhaps be

used both to describe Althusser's theory of the actual, historical, beginning of the capitalist mode of production, and also mark the emergence of political subjectivity that is necessary for any aleatory encounter to take hold.

**Ideology in the Age of Monsters: Rethinking the State in the Age of Extinction Capitalism**  
Alexander Gorman

Since the publication of Louis Althusser's 1970 essay, *Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses*, inquiries into the nature of the contemporary capitalist state have centered the function of ideology and ideological state apparatuses in securing the reproduction of the capitalist mode of production. Pressing beyond the classical Leninist model of the repressive state, Althusser posited the existence of ideological state apparatuses that run on ideology rather than coercion. From schools and the family, to the communicative and cultural apparatuses, and ultimately to the parliamentary and representative institutions of the state themselves, Althusser helped to clarify the extensive role of the state in reproducing the relations of production characteristic of capitalism. Ideology functions to secure the consent of the people, enshrining relations of domination and legitimating the violence and coercion that are a necessary function of any social formation predicated upon the exploitation of one class by another. Althusser's contributions to Marxist State Theory notwithstanding, today we face a new set of questions concerning the State in the conjuncture that motivates a rethinking of the relationship between the repressive and ideological apparatuses. As the liberal-technocratic ruling bloc undergoes legitimation crisis and an extreme right appears that is prepared to contest state power, the new modes of surveillance and border control regimes that ordo-liberalism raised to serve intensified exploitation appear as readymade tools for a new mode of fascism. We must therefore reconsider the intensified function of the repressive apparatuses as an effect of the breakdown of the ideological hegemony of the neoliberal order. Taking the reorganizations of the capitalist state in the 20th century as a guide to thinking our current crisis, we must consider how the form of the contemporary alliance between the far-right and liberal-technocrats is driven by the intensifying ecological consequences of persistent capitalist exploitation on a warming planet. An analysis of contemporary neo-fascism that centers upon renewed nationalist and patriarchal discourses that fails to recognize its emergence as a means of resolving the crises brought on by climate change necessarily fails. As warming renders the objective conditions of reproduction increasingly tenuous across large swaths of the planet (particularly in regions destabilized by contemporary imperialisms), we must examine the rise of neo-fascism represents an ideological effect of climate crisis and examine how this crisis has driven the re-configuration of the State Apparatuses in the epoch of Extinction Capitalism. The central question which I seek to address concerns how climate crisis induces changes in the relative dynamics between ideological and repressive apparatuses, how ideology facilitates transitions in the repressive apparatuses, and how examining these relations provides us with a more adequate theory of contemporary fascisms.

## Rediscovering Lenin: Dialectics of Revolution and Metaphysics of Domination

**Michael Brie (Institute for Critical Social Analysis at the Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung)**

As a Marxist historian educated in the official Marxism-Leninism of the East German academy, Michael Brie returns to Lenin and rediscovers him as a strategic socialist thinker through close examination of his collected works and correspondence. Brie opens with an analysis of Lenin's theoretical development between 1914 and 1917, in preparation for his critical decision to dissolve the Constituent Assembly in January 1918 in a struggle for power. This led from the dialectics of revolutionary practice and social analysis to a new understanding of socialism, which is compared and contrasted to the alternative Marxist ideas and conceptions of the state posited by Karl Kautsky and Rosa Luxemburg. Brie then moves to 1921, when Lenin begins a new stage of his theoretical development concerned with resolving the reversal of the revolution's aims and its results. This process remains unfinished, and the questions raised a hundred years ago remain: How can one intervene successfully and responsibly in social and political crises? What role do social science theories, ideological frameworks, and other practices play in transforming the economic, political and cultural power structures of a society? Brie concludes with a retrospective on the ideas developed by Marx and in the Second International, and their impact on Lenin's strategic thinking. Placing Lenin's writing itself in the foreground and arguing from inside his own self-learning, *Rediscovering Lenin* focuses on the reflective relationship between ideology, theory, and practice. The book will be published by Palgrave Macmillan on 8 November 2019.

## LEF vs. NEP: the case of the National Fabric Factory (Moscow, 1923-24)

**fleury marcela (Master's degree at the University of So Paulo)**

The paper will analyse the case of the constructivist-productivist experience of V. Stepanova and L. Popova, at the First Cotton-Printing Factory (Moscow, 1923-1924). The evolution of constructivism toward productivism, discussed since November 1921, led to the search of a convergence between artistic research and industrial work. However, not all experiences implied concrete changes in labour relations, since artists such as Malevich and Tatlin remained, even if within the factories, in the role of artists. Discussing the experience of both artists, Tarabukin affirmed in a conference in late 1921: () The artistic industry cultivated by applied artists embellishes, but does not change the forms of exterior life, while productivist mastery, when applied to all stages of manufacture of products, transforms, above all, work itself, by exercising its action not only on the products, but also on the producer: the worker. () Art thus understood is really capable of changing life, because it transforms the work, the foundation of our life, making it creative and joyful. The art of the future will not be something pleasant, it will be work transformed. 1 In view of

this debate, has the above-mentioned experience of Stepanova and Popova constituted another case of applied art or has it effectively moved towards what Tarabukin defined as productivist mastery? The analysis will seek to answer this question based on the discussion initiated in the LEF journal among constructivists-productivists about this experience. Based on this case and on related debates, the paper will establish, according to texts by Tretiakov, 2 the counterpoint to the new contradictions generated by the NEP (New Economic Policy) that, from 1921, resumed elements of the free market and of the capitalist organisation of labour. Finally, the paper will raise the question, from texts published in LEF in the same period, whether or not the productivist movement, in line with Tarabukin and with previous experiences of the Proletkult, took concrete and effective steps towards a new organisation of work.

## **Gone with the wind : a farewell to the populist moment ? An essay on sovereignty, class and hegemony.**

**Gabriel MIGHELI (none)**

The populist moment, as coined by Chantal Mouffe, was supposed to characterize a recomposition of the traditional left-right political divide around a people-elite antagonism, which aimed to overthrow neoliberalism and recompose popular sovereignty. This article seeks to add to our understanding of hegemony by considering how left-populism's sovereignty was undermined by its ambiguous stand towards class struggle in its attempt to form a counter-hegemonic block. As shown by these groups poor results in the most recent European elections, in which they were outperformed by Far Right populist movements, one may now consider a lasting farewell to the populist moment at least for the left, which raises the question of its alternative for the left. A study of European populist movements, through the specific case of the french political movement La France Insoumise is drawn upon to explore in which ways the left-right divide may still prevail and why populist movements quickly fade away after seizing, or trying to seize institutional power. It is argued that the rise of left-wing populism is an expression of the inherent difficulties to recompose a class subjectivity and a revolutionary leadership of the workers movement in the neoliberal era. Thus, one must take into account the reconfiguration of the State system as well as the atomization of the working class in order to unify a counter-hegemonic block centered around workers' hegemony.

## **21st Century Queer Struggle**

**Gus Breslauer (Houston Socialists), Grietje Sabra (City of Law, London) Rhiannon Blake () Jules Joanne Gleeson ()**

This panel provides perspectives from contemporary queer marxism, addressing both historical and strategic questions that face revolutionaries intent on integrating workers' and gender struggles.



Gus: Strategy, Memory and Queer Revolution - A Revisionist View of the AIDS

Movement The AIDS movement and ACT UP produced what Peter Drucker called the largest wave of LGBT activism since the 1970s. Because this is in our recent historic memory, this movement was well documented. The direct action tactics and strategy produced from these queers fighting for their lives became a major influence on the left at large. However, specifically how this particular historic memory is remembered is critical. Because of the sensitive nature of the subject matter and the courage of its participants, there is a hesitancy to look at the class politics of the AIDS movement critically and understand the failures, defeats, betrayals and fall-outs. This submission will seek to overcome this hesitancy, and hopefully de-mystify and bring clarity to the AIDS movement. From this re-reading we can derive important strategic lessons for everyone today.

Grietje: Towards an anti-racist Queer Marxism What Marxist theory lacks in explicit theorisation of subject formation and fetishisation, queer theory can supply. Where queer theory risks losing sight of structure and descend into identity politics, Marxist theory can provide the backstop. Where both Marxist and queer theory are colour blind and blind to the racialization of classed subjects, building on the Black Marxism of Cedric Robinson, Angela Davis, Robin Kelley and others, and black queer and trans scholarship (Audre Lorde, C. Riley Snorton e.o.), the Queer Marxism of Kevin Floyd and Nat Raha, anti-racist queer theory can elucidate the roles racialization and gendering in the global economy past and present. Where Marxist theory of ideology fails to question, and to disrupt, the basic conceptual building blocks of a mainstream narrative of the social-economic world, and building on the work of authors such as Keeanga-Yamahatta Taylor and Roderick Ferguson, a queer antiracist Marxist theory should enhance the generative and transformative potential of Marxism. Where these theories are blind to the role of law in constructing and continually reproducing normative subjection, and with that, racialised and gendered distribution, building on the work of authors like Amna Akbar and Angela Harris, queer antiracist Marxist theory of law should assist in disrupting and smashing the existing order.

Rhiannon: Queers against the family Abolition of the family is a now seldom focused upon communist goal called for throughout the writings of Marx and Engels. Family abolition today is a goal that recognises the harms and traumas that capitalism inflicts upon the developing child via social reproduction, harms that the nuclear familiar concentrate and exacerbate with or without intention. Liberalism has in some ways reformed the family in terms of access to divorce, contraception and marriage equality yet despite such changes the family remains a site of exploitation with the second shift still holding relevance despite a perception of shrinking significance of the role of the wife/housewife. Furthermore, we now see these reforms attacked by reactionary revanchism. And for many queer youths, such reforms did little to prevent psychological, physical or emotional harms anyway. Queers as well as the left are often blamed by reactionaries for the breakdown of the family and its values this paper argues that such a breakdown is necessary for queer emancipation and should be a central aim for both queer and communist activists and thinkers. It also considers the notion of found or created family, often synonymous with community and the importance this has not only for queers, but also as and for the basis of a social or revolutionary movement

## Capitalism, climate crisis and democracy: emerging dynamics?

**James Goodman (Climate Justice Research Centre, University of Technology Sydney)**

Continuing capitalist climate crisis politicises socio-ecological relations, and creates new fields of socio-political contention. The exercise of intentional climate agency, made necessary by climate change, politicizes social relations with climate. As the crisis forces emission reduction into the political process, state structures are disrupted, and a cascade of democratising forces emerges. The paper explores this changing relationship between climate and democracy under capitalism. It focuses on four aspects of contention. First, in the immediate sense of climate impacts, climate change is de-democratising, both in terms of negating living environments and inviting emergency and exclusion. Against this there is a politicization of impacts, for instance through the climate vulnerable countries, though indigenous peoples organisations, and increasingly through labour unions. Second, failing policy exposes the limits of liberal democratic political institutions as they display a structural incapacity to act against the dominant fossil fuel sector. Deep contradictions erupt at the centre of the formal political process, and in the institutions of the state, especially between climate and energy policy. Third failing policy politicizes the carbon cycle across society, from extraction to burning, to impacts and sinks. Social mobilisations over climate change create new subjectivities, constituencies and blocs, articulating new demands. These find traction in the social relations of energy transition, around agendas for energy democracy and the idea of a green new deal. Fourth, the persistent and intensifying crisis politicizes climate itself, as a social product. Contention over climate and accumulation opens up, with concepts of living well, de-growth, 'bio-civilisation' posed against models for renewed accumulation through a green economy'. The paper analyses these four aspects of climate agency, debating whether they create distinctly new forms of contention in the emerging worlds of capitalist climate crisis.

## Why Charles Taylor Is Worth to be studied in China?

**Chengbing Wang (School of Philosophy, Beijing Normal University, Beijing, China)**

At the end of the 20th century Chinese scholars began to translate Canadian philosopher Charles Taylors book *The Sources of the Self* into Chinese, as one of the translators of the book, I had been searching for the significance of my work. There have been many translations of the works by Taylor since the end of last century, and there are frequent questions from the academic circles about the significance of Charles Taylor in the context of contemporary China. Personally, I think Taylor is important for Chinese scholars mainly because: Firstly, Taylors thought on identity is the key western academic resource for the research on contemporary crisis of identity in todays China. The Chinese scholars have regarded the issue of identity as the problem the contemporary Chinese people have to face since 1990. So the issues of identity have been a topic discussed by the Chinese scholars from the fields of philosophy, political science, education, sociology, psychology, media, etc.

The scholars selected Charles Taylor and British sociologist Anthony Giddens as the main western academic resources among the various resources. Secondly, Taylors philosophy may help the Chinese scholars to be awareness of the possible malaises of modernity. As we know, Taylor explored the malaises such as the extreme individualism and the instrumental reason of modernity. Taylors serious criticism of modernity may lead the Chinese scholars to realize the complicated and various affects from the modernity. Thirdly, Taylors sincere reflection on the spiritual crisis of the secular ages in the west world emphases the function of the value in this age. Although we do not worry about the secular age in China, but we will consider the relations between traditional Chinese culture and the contemporary culture, the relations among pre-modern thoughts, modern thoughts and postmodern thoughts in the globalization. Fourthly, the commonalities between Taylors communitarian thoughts and the traditional Confucian focus on virtue, community and social interaction should be a field in which we may do collaborating and comparative research.

## **Apocalypse and Marital Bliss: Unity in Contradiction?**

**Peter Drucker (IPPE)**

Among the apocalyptic threats which disaster-prone capitalism is foisting on the world, specific persecutions aimed at queers occupy a notably nasty place, while poor and marginalized queers are particularly subject to all the other threats as well. Yet the same world order offers relative comfort to a layer of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois gays and lesbians, mainly but not exclusively in imperialist countries. How can these two realities coexist on the same planet? For bourgeois liberals, gay normality is not only the present of a fortunate few but the destined future of LGBTI people worldwide, to be secured for example by refusing to stay in the luxury hotels owned by the sultan of Brunei (a form of solidarity that most of us can effortlessly join in!). For a certain call-out culture among some anarchist-leaning queers, by contrast, a great many white, cisgender gays and lesbians are complicit in homonormativity and homonationalism and feature mainly in solidarity campaigns as targets. From a Marxist standpoint, the great majority of LGBTI people in imperialist countries should be counted as part of the working class and its allies, and should unite with the most persecuted queers in a worldwide struggle for sexual liberation that must ultimately be anti-capitalist. But how to forge this global unity between LGBTIQ people in imperialist countries, increasingly susceptible to Islamophobia and other homonationalist temptations, and in dominated countries, often faced with paralyzing repression? This paper attempts to assess what is and is not practical politics in this challenging conjuncture.

## New Ways of Reading Marx's Capital

Jim Kincaid ()

A project of utopian politics today will need new ways of reading Marx. Here I consider three recent developments which are revitalising our engagement with Marx's economic writings. First, concepts of emergence and complexity now widely used in biology, ecology and cognitive science. Individual agents with causal powers are seen as competing and cooperating in ways which create structures and constraints at collective level: as agents get feedback they adapt their strategies. Recent studies of Marx's use of accountancy categories (e.g. by Rob Bryer) can lead to a clearer appreciation of Marx's analysis of capitalist agency in contending with the law of value and implementing the linkages between labour-power, time, and money. The literature on time as a category in Marx, valuable though it is, has underplayed the temporality of decision-making by agents, and the associated dimensions of uncertainty and risk. To see capitalism as a complex adaptive system also has implications for transformative action which are only now starting to be explored. Second, recent scholarship has powerfully documented metabolic rift and associated themes as central in Marx's work. This, in turn, has inspired a broader reappraisal of Marx's materialism. The role of use-value and of concrete labour in Marx's value theory is being reassessed, and critical questions raised about influential interpretations of Capital such as those of the new dialectic school and the neue Marx-Lectre. Third, the poetics of Capital. How the textual and metaphorical strategies which Marx uses play into the political objectives of his economic analysis. Materialist ways of reading Capital as a text are being revised, increasingly influenced by the treatment - in literary and film theory, psychoanalysis, and media studies - of themes such as representation, desire, repression, and political unconscious.

## Alienation and Exploitation: The Contours of Estrangement

Paul Russell Reynolds (Reader in Sociology and Social Philosophy Social Sciences, Edge Hill University, and Historical Materialism Editorial Board)

The concept of alienation is generally regarded as a prominent feature of Marx's earlier, philosophical (sometimes regarded as immature) work. It tends to presuppose both a sophisticated explanation of the terms of estrangement under capitalism, and an underlying naturalistic pre-capitalist nature to humans that is a counterpoint to historical conjunctures and contexts. Likewise, the concept of exploitation develops and matures through Marx's work as the concepts of labour power, the labour theory of value and the political economy of capitalism develops through to Capital. In this paper I survey some recent studies in Alienation (Sayers, Jaeggi, Meszaros, Torrance, Wendling, Fischbach, Jameson and Ollman) and argue three points: 1. Marx's concept of alienation is best understood as a materialist and dialectical reading of its Hegelian forerunner that composes a set of tensions, contradictions and tendencies to social self-organisation and practice, rather than a more static deviation from some naturalised human condition. 2. That Marx's more mature political economy only explicitly spoke less to alienation because

Marx recognised the centrality of exploitation within a materialist experience of alienation<sup>3</sup>. The challenge for contemporary Marxists is to retain the emphasis on a materialist alienation/exploitation, whilst understanding and using the insightful dialectical tensions of the earlier iteration of alienation in understanding the current complexities of cultural and political differentiation and intersectional identities

## **Queer Materialism: Identity, Practice and materiality in Sexual Politics**

**Paul Russell Reynolds (Reader in Sociology and Social Philosophy Social Sciences, Edge Hill University, and Historical Materialism Editorial Board)**

This paper is the fourth in a series presented at HM conferences through 2017 and 2018. After the briefest reprise of a thesis of queer materialism that employs frameworks adapted from the British Marxist Historians to provide a critical and dialectical framework for understanding sexual politics without insisting on a fusion of queer and marxist traditions, this paper will address the implications of such an argument. It will focus on three areas: 1. It juxtaposes the importance but limitations of identity within contemporary identity/intersectional politics and argues for the necessity of constituting sexual politics in the centrality of practice 2. It argues that queer Marxist and socialist politics have often failed to move beyond liberation struggles to understand the need to constitute sexual politics within practices that require both an understanding of ethics and values and power and materiality, rather than the breaking of identity-oriented prejudices only to accept others along Rubin-esque 'outsider' 'perversions' 3. Such an analysis opens up the necessity of seeing a Marxist erotics as the next stages in understanding and sketching what an emancipated sexual politics would look like that both promotes imaginative bodily pleasures and provides a basis for the interplay between personal play and the self-organisational priorities and values of a socialist society.

## **The Limits of Student Struggle: Evaluating Occupation and Sit-in Tactics in the US (JHU), UK (Goldsmiths) and Chile (UCH)**

**Mitchell Cram (Johns Hopkins University), Mariam Banahi (Johns Hopkins University) Sebastian Link (Johns Hopkins University Popular Power Research / Fragua Centro de Investigacin)**

The sit-in and occupation by students, like the strike at the workplace by workers, involves territorial and discursive control over a space. There, students are able to challenge university control by establishing rules outside of institutional hierarchies. By disrupting the everyday production of the university, we understand the sit-in and occupation as tactics employed to increase bargaining power vis-a-vis university authorities. In addition to these immediate tactical concerns, both sit-ins and occupations need to be understood as part of longer processes: as an intensive formation through which new political subjectivities are formed. In this panel, we discuss three contemporary student

movements: the 2019 sit-in and occupation at Johns Hopkins University; the 2019 occupation at Goldsmiths, University of London; and the 2011 student movement at the University of Chile (UCH). Our presentations address how, depending on the context of the struggle, different structures were highlighted as more central to organizing and ideological orientations. At JHU, race occupied a central place in the struggle, not only against the university's role in reproducing white supremacy, but also by addressing racist and classist orientations within the movement. At the UCH, in contrast, class as stratification took centrality, particularly through strategies aimed at building loyalty with worker and poor culture. Despite their different orientations and struggles, these movements took place at elitist, white-led universities. If the occupation as a tactic provides the conditions for new organizational forms that challenge the inherited practices of participants (i.e. racist, classist, patriarchal, and homophobic practices), then the failures in overcoming these contradictions reveal the limitations of anti-racist struggle on such campuses. For example, the lack of a coherent, long-term strategy in the JHU occupation was not a shortcoming so much as an objective limitation of a student group that coalesced around a contingent anti-private police, anti-police brutality, and anti-deportation platform. In the wake of a police raid and forced end to the occupation, those contingencies have disappeared. Our panel therefore seeks not only to locate the history and experience of our struggles within a larger periodization of campus activism, but to theorize the possibilities for movements post-occupation practices.

## **What, if Anything, is Wrong with Sovereignty? A Critical Stance towards the Schmittian-Biopolitical Approach**

**Giorgio Cesarale (University Ca' Foscari of Venice)**

As is well-known, Agamben's analysis of sovereignty in *Homo sacer* rests on the Foucauldian idea, according to which modern biopolitics would have undermined the ancient image of sovereignty: while the latter coincided with the right to take life or let live, in modern times sovereignty fosters life or disallows it to the point of death. Agamben, though, dates back to Aristotle the philosophical genesis of biopolitics: already in Aristotle, man would be an animal whose politics places his existence as a living being in question. On the other hand, this backdating is dependent upon a different notion of sovereign power, which founds the law on the *exceptio*, exception, and not, as Foucault thought, on the disciplinary power of norms. Agamben owes to Carl Schmitt the definition of sovereignty: sovereign is he who decides on the state of exception. But what is missed in this definition and understanding of sovereignty? What is the legacy, in the arc spanning from Rousseau to Hegel and Marx, of modern rethinking of sovereignty which is neglected by biopolitics?



## **Marx and Nature: A Vygotskian perspective**

**Kostas Skordoulis (National & Kapodistrian University of Athens)**

This paper is going to critically review existing literature on Marx and the concept of nature in view of the current debate on ecosocialism. The paper is going to argue against the commonly held views for the social construction of nature bringing forward the socio-historical perspective as articulated by the Russian Marxist Lev Vygotsky. Finally, the paper is going to link the discussion on nature with the discussion on natural science commenting on the ideas of the Left Vienna Circle.

## **Post-Work Utopian Societies, and Ernst Blochs Writings on Work**

**Henry Holland (Member of the editorial board of the Collected Works of Rosa Luxemburg.)**

Debates about post-work, postcapitalist societies must include analysis of how current working populations feel about their work. In many different parts of the world, we are socialized to feel boredom and disgusts Ernst Bloch put it when, short or long-term, we cannot take part in wage labour. Reasons for this can be unemployment, illness, being forced into unpaid care work for a friend or family member, or lack of state childcare. Simultaneously, Bloch's concrete utopian vision harnesses the medieval myth of Cockaigne, the promised land of sensory and sexual plenty, to provide an attractive and transgressive picture of the future, and to motivate people to participate in overcoming capitalism. He cross-fertilizes these contents with fountains as diverse as (fictionalized) autobiographical writing on taboo-breaking sexuality, and philosophical-theological studies on leaders of the medieval German peasantry. Bloch's Thomas Mntzer as Theologian of Revolution (1921), as yet unpublished in English translation, is devoted to one leader in the German Peasants War of 1524-25. Reconsidering historical groups of workers very different to ourselves is an essential step on the journey to any postcapitalist future. A major challenge in Bloch's writings on work and the postcapitalist future remain his ideas on indigeneity and a feeling or sense of belonging among working people and populations. These remain contentious concepts in all accounts of post-work societies, whether Marxist or non-Marxist. If they are finally to be refuted, they can hardly be ignored.

## **Class formation between the posts: neoliberalism and uneven development in the Second and Third Worlds**

**jana tsoneva (KOI books), Kanishka Goonewardena (University of Toronto) Elia El Khazan (The socialist forum)**

Exactly 10 years ago, in their influential article Thinking between the posts, Chary and Verdery urged scholars of postsocialism and postcolonialism to explore jointly their

respective fields. All too often has this been done from a postcolonial perspective, depicting the former Soviet satellites as little more than colonial hinterlands of a veritable Soviet empire. However, from the perspective of a history of neoliberalism, they share much more in common. This panel explores in a comparative way the historical course of neoliberal development and class formation in two post-colonial and a post-socialist country: Sri Lanka, Lebanon and Bulgaria. We zoom in on countries faulted as peripheral, backward, underdeveloped and late to capitalism, even though in all three countries the neoliberal reforms began in earnest much earlier than in the so-called developed world. In addition, their reforms have been so radical and advanced (i.e. flat tax in Bulgaria) so as to make a joke of the proverbial project of catching up with the West that informed Transitological scholarship in the 1990s. In reality, the West seems to be lagging behind the Global South and the ex-Socialist Bloc in terms of the relative force and radicality of neoliberal reform. Some of the questions we will explore in this panel touch on the relation between neoliberalism and class formation, on the one hand, and neoliberalism and ethno-nationalism, on the other. How does (neo)liberal capitalist development occur in places marked by an underdeveloped or barely existing bourgeoisie? What is the social base upon which such neoliberal reform is predicated? What kinds of political-ideological formations are accompanied by these neoliberal policies? Do neoliberalization agendas in postsocialist and postcolonial conditions lend themselves to comparative analyses in terms of class, ideology and political movements?

The problem of the middle class in post-1989 Bulgaria  
Jana Tsoneva  
My contribution explains the case of middle-class formation in a peripheral country: Bulgaria between 2002-2013. Based on low wages and low taxes, the countrys political economy mitigates against the emergence of broad middle habitually associated with the developed welfare states of the West. 80% of the working population ekes out less than 500 EUR monthly, making Bulgaria the poorest EU-member state. After three decades of neoliberal reforms, the countrys class structure resembles that of a Third world country: a tiny opulent minority sits atop a vast ocean of poverty. The unpopularity of this mode of economic development prompted the liberal ideologues of the Transition to create a social base for the liberal reforms in the early 2000s, a project that culminated with the 2013 anti-corruption protests. The 2013 protests portended the birth of a self-identified middle class. This paper offers a way of thinking about the problem of the middle class that breaks with the double objectivism of structural and mechanical theories extrapolating its existence from the laws of capital (i.e. J. Urry), on the one hand, and from liberal stratification theories which rely on arbitrary income brackets to discern its existence, on the other. Because of the strong emphasis on class polarization, inherited from the Manifesto, the middle class has traditionally posed a challenge Marxists have tended to overcome via a recourse to Weberian prosthetics (i.e. Olin Wright). Thus, a subjectivist approach to social class akin to E.P. Thompsons is well suited to understand this formation but I supplement it with elements from Pierre Bourdieus sociology of class and Ernesto Laclaus theory of populism. This theoretical amalgam offers a polemical slant to theorizing class formation, resonating with some early remarks on the political nature of social class by Karl Marx.

Origins of the Present Crisis in Sri Lanka: Class, Culture and Space  
Kanishka Goonewardena  
This paper outlines an approach to present political contradictions in Sri Lanka by situating

them in local and global dynamics of neoliberal development. The so-called open economy was unleashed in this underdeveloped nation-state in 1977, even before the word neoliberalism had entered popular discourse, by a right-wing regime blessed by Washington. Indeed, 1977 was a pivotal historical moment for Sri Lanka—a turn away from state-led development and import-substitution industrialization in a predominantly agricultural economy based on primary commodities (tea, coconut, rubber), towards a neoliberal reformatting of the state and economy anchored on privatisation, deregulation and cuts to social welfare. While the open markets of 1977 inaugurated a new consumer culture based on an unprecedented influx of imported goods such as televisions and automobiles, the neoliberal regimes of the time also succeeded in effectively eliminating traditional left parties from parliamentary politics. This defeat of the left was accompanied by a corresponding rise of both majoritarian and minoritarian ethno-nationalisms (Sinhala, Tamil and most recently Muslim), while Sri Lanka became increasingly caught up in post-1989 geo-political contestations involving major regional and global powers: USA, EU, India and China. With reference to these global and local conjunctural factors, the focus of this paper falls on the cultural-ideological expressions and spatial divisions of class relations and attendant ethnic tensions of the neoliberal era in Sri Lanka, with special attention to the cosmopolitan liberalism of neoliberal ideologues and the ethno-nationalisms of those discontented with neoliberal globalization.

Beginning at the end: Class formation and late capitalism in Lebanon Elia El Khazan Since its post-independence era, Lebanon has historically been the favored site for consecutive laissez-faire and neoliberal experimentation. The erection of a robust banking sector that transcends national capital alongside the formation of the state has been one of the hallmarks of state and class formation in Lebanon. It is this imbrication of fleeing Palestinian capital in the 1940s and surplus capital from the Gulf from the 1970s onwards with an increasingly precarized migrant workforce that makes Lebanon a microcosm of larger neoliberal regional and global transformations and a laboratory for the sedimentation of geopolitical networks along sectarian lines. Following from Fanon's concept of the native bourgeoisie, this paper will present the features of class formation in Lebanon in its post-independence era all through the neoliberal restructuring imposed after the end to the civil war. Using Fawwaz Traboulsi and Hicham Saffiedine's accounts of the overlapping inception of financial institutions and state formation, this paper will trace the interconnected networks between ruling class and native and regional financial capital to emphasize the historical role of the native bourgeoisie in post-colonial nation state: the role of intermediary. This paper will try to make sense of the recent growing ethnonationalism and racism within the context of an increasingly precarized and hyper-exploited migrant population. I will try to show that this rise in racism is not coincidental but a direct consequence of successive restructuring neoliberal schemes that have spatially displaced countless economic crises onto pools of reserve refugee and migrant labour armies. Elia El Khazan is an active member of the Lebanon-based revolutionary socialist organisation The Socialist Forum and an editorial member of its publication Al-Manshour. His writing has appeared in the organization's publication, Jacobin Magazine, Salvage Quarterly and the Historical Materialism blog.

## A Dead Head Sticker on a Cadillac: how the 1960s haunted neoliberalism.

**Toby Manning (Freelance)**

This paper will explore the 1980s neoliberal attack on the 60s counterculture, and how Thatcher and Reagan's ideology was channeled by 1980s pop music, which can seem a catalogue of neoliberal capitulation and celebration. (Madonna's *Material Girl* is the paradigm here.) By the 90s, the countercultural legacy had been successfully neutralized, so Britpop and the Beatles Anthology project could offer a depoliticised simulacra of the 60s, paralleling the Blair project's reduction of left utopianism to gesture and image. During the 80s, however, this countering of the counterculture was still in process and pockets of cultural resistance paralleled the political resistance of the US air traffic controllers strike, the UK miners strike, US AIDS activism and UK protests against Section 28 etc. This paper will take Don Henley's 1984 yacht-rock hit *Boys of Summer* as paradigmatic of how the 80s were, in fact, haunted by the counterculture. The paper will also examine David Bowie and *Queens Under Pressure*, Stevie Nicks' *Stand Back*, Prince's Paisley Park and Carly Simon's *Coming Around Again*. In these songs we encounter the ghost of countercultural utopianism, not as mourning, as Mark Fisher seems to suggest, but as Raymond Williams says in *The Town and the Country*, as aspiration, a resource of hope.

## EXTINCTION POLITICS

**James Trafford (University for the Creative Arts)**

This paper examines the nexus of climate crises and migratory movements and discourses in relation to English climate activist group, Extinction Rebellion (XR). XR are a group of liberal activists and academics engaged in non-violent civil disobedience: shutting down bridges and roads across London; actively seeking mass arrest; striving for media spectacle. For XR, climate breakdown is the fault of corrupt governments and a humanity that is killing the planet, which we need to save from extinction. As such, XR's post-political universalism and apocalyptic discourse exacerbates and obscures the temporal and spatial distribution of the impacts of climate change, whilst also diverting from consideration the colonial and neo-colonial practices that have brought them about. These configurations are potentially naturalized by positioning climate as fundamentally supra-political. For example, XR explicitly tethers climate activism to the horizon of the nation that climate breakdown is destroying this nation, its peoples, our ecosystems and the future of generations to come. By asking what the real conditions of possibility are for this green nationalism, I argue that XR relies on a specific constellation of national identity, bordering practices, and transnational connections that produce the modern nation-state through the exploitation and attempted containment of the global majority. Analysing the current configuration of forces within which XR sits not only illuminates its disregard for racialized patterns of climate change, it also shows how it supports protectionist narratives that connect together migration, population growth, and sustainability for the nation. Resultantly, I argue that environmentalism without aiming to end border imperialism and

the differential vulnerabilities of the global south upholds self-preservation that unwittingly culminates in slow eugenicism.

## **Racism, alienation, oppression and exploitation**

**Phil Griffiths (University of Southern Queensland)**

This paper will attempt to contribute to the further development of a Marxist theory of modern racism. It seeks to build on the work of Abigail B Bakan and others. Unlike many theorists, Bakan rejected the methodology of seeing capitalism as a series of plural structures, seeking instead to ground her analysis of racism in an understanding of capitalism as a totality and focusing on its core features, in particular the alienation, oppression and exploitation of the working class as a whole and the role they play in facilitating and fomenting racism. This paper will attempt to extend her analysis by distinguishing between the roles racism plays for the ruling class and the role of alienation and oppression in making possible the use of racism as part of bourgeois hegemony. It will also argue that alienation is not just a condition of capitalism, but one that is both resisted (by the working class) and consequently fought for and renewed by employers, ideologists and the state with racism one of their weapons. In the process I will draw on both recent episodes of political struggle in Australia, and conclusions I drew in researching a Marxist explanation for the development of the infamous White Australia policy.

## **From the national question to imperialism: Rosa Luxemburg and the world economy**

**Antonio Mota Filho (cole des Hautes études en Sciences Sociales (EHESS/Paris)  
Universidade Estadual de Campinas (Unicamp/Brazil))**

Rosa Luxemburg was an important economist and socialist militant of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Her early work analyzes the national question of Poland and marks intense controversy with sectors of the left that defended the independence of the country, then divided between Germany, Russia and the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The subject is developed in 1908 when the author seeks to systematize her formulations and presents them in the book *The National Question and Autonomy* and, diffusely in some other texts. For the author, the development of the capitalist mode of production had transcended national space and created a powerful world economy. For the author, this world capitalism demanded an international socialist struggle, which led her to strongly denounce nationalism and the right to self-determination of peoples. The present work aims to analyze how Rosa's analysis moves, throughout her formulations, from the Polish question towards a wider interpretation of world capitalism. To do so, we will analyze five texts of the author: her doctoral thesis "The industrial development of Poland" (1897), "The National Question and Autonomy" (1908), "Accumulation of Capital" (1913), "Junius Pamphlet" (1916) and the "Russian Revolution" (1918). As a conclusion, the paper points out that the theoretical nuances of Rosa's analysis accompanies the changes occurring in

the capitalist mode of production itself, which shows the historical basis of her theories. The paper is divided into six parts: introduction; the Polish case in "The Industrial Development of Poland"; the limits of self-determination of peoples; the national question and imperialism; the national question and the socialist revolution; and the conclusion.

## **The Rules of Reproduction of Capitalism: A Historicist Critique**

**Benno Teschke (Department of International Relations University of Sussex)**

Marxism has often been associated with two different legacies. The first rests on a strong exposition and critique of the logic of capitalism, which has been grounded in a systematic analysis of the laws of motion of capitalism as a system. The second legacy refers to a strong historicist perspective grounded in a conception of social relations and an emphasis on the centrality of power and social conflict to analyse history. In this article, we challenge the prominence of structural accounts of capitalism, which are inspired by the first of these legacies and argue for the need to radicalize the agent-centered and historicist contribution of Marx that derive from the second. To make this argument, we show how this tension between these legacies has played out within Political Marxism (PM). We proceed by critically exploring the increasing reliance on a structural conception of the rules of reproduction in later works of PMs early proponents and by some of its contemporary followers. This, we argue, has led to the reification of capitalism and a growing divide between theoretical premises and historical explanation. In response, we seek to return to the early historicist innovation of PM and to recover and develop its commitment to a more contextualised and open-ended interpretation of social conflicts. Through this internal critique and re-formulation of PM, we wish to open a broader debate within Marxism on the need for a more agency-based account of capitalism, which builds more explicitly on the concept of social relations.

## **Ecological Crisis and Crisis Theory: Integrating Political Ecology and Political Economy**

**James Andersoin (Queen's University Belfast)**

Drawing critically on various contemporary theorists including James O'Connor, John Foster, Neil Smith and David Harvey, and on classical Political Economy, this paper argues that capital accumulation produces both economic and ecological crises and ecological problems lead directly to wider economic and social crises. There is an increasing contradiction between the relentless imperative to accumulate capital through economic growth and the sustainability of the environment on which capitalism depends. Capitalism is the ecological problem. Accumulation crises are inherent in the capitalist system and its internal contradictions. They bring pressures and opportunities for re-organising or for politically transcending it. But ecological crises - now best exemplified by climate change but also by a series of other problems - operate differently from economic crises as generally understood in Marxist crisis theory; and traditionally they have been treated



quite separately as Political Economy conceptualised the environment in terms of 'externalities' outside the economic system. This was always questionable, but in practice is now increasingly at odds with the growing economic costs of ecological disruptions and disasters. We need to develop a more integrating theory of economic and ecological (or eco-economic) crisis, with a redefinition of 'the system' where ecological factors are also seen as 'internal' and important as crisis generators - to encourage marxists to take ecology more seriously and ecologists to take marxist analysis more seriously, and both to come up with more grounded (or less apocalyptic) views of how future crises might play out. They might for instance force a re-organisation rather than the oft-predicted collapse of capitalism? And it raises other pertinent questions about the complexities of ecological-economic relations - about, for example, the ecologists' solution of 'No Growth' or 'Degrowth' running counter to growth as the political reformist answer to economic inequality; about ageing capitalism producing increasing proportions of waste; about whether ecological disruptions of production reduce profits and bolster capitalism's stagnation tendencies, or does the ecological destruction of capital help counter the tendency of profit rates to fall?

## **Philosophy and/with politics revisited: Althusser encountering Machiavelli**

**Giorgos Kalampokas (National Technical University of Athens, School of Applied Mathematical and Physical Sciences, Department of Human Sciences, Social Sciences and Law), Panagiotis Sotiris (Hellinic Open University (HOP)) Vittorio Morfino (University of Milano-Bicocca) Stefano Pippa (University of Milano-Bicocca, Italy)**

Althusser encountering Machiavelli and Gramsci: The Modern Prince and / as new practice of politics Panagiotis Sotiris Abstract Both Antonio Gramsci and Louis Althusser encountered Machiavelli and they both attempted to rethink the very possibility of political practice through their respective readings of the Florentine thinker. In a certain way for both Gramsci and Althusser the reading of Machiavelli was the experimental site where they tested and elaborated their own conceptions of politics, either in the form of Gramsci's quest for the Modern Prince, the political and organizational form of a potential hegemony of the subaltern, or in the form of Althusser's constant redefinition of a potential new practice of politics in a communist perspective. At the same time, it is important to stress that the reading of Machiavelli was for Althusser also one of the terrains upon which he attempted to confront Gramsci, something that is particularly evident in a series of Althusser's texts in the 1970s from Machiavelli and Us to the recently published Que faire? The aim of this presentation would be to offer a comparative reading of the approaches to Machiavelli offered by Gramsci and Althusser, focusing in particular on the tensions running through Althusser's reading of Gramsci's writings on Machiavelli. In particular I will try and offer a reading of Althusser's extensive criticism of Gramsci in 1977-1978, linking it to his critique of Eurocommunism. Then I will go back to Gramsci, and in particular Notebook 13, in order to bring forward not only the aspects of Gramsci that Althusser

tended to overlook but also how Gramsci is in fact thinking the very question that Althusser attempted to pose, namely that of a new practice of politics for communism.

Machiavellis solitude, Althusser's solitudeGiorgos KalampokasAbstractThe very few references to Machiavelli that could be found in Althusser's published works while he was alive, gave for many decades the impression that the first was no particular theoretical influence to the latter. Nevertheless, the posthumous publications of Althusser's works, proved this impression false. Not only did Althusser, from the early 60s on, never stopped returning to Machiavelli's work, but the latter occupies a central position to his thinking from the mid-70s onwards, and especially to the evolution of his materialism of the encounter, to the so-called underground current of which Althusser would ascribe Machiavelli, alongside Epicurus, Spinoza, and Marx, to state its most significant figures. Nevertheless, a paradox somewhat remains: Why is it that, that Althusser himself, despite having been overwhelmed by the Florentine Secretary, published nothing more on him than his 1977 talk on Machiavelli's Solitude? Paying theoretical attention to such a practice would require acknowledging that, for Althusser, solitude is not a simple figure of speech; rather, it is legitimate theoretical concept internal to the latter's theorization of Machiavelli stating both the necessary condition of possibility of the New Prince, a man of nothing, to become a historical political force creating his new hegemony, as well as the state Machiavelli as a political thinker had to find himself into, in order to produce such a revolutionary theory. It is this a use of the concept that formulates the theoretical grounds for Althusser's identification to Machiavelli, in a period of theoretical and political defeat of his endeavour inside the PCF. In this respect, I will try to grasp the theoretical solitude Althusser projects to Machiavelli, in order to understand his late work as the fruit of the theoretical and political affinities of Machiavelli's work to Althusser's own project. To do so, I will revisit Althusser's reading of the Prince as a possible immanent theory of revolutionary politics and a possible theory of the conjunction, focusing on the concept of new, absolute, beginnings, while also try to theorize the epistemological grounds of Machiavelli's work through the use of the Prince both as a political treatise and as an imminent political intervention.

The development of Machiavelli's Althusserian reading and its political significanceVittorio MorfinoAbstractIn my lecture I intend to consider the fundamental features of Machiavelli's Althusserian reading in its historical development, starting from the course of 62, passing through the course of 72-76 published with the title of Machiavelli and us and through the writings of 77-78, ending with the group of writings of the 80s. The basic idea rejects any teleological reading that sees in the final writings the truth finally revealed of the path (as well as its inversion, that is the path itself as a corruption of an original truth), to focus on the thesis that Althusser, through the figure of Machiavelli, theoretically reworks his relationship with the Party. Hegel or Machiavelli. On Althusser's Machiavellian anti-Hegelianism Stefano Pippa Abstract Following the publication of Reading Capital (1965), the question Hegel or Spinoza became a classical way of reading the Althusserian and post-Althusserian trajectory. However, as has become clear in recent years, especially following the publication of Althusser's posthumous writings, this simple and neat dichotomy is far from being able to capture the complexity of the stakes of the Althusserian undertake. In this paper, I will argue that from the seventies this opposition is replaced by

another the one between Hegel or Machiavelli, and that such a disjunction becomes the most important axis of Althusser's reflection on the relationship between philosophy and politics. Thus, the paper will attempt to show: 1) how Althusser's highly original theorization of the existence of an unprecedented *dispositif* at work in Machiavelli (Althusser, Machiavelli and Us) is best understood as a radical critique of the structure and functioning of the Hegelian concept, which Althusser had laid bare some 25 years before in his early thesis on the notion of content in Hegel (1948); and 2) how this move enables Althusser to free himself from the Hegelian assumption that philosophy always comes at dusk, which was still at work in his previous definitions of philosophy. It will be argued that the Machiavellian *dispositif*, understood in a radical anti-Hegelian vein as a philosophico-political concept, will allow Althusser to substitute, for the Hegelian-inspired idea that philosophy exists as a specific relationship of the present to the past, the idea that a materialist philosophy needs to open up the current conjuncture to the future *accomplir*.

## **Porno-Accumulation: Fascism, Absolute Capital, and Surplus Populations in Don DeLillo's "Running Dog"**

**Tom Travers (Birkbeck, University of London)**

In their collaborative text *Wars and Capital*, Eric Alliez and Maurizio Lazzarato claim that the Marxist critique of political economy has insufficiently considered the extent to which the economy does not replace war but continues it by other means. Their first thesis, that war, money, and the State are constitutive or constituent forces of capitalism is certainly endorsed by Don DeLillo's *Running Dog* (1978), a novel whose post-fascist aesthetic affirms that the logical extension of business is murder. *Running Dog* is a novel about a product, perhaps the product of a Hitler sex tape and the struggle to possess and, crucially, reproduce that object commercially, as a commodity. An avant-garde reworking of the popular genre of the thriller, DeLillo's post-autonomous compositional practice has been censured by leftist critics, who argue that the novel's pastiche decoding of capitalist models of reality is constrained by an inability to construct alternative (communist) models. Drawing on the idea that DeLillo is a late imperial historiographer of romance, the paper will suggest re-circuiting *Running Dog*'s porno-accumulation through Jason Moore's world-ecological emphasis on capitalism as a frontier process. Reconceptualising the Hitler film as both a commodity frontier and frontier commodity provides an opportunity, I will argue, to reflect on the changing relationship between labour-power and its commodification in a financialising economy, and on the eroticisation and commercialisation of fascism in the spectacle. The paper will conclude with a speculative account of *Running Dog*'s missing third, its forms of collectivity that have been exiled to the ruinously de-collectivised margins of the text to demolished factories, racialised housing ghettos, and post-extraction hinterlands. In Alliez and Lazzarato's terms these are the immiserated casualties of capital's wars of annihilation against the people qua labour-power. In DeLillo's work, the perpetual motion machine of romance might be said to malfunction: the genre no longer records the expansion of universal freedom, but instead registers and encodes the secular stagnation of the USA and its surplus populations.

## **Metabolic Rift and Climate Change: An Empirical Test and Specification**

**Eoin Flaherty (Maynooth University)**

This paper attempts to substantiate the empirical process of metabolic rift with respect to climate change in its specifically modern capitalist context by offering an empirical specification and test using pooled time series cross-section data. It also attempts to outline how the concept of metabolic rift can be advanced beyond its more common use as a theoretical link between capitalism, urbanization, and soil degradation during industrialisation, as an explanation of the connection between capital and climate change. The empirical component of this paper uses national-level data arranged over time for multiple countries, in an attempt to capture both cross-national and longitudinal components of variation. It derives and tests a specification of the process of metabolic rift as informed by Marx's (and modern Marxisms) understanding of ecology under capitalism. To this end, we explore the role of industrialisation and sectoral industrial structure, mass consumption, income inequality and the rise of the super-rich, urbanisation, and mass transportation, as stressors of the factors of global climate change (principally CO2 emissions, and indicators of landscape change). The wider goals of this paper are (1) to offer empirical corroboration to the concept of metabolic rift as a useful and vital explanation of the link between capitalism and climate change, (2) to substantiate the mechanisms and specific national and international factors implicated in rising emissions and landscape change, and (3) by using the methods of conventional political economy and ecological economics - to demonstrate the relevance of metabolic rift theorising, and bring Marxist-informed specification and interpretation more readily to bear on their typical subject matter. Note: the presentation will not detail the modelling procedure or econometrics. Tables will be made available to participants should they wish to view statistical output.

## **The 18th Brumaire of Donald J. Trump? The rise of the far Right in the United States in light of Marx's bonapartism theory**

**Ingar Solty (Institute for Critical Social Analysis Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung Berlin)**

The rise of the far Right has sparked attempts to understand it in more theoretical terms and drawing on the theoretical corpus of Marxist writings. Based on a German book chapter published in 2018, this paper analyzes the rise of Donald J. Trump through the lens of Marx's theory of bonapartism and its further development by Antonio Gramsci and August Thalheimer. It critically engages with the class equilibrium theses applying it to the development of class forces in the United States in the years and decades before the Trump presidency. Arguing with Nicos Poulantzas against Marx, Gramsci and Thalheimer, the paper nevertheless identifies elements from Marx's and the Marxist's understanding of bonapartism which might still make its application to Trump and the United States analytically useful and makes the case that Domenico Losurdo's concept of "soft-

Bonapartism” might be an analytical tool shedding light on right-wing authoritarianism in the United States.

## Launch of Commoning with George Caffentzis and Silvia Federici

David Harvie (University of Leicester)

Proposal for a Book Launch SPONSORED by Pluto Press *Commoning with George Caffentzis and Silvia Federici* edited by Camille Barbagallo, Nicholas Beuret and David Harvie (Pluto Press, 2019) **BLURB-ABSTRACT** This collection explores key themes in the contemporary critique of political economy, in honour of the work of Silvia Federici and George Caffentzis two of the most significant contemporary theorists of capitalism and anti-capitalism, whose contributions span half a century of struggle, crisis and debate. The book is organised around five key themes: revolutionary histories, reproduction, money and value, commons, and struggles. Drawing together a collection of essays that assess Federici and Caffentzis contributions, this volume acts as a guide to their work, while also taking us beyond it. Ultimately, the book shines light on the continuing relevance of Caffentzis and Federici's work in the twenty-first century for understanding anti-capitalism, primitive accumulation and the commons, feminism, reproductive labour and Marx's value theory. In this proposed launch event, the book's editors will be joined by four other contributors, to explore the way in which the militant scholarship of Federici and Caffentzis in each of the five areas revolutionary histories, reproduction, money and value, commons, and struggles can help us navigate ways through the ecological (and related) catastrophes that we currently live. **SPEAKERS (2 hour-slot)** Camille Barbagallo (editor) is a postdoctoral researcher at Leeds University. Her forthcoming book, *Mothers and Others: The Politics of Reproduction in Neo-liberal Britain* (Manchester University Press) analyses the political economy of women's work and the history of care work in Britain. With Silvia Federici, she edited the *Care Work and Commons Vol. 15 Commoner* 2012. She is the editor of *Women and the Subversion of the Community: A Mariarosa Dalla Costa Reader* (PM Press 2019). [ellimac@gmail.com] Nicholas Beuret (editor) is a lecturer at the University of Essex whose work focuses on environmental politics and science and technology studies, exploring how ecological crises shape, and in turn are shaped by, political action. His research has been published in journals such as *Antipode*, *Science as Culture* and *South Atlantic Quarterly*, as well as numerous political and news outlets. [nb17913@essex.ac.uk] David Harvie (editor) is associate Professor of Finance and Political Economy, School of Business, University of Leicester. He is author (with The Free Association) of *Moments of Excess: Movements, Protest and Everyday Life* (PM Press 2011) and coeditor (with Keir Milburn, Ben Trott and David Watts) of *Shut Them Down! Gleneagles 2005, the G8 and the Movement of Movements* (Autonomedia/Dissent! 2005) [david.harvie@le.ac.uk] Bue Rubner Hansen (contributor) is a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Aarhus. He is an editor of *Viewpoint Magazine*, and has engaged as an activist researcher in the British student movement, municipalism in Barcelona, and the migrant and refugee solidarity movement. His research focuses on questions of social reproduction, class formation and ideas of the good life in common, and he is beginning to work on ecology. Apart from *Viewpoint* and academic journals, his writing has been published in *Roar*, *Jacobin*, *Novara*, *Mute*,

OpenDemocracy and Diagonal. [bue.r.hansen@gmail.com] Paul Rekret (contributor) teaches political and social theory at Richmond University, American International University in London. He is author of *Down With Childhood: Popular Music and the Crisis of Innocence* (Repeater 2017) and *Philosophy, Politics, and Polemics: On Derrida and Foucault* (Rowan & Little field 2017). He hosts *Beholder Halfway*, monthly radio essays investigating music politics on Resonance.Extra. [p.rekret@gmail.com] Stevphen Shukaitis (contributor) is Senior Lecturer at the University of Essex, Centre for Work, Organization, and Society, and a member of the Autonomedia editorial collective. Since 2009 he has coordinated and edited *Minor Compositions* (www.minorcompositions.info). He is the author of *Imaginal Machines: Autonomy & Self-Organization in the Revolutions of Everyday Day* (2009) and *The Composition of Movements to Come: Aesthetics and Cultural Labor After the Avant-Garde* (2016), and editor (with Erika Biddle and David Graeber) of *Constituent Imagination: Militant Investigations/Collective Theorization* (AK Press 2007). His research focuses on the emergence of collective imagination in social movements and the changing compositions of cultural and artistic labour. [stevphen@autonomedia.org] Marina Sitrin (contributor) is an Assistant Professor of Sociology at SUNY Binghamton. She participates in, and writes about, societies in movement. Her books include *Horizontalism: Voices of Popular Power in Argentina* (AK Press 2006); *Everyday Revolutions: Horizontalism and Autonomy in Argentina* (Zed Books 2012); and coauthored, *They Can't Represent Us!: Reinventing Democracy from Greece to Occupy* (Verso Books 2014). She is currently writing a book on global societies in movement and nonmovements with the University of California Press [marina.sitrin@gmail.com]

## Predation in the age of algorithm. The techno-feudal hypothesis

Cdric Durand (Paris 13 University)

The concept of techno-feudalism has been circulated in recent years by editorial writers from the Financial Times, Martin Wolf and Izabella Kaminska, and critical essayist Evgueni Morozov. It highlights the fact that the deployment of innovations associated with information technologies (digital platforms, artificial intelligence, Big data, etc.) may lead to a qualitative transformation of the economic system, a dystopic horizon where the extreme concentration of power and wealth in the hands of a tiny minority goes hand in hand with a marginalization of the rest of humanity. The use of this metaphor for journalistic or polemical purposes reveals an ideological malaise. The technophile optimism associated with IT and the deployment of the Internet suddenly vanished in the early years of the 2010 decade to give way to a growing concern about the return of monopolies, the deterioration of work, the rise in inequality, and economic stagnation. These phenomena are in stark contrast to the promises of what Michael Piore calls the “Silicon Valley Consensus”. The utopia of entrepreneurial capitalism 2.0 has not happened, but it leaves room for something new and strange to be named. This communication proposes to take the techno-feudal hypothesis seriously. It is not a question of taking up the metaphorical and disqualifying use in force, but explore the analytical value of the concept. I will deploy this proposal by focusing on three aspects of the problem: the relevance of the concept of feudalism and its link to predation; the development of intellectual monopolies in the



context of the rise of intangibles, and, more specifically, its relations to digital platforms and trade in global value chains ; the importance of neoliberal policies to create conditions that allow and even encourage predatory practices.

## **Reading Luxemburg after a decade of Tahrir. Counter-Revolution and Mass Strike in in North Africa**

**Brecht De Smet (Ghent University), Sami Zemni (Ghent University) Koen Bogaert (Ghent University Free University of Brussels)**

In this paper we return to our reading (Antipode, 2012) of the 2011 popular uprisings and protests in Egypt, Tunisia, and Morocco through Luxemburgs text *The Mass Strike*. We argue that Luxemburgs insights, written down after a period of large-scale mass mobilization and its subsequent defeat, are still relevant for understanding the contemporary process of revolution and counter-revolution in the MENA region. Firstly, Luxemburg offers a critique of the authoritarian resilience of the Czarist regime, moving beyond orientalist stereotypes of the Russian state, society, and working class. We draw on her arguments to criticize the essentialist premise that the regime in the MENA is the constant variable and social movements are the dependent variables. Counter-revolutionary success is not the standard, over-determined result, but always the concrete outcome of political and social struggles between different actors. Secondly, Luxemburg draws our attention to relations between organized, industrial unionized workers and more precarious, unorganized, sometimes informal labour. Her concept of the mass strike allows for the inclusion of local, peripheral, elementary economic struggles, which often remain below the radar, in the building up of more salient, politicized, mass protests. Moreover, she stresses that the end of a wave of visible, politicized, mass strikes does not imply the disappearance of social struggles altogether, but its opaque re-fragmentation in local workplaces and communities. Thirdly, reading Luxemburg not only illuminates points of light for social emancipation in the MENA, but also a strategic programme for alliance-building between organized and unorganized workers, between political and social activists, and between local and national movements in the context of a ruthless dictatorship. We deploy Luxemburgs insights to understand Tahrir as a cross-national historical process linking together pre-2011 struggles, the uprisings of 2011-2013, their counter-revolutionary transformations, and more recent events in Algeria and Sudan.

## **The Italian Communist Party and the Krestintern: agrarian and regional alliances**

**Derek Boothman (retired ex-University of Bologna)**

Gramscis most influential pre-prison writing is his essay on the Southern question, in part the result of considerations that go back to articles published in the first run of *L'Ordine Nuovo*, to letters from his Moscow period, and to other scattered documents. The essay

should also be read in the context of the debates at the Krestintern (the Red Peasant International) and at the Fifth Plenum of the Comintern Executive, both in Spring 1925, and of the theses on the agrarian question at the Third (Lyon) Congress Italian Communist Party (PCI) in January 1926. Sometimes more than Gramsci, the more important figure was Ruggero Grieco, secretary under the presidency of the Polish peasant leader Tomasz Dbal (Dombal) at the sessions of the 1925 Krestintern Congress. Together, Grieco and Gramsci established a close working relationship with Guido Miglioli, leader of the White (i.e. catholic) peasant associations in Northern Italy, bringing him into a working relationship with the Krestintern. Making use of the Comintern files, we here examine the collaboration between these Italians, taking as the major basis the joint work of Gramsci and Grieco in the 1925-26 period, i.e. up to the essay on the Southern question and the Lyon Congress; in addition we mention the overtures made by the Krestintern in the persons of Grieco, Miglioli, Dbal, and Giuseppe Di Vittorio, the post-war CGIL union general secretary, to the Sardinian Action Party. All this represented an important step forward in the PCIs formulation of an approach to the various (and varied) sections of the peasantry and agricultural workers, raising, among other issues, the questions of class alliances, gender, the autonomy of peasant associations, the nature of peasant parties and, increasingly, specificities and disparities among different regional economies. The documents are of value not only historically for the period under examination but more generally for the establishment of guidelines regarding the question of alliances.

## **Materialities and Politics**

**Alex Demirovic (Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung)**

The paper discusses the specific materiality of the political as an 'illusion'. This refers to arguments of early Marx and Althusser to argue for the overcoming of politics.

## **Goethe in Moscow: Lukcs 1930s Writings on German Literary and Intellectual History**

**Daniel Hartley (Durham University)**

This paper will explore Lukcs writings on German literary and intellectual history from the 1930s, written whilst in exile in Soviet Russia. Often seen as a continuation of politics by other means (he had withdrawn from active political life following widespread condemnation of his 1928 Blum Theses), these works included such studies as *The Historical Novel*, *Goethe and his Age*, *German Realists of the Nineteenth Century* and *The Young Hegel*, as well as important stand-alone essays such as *The Intellectual Physiognomy in Characterization*. This paper will focus on three interconnected concepts that guide Lukcs critical reconstructions: bourgeois revolution, the law of uneven development, and personality. It will seek to complicate the standard interpretation of Lukcs work in this period as being essentially Stalinist or, alternatively, as a simple literary transposition of the logic of the Blum Theses. Instead, using the ambiguous status of personality in these works

as a critical lens, it will attempt to read them as the overdetermined product of three factors: the contemporary debates regarding tactics and strategy within the Communist International; the need to battle fascist appropriations of German literary history in the 1930s; and Lukács's original theoretical and literary-critical innovations and interventions not least his central emphasis on uneven development, which I shall argue arises, in part, from his experiences in Hungary.

## **Global Capitalism and Revolution in the Periphery**

**Judith Daniel (Die LINKE. Bundestagsfraktion)**

Most Marxist accounts of the Arab Spring in Egypt have linked its failure to the lack of a party of the working class. Some have then resorted to Marx's Bonapartism theory in order to explain why eventually the counter-revolution installed al-Sisi with new dictatorial powers. The paper draws on the theory of global capitalism and the new imperialism in order to show that the aforementioned accounts have not outlined a comprehensive concept of how the transnationalization of capitalist production and transnational class formation have fundamentally transformed the general circumstances for and the prospects of social revolution in the periphery. The penetration of peripheral social formations by global capital and the demise of national bourgeoisies necessitates revolutionary movements to respond to those challenges. Based on a case study of the events in Egypt 2011ff and drawing on Marxist (comparative) research on and theorization of revolution, the paper outlines the class coalitions underlying modern peripheral revolution and argues that its failure must be understood with regards to how neoliberal global capitalism has made the comprador bourgeoisie (Nicos Poulantzas) superfluous and that, similarly to bourgeois revolutions between 1789 and 1848, the revolution itself sought a modernization of Egypt ridding the country of this superfluous class.

## **Rethinking popular resistance after the Gilets Jaunes movement: Sartre on the ambivalence of the mass**

**Matthias Lievens (Institute of Philosophy, KU Leuven, Belgium)**

The emergence of the Gilets Jaunes movement in France has been a major event with international ramifications. A number of its features are unique. This is a form of populism without a populist leader. It has emerged outside of any organised framework and it is, to a certain extent, rooted in other social layers than those mobilised in other recent movements of struggle (students, industrial workers, civil servants, people from the banlieue). It has a significant anchorage outside the big cities. Its militant basis and discourse include both rightwing and leftwing elements. Despite the clear social and democratic content of the key demands of the movement, it remains somewhat ambivalent, including even semi-racist aspects. Drawing on the example of the Gilets Jaunes, this paper aims to contribute to rethinking the notion of the mass and its ambivalence, with the help of Jean-Paul Sartre's Critique of Dialectical Reason. Several of the movements' interpreters

have already taken inspiration from specific aspects of Sartre's work (e.g. Sophie Wahnich, Stathis Kouvelakis), and this is no coincidence, as its conceptual armature is uniquely equipped to come to grips with such forms of mass popular resistance. Within marxism, the notion of the mass is usually used in a loose, descriptive way, referring for example to all those who toil and are exploited by capital, particularly those who are least organised and educated, who are most oppressed and least amenable to organisation (Lenin). Within existentialism, however, the notion of the mass usually refers to the anonymous condition of alienated modern life (e.g. Heidegger, Ortega y Gasset). Sartre's Critique is the locus of a unique encounter between Marxist and existentialist notions of the mass. Theorizing both its potential and its risks, Sartre integrates insights from the classical critique of the mass (Heidegger, Gustave Le Bon) into Marxist theory, including how mass public opinion is generated through dynamics of imitation and contagion. Far removed from autonomist Marxist theorizations of the creative multitude, Sartre thus fully acknowledges the deep ambivalences of the mass as a specific figure of the series. As its dynamics are rooted in a complex set of serial relations and forms of passive activity, the mass is ultimately uncontrollable (through representative or institutional politics) and can thus generate unexpected events. The mass can turn into a group (the subject of collective action), but it could also become the agent of a violent pogrom. As a limit-figure between serial mass and group in fusion, the Gilets Jaunes movement uniquely exemplifies these fundamental concepts of Sartre's social and political theory.

## **NEW PATHWAYS OF UNDERSTANDING ROSA LUXEMBURG**

**Paul Joseph LeBlanc (LaRoche University 9000 Babcock Blvd. Pittsburgh, PA 15237 USA)**

This is a panel, with presentations from members of the editorial board of the Verso Complete Works of Rosa Luxemburg: Paul LeBlanc (on her connections with Social Democracy and Lenin), Helen Scott (on her cultural background and engagement), Sandra Reins (on her approach to pedagogy), and Dana Naomi Mills (on her connection with feminists in the Marxist tradition). Rosa Luxemburg is an outstanding figure in the revolutionary socialist and Marxist pantheon - but too often is turned into an idealized figure who conforms to the viewer's own political predilections. Especially with the growing availability of her writings, it is more possible to present challenging and sometimes new facets of her complex life and thought, some of which have great relevance for our own troubled times.

## **Ground rent appropriation and political cycle in South America. A critique on marxist dependency and extractivism theories**

**Juan Kornblihtt (Conicet - UNGS - UBA)**

The cycle of the so called pink tide or alternatives to neoliberalism governments in South America has ended with the bust of the commodities price boom. The indisputable relation

between political cycle and the prices of the exported primary goods challenges the ruling marxist explanations of the specificity of South America. The perspective of marxist dependency theory based on the idea of unequal exchange or the related theories of extractivism put in the unilateral flow of wealth from South America to the imperialist countries the explanation of the worlds role of this continent as part of the periphery. The arise of governments with a capacity of expanding social expenditure and stimulating industrial development appears as the result of a (relative) national autonomy but without a proper analysis of the source of those policies. Also it fails to explain the simultaneous political cycle of the region. This lack of consistency comes from ignoring or having a theoretical misunderstanding of the ground rent role in South America. Following Marx explanation of the differential ground rent, instead of a simple flow of surplus value from the primary good exporter to the imperialist country, the buyer has to pay an extra profit as production conditions are not reproducible by human labour. This extra profit should go to the landowner in the form of ground rent. But as he is a parasite that only reproduces itself, capital from buyer countries is capable to recover his lost by the mediation of the national state of the producing country. In the paper, we are going to show the results of a collective effort based on Juan Igo Carreras methodology of measuring the ground rent and the different mechanisms of its appropriation for Argentina, Bolivia, Brasil, Chile, and Paraguay, Uruguay and Venezuela. With the support of this quantification, we are going to present an alternative explanation of the specificity of South America and its role in the international labour division. This not only imply a different explanation of the role of the pink tide governments and the cause of its crisis, but has also (and important) implications for a revolutionary programme of the working class.

## **US TROTSKYISM 1928-1965**

**Paul Joseph LeBlanc (LaRoche College 9000 Babcock Blvd. Pittsburgh, PA 15237 USA)**

Historians Paul Le Blanc (Professor, La Roche University) and Bryan Palmer (Professor Emeritus, Trent University) present some of their findings related to the appearance of the massive documentary trilogy which they have edited, **US TROTSKYISM 1928-1965**. US Trotskyists have been long dismissed by hostile critics as an inherently sectarian and sterile cluster of fanatics and would-be authoritarians. Le Blanc and Palmer find, to the contrary, that they sometimes played a significant role in the struggles of their time, were generally animated by democratic sensibilities, and contributed a rich, informative, and often insightful body of writings that have relevance for scholars and activists in the twenty-first century.

## **State Sovereignty and Security Discourses in Eastern Europe: The Bulgarian Case**

**Madlen Nikolova (Department of Politics, University of Sheffield)**

With the end of the Cold War and its attendant systems rivalry, counterterrorism and anti-corruption discourses have become a dominant framework of political governance throughout Europe. The two phenomena are thought of as interconnected objects of the security apparatus and widely adopted by states in and outside of the EU. This paper shows that the reconceptualisation of anti-corruption as a central security issue in post-socialist Bulgaria is inextricably linked to anti-terrorism policies in practice. This is not due to some rapid increase of terrorism attacks or cases of political corruption, nor to public perception. Rather, the paper claims that the efforts to curb both corruption and terrorism facilitate the consolidation of liberal capitalism and Bulgaria's Western geopolitical orientation. Anti-corruption and counterterrorism campaigns are viewed by supposedly neutral experts as post-political and necessitated by 'objective' problems faced by transitioning democracies. However, they contain a strong normative and self-colonising strain in a post-socialist context. I will explicate the latter by analysing the Bulgarian national security strategies, the think-tank policy papers informing them, and their practical application.

## **The Rise of the Far-Right and the Crisis of Democracy in Brazil**

**Jorge Grespan (University of So Paulo)**

The rise to power of a far-right government in Brazil, now occupying all relevant positions in the federal administration, is no isolated phenomenon in the world context. This panel examines, first, the political, economic and ideological modus operandi of the Brazilian far-right in contrast with other countries. In this framework, we discuss the influence of the weight of each country in the world system in the form taken by its own far-right political forces. For example, would the far-right in each country have a specific shape, or perform a particular role, according to the international position of the country? Second, the panel explores the connection between the economic crisis of world capitalism and the neoliberal policies intended to reduce the share of labour in national income, in order to increase profits and rent. It is only in this context that the form taken by economic crisis and neoliberalism in Brazil can be adequately understood, particularly in the case of the current government. Finally, the panel will examine the possible decline in the enthusiasm generated by the far-right government of Brazil, due to the persistence and deepening of the economic crisis. The diagnosis may lead to important conclusions about the course of events to come.



## Revolutionary education or educational revolution in the Marxian System

Caio Antunes (Universidade Federal de Gois - UFG), Joana Alice Freitas (Universidade Federal de Gois - UFG)

Much has been said about the Marxian conception of education, as well as of his conception of revolution. But normally, Marx's approach to the educational issue is considered to be the technological or omnilateral education as discussed in Capital or in the Instructions for the delegates of the IWA, respectively that shall take place in formal institutions of education that, through the raising the level of the working class above the higher and middle classes, composes one of the measures necessary to the social transformation of society.

Revolution, by its turn is considered, as the conquer of the State, as the apex of a political struggle of the proletariat; of course, a process necessarily connected to various forms of class-conscious movements. Therefore, these two very important elements of the Marxian system very rarely are considered as articulated, not to say inherently connected. In one hand, the very process of the human constitution (derived from labor) is, in itself and for itself, an educational process; the ontological leap and the following process of human complexification is inherently a process of social formation. On the other hand, as the social process of political struggle necessary constitutes the material basis to the construction of a revolutionary class-consciousness, the revolution itself can only take place where a deep process of formation is already in its due course. Consequently, from this point of view not only the revolutionary movement is a profound process of both, social transformation and social education, but also the core of the educational process of the human beings shall be, in its broad and formal senses, revolutionary orientated.

## A Possible Future for the Far-Right Government of Brazil

Jorge Grespan (University of So Paulo)

This paper belongs to the panel "The Rise of the Far-Right and the Crisis of Democracy in Brazil" together with Raquel Varela and Alfredo Saad Filho. Months after the coming to power of a far-right government in Brazil, it is already possible to give an account of its promises and achievements through a two-fold perspective. On the one hand, from the perspective of the economy and economic policy, this government can be considered as a radical enforcer of neoliberal policies intended to raise the share of profits and rents in their various forms in capitalist appropriation; this must be done by means of a corresponding reduction in wages. The continuing and deepening economic crisis that has led to an unprecedented decline in the rate of investment seems to require the bitter medicine of public expenditure cuts, further limitations of labour rights, the disorganisation of the trade unions, privatisation of state-owned enterprises and the rest of the neoliberal policy menu. After the failure of the precedent government in doing exactly the same, capitalists now believe that only a strong government can enforce these policies. On the other hand, from the politico-electoral perspective, the expectation that has

guided the majority of voters to choose the current government corresponds to forms of perception transcending their own economic needs. Traditional views about market virtues and free competition have joined up with conservatism on religion and customs, and the idea that fighting corruption would heal politics. To the supporters of these views, the task is to respond to the whole set of ideas associated with globalisation, i.e. cosmopolitanism, scientism, and tolerance towards social behaviors considered to diverge from the norm. My paper aims to draw up the relationships between these trends leading to the current political situation in Brazil, taking into account its differences with the situation in other countries with far right governments. The comparison may lead to important conclusions about the course of the events to come.

## **Searching for a comradely solidarity**

**Maral Jefroudi (IIRE)**

From neighbourhood organizing to disaster reliefs and anti-war campaigns reaching to an international level, solidarity has been a key concept for revolutionary political action. While it strives for an immediate relief and support to the afflicted community, its vision tends to go beyond that. It does not only aim to bring relief at the present time, but also to present some practices that belong to a vision of an alternative, future society. That revolutionary leftists practices of solidarity actions are different from charities or even from humanitarian aid has been established to a certain level. However, the main principles of revolutionary solidarity activity itself have not been explored sufficiently. What makes a solidarity activity by revolutionary leftists different from other groups? Going through refugee solidarity activities in the Netherlands and Turkey; involving Turkish, Kurdish and Syrian refugees respectively, this paper helps to develop a conceptualization of a comradely solidarity and elaborate on its limits in the given cases. The principle of attaining an inclusive, democratic practice together with the afflicted people and focusing on empowerment and the process rather than opting for the quickest solution will be traced through examples and relevant tools to achieve it. Challenges to this approach and particularly the limits of internationalism and affinity to campism when faced with local political challenges will also be dealt with.

## **Extractive Industries and Changing Means of Rural Livelihood: Proletarianization Processes and Class Relations in Soma Coal Basin**

**Coku elik (Middle East Technical University)**

This study aims to reveal the wider set of social relations and processes behind the labour supply, labour process, and diversification of the means of livelihood in Soma coal basin- one of the leading basins of coal reserve in Turkey experienced the biggest work accident of Turkish labour and employment history that resulted in the death of 301 miners on May 13, 2014. Increasing significance of coal extraction in Soma for the Turkish economy from the mid 2000s onwards in parallel with the aim of overcoming the over-use of imported

natural gas in electricity production and of encouraging the use of domestic coal coincided with the dispossession of the petty commodity producers in agriculture due to the neoliberal transformation of agriculture, especially of tobacco production. In this paper, the analysis of the impact of extractive investments in Soma will be made with reference to three interrelated discussions: Labour supply in the coal pits in Soma with reference to the processes of dispossession and proletarianization of the agricultural petty commodity producers, Labour processes and labour control strategies in the coal pits of Soma, Transformation of sexual division of labour in the basin in the productive and reproductive work towards feminisation of agricultural work and intensification of the reproductive work. The related analysis is built upon the field research carried out in Soma in 2017.

## **Excavating the Overlooked Contours of Everyday Life: Methodological Considerations in Researching Social Reproduction**

**Sophie O'Manique (The Graduate Center, The City University of New York)**

Marxist-feminist scholars and activists have convincingly identified the sphere of social reproduction as a site of political possibility (Federici, 2012; Katz, 2001). These arguments center around the necessity of social reproduction for the sustenance of both life and capitalism, and the universal, albeit varying, nature of humankind's participation in social reproductive activities. And yet, social reproduction, in many instances, continues to be omitted in explanations of the juncture of crisis in which we collectively find ourselves, demonstrating the extent to which social reproductive work remains, as Tithi Bhattacharya tells us, naturalized into non-existence, (2001). Given this taken-for-granted reality of social reproductive labour, researching the material social processes that constitute social reproduction poses a range of methodological challenges. This paper considers how we might better incorporate considerations of social reproduction into our work since so many of these processes are naturalized into non-existence and occur in physical spaces constructed as private. Following the lead of scholars of social reproduction who invite us to consider how dynamics we might not conventionally understand as being part and parcel of concerns around social reproduction (Young, 2015; Roberts, 2013), here I consider what methodological tools and avenues for inquiry we might adopt in order to better render the often-overlooked labour of social reproduction more visible. Works Cited: Bhattacharya, Tithi. *Social Reproduction Theory: Remapping Class, Recentering Oppression*. London: Pluto Press, 2017. Federici, Sylvia. *Revolution at Point Zero: Housework, Reproduction, and Feminist Struggle*. PM Press: Oakland, California, 2012. Katz, Cindi. Vagabond Capitalism and the Necessity of Social Reproduction. *Antipode* 33 no. 4 (2001): 709-728. Roberts, Adrienne. Financing Social Reproduction: The Gendered Relations of Debt and Mortgage Financing in Twenty-first-century America. *New Political Economy*, 18, no.1 (2013): 21-42. Young, Brigitte. Gender, Debt and the Housing/Financial Crisis, in *Handbook of Research on Gender and Economic Life*, edited by Deborah M. Figart and Tonia L. Warnecke. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2015.

## **Making a Case for Marxist-Feminist Research in the Fight Against Authoritarianism**

**Nadia Jones-Gailani (Central European University)**

My paper will advance a critique using collected cases and individual narratives that support the premise that not only is feminism under attack; so too are the labours of multiple generations of Marxist-feminist scholars within the academy. Drawing upon a Foucaudian genealogy as historical narrative, I explore patterns of forgetting whereby feminists are being written out of the fields and methodologies that they helped to establish. Basing my analysis within the broader field of Migration Studies that encompasses transnational histories of migration, I argue that this silencing process has far-reaching consequences for the sciences, social sciences and humanities, and a far graver future impact on how we hope to resist systems of power and patriarchy. As a gender historian engaged with feminist qualitative methods, I will attempt to map out how a male-centered form of authoritarianism from within the academy is impacting Gender Studies in Hungary where I am based, and what risk these threats pose to our profession, our politics, and our person. I address particularly how Marxist-feminist research and methods are being silenced and undermined, and how this connects to what we are experiencing in a daily material reality of authoritarianism. Without meaning to imply that feminist research has made the only nor the largest contribution, simply that at this particular moment we cannot afford to overlook the precarity of scholars who occupy the margins of academic research.

## **Is the party back?**

**David Broder (none)**

The European elections again showed the decline of the old mass parties of both center-left and center-right, ever less able to mobilize their base or cohere millions around traditional political identities. Yet the moment is contradictory. Recent years have seen the rise of new electoral forces on the Left, seeking to either revive or replace the traditional social-democratic and communist parties, while other kinds of mass mobilisation seem to have subsided. In this panel sponsored by Catalyst magazine, we ask whether experiences like the transformation of the Labour Party, the rise of the DSA and the travails of “movements” like Podemos and France Insoumise point to a revival of the mass party, and what kind of forms of political communication and education and intermediate bodies and decision-making structures are appropriate to the present.

## The luxurious future: visions of a socialist society

David Broder (The luxurious future: visions of a socialist society), Aaron Bastani (invited), Kirsten Ghodsee (invited), David Broder)

The rise of new electoral forces on the Left has allowed the revival of the word “socialism” as a project able to inspire millions of people. Yet after the collapse of the Soviet model, the hollowing out of social-democracy and the atomisation of the industrial working class, the kind of form this “socialism” might take - or whether it is an end goal to work toward at all - remains unclear. In the mouths of Jeremy Corbyn or Bernie Sanders, socialism appears more as a brake on the far right, neoliberal atomisation or ecological catastrophe than a clear set of principles for social organisation. This panel, sponsored by Catalyst magazine, draws on recent contributions on the socialist/communist future as well as the history of utopian projects to ask what tendencies in the present allow us to make out the contours of a postcapitalist society.

## Is Lexit over?

David Broder (none)

Labour’s disputed position on Brexit as well as the setbacks for left-populist forces in the European elections seem to have undermined the forces behind a left-wing exit from the European Union. Yet as the EU integration process tightens the freedom of action for national governments, and pan-European left projects struggle to find mass support, the need for an alternative to the existing order seems more pressing than ever. This panel asks whether Labour can impose a progressive outcome to the Brexit process and whether the window of opportunity for a left-wing challenge to the EU has closed.

## The Bible of Operaismo

David Broder (none)

Mario Tronti has been one of the most innovative and radical contributors to the development of Marxist theory in post-war Europe. But his work, although increasingly discussed in Anglophone Marxist circles, has remained largely untranslated into English. This year will see the publication of two volumes of work from the classical period of Tronti’s “political workerism”: the long-awaited English translation of *Workers & Capital*, the “bible of operaismo,” from Verso Books, as well as *The Copernican Revolution* [provisional title], a newly edited collection of public talks, personal letters, and political dispatches written during the same period, published by Common Notions. Drawing from these new translations, this panel will recapitulate the essential historical and methodological premises of Tronti’s “Leninist critique of Marx” from the viewpoint of working-class politics. It will also provide the audience with some reflections on what use activists and theorists might make of Tronti’s work fifty years after its original production.

## **Aesthetic Ecology: The Concept of Nature in Adorno**

**Daniel LeBlanc (University of Toronto)**

Against the overwhelming consensus that the Dialectic of Enlightenment represents Adorno's last word on nature and its relationship to society, I argue that it is his unfinished opus *Aesthetic Theory* that contains his most sustained meditation on nature, and not only in its substantial section concerning natural beauty. Far from being a specialist treatise on late Modernist art, *Aesthetic Theory* is concerned primarily with the aesthetic sphere as the incarnation of political possibility, the sensory realm of non-identity. Artworks objectivate the extimacy of nature within and without the subject. Adorno's unfinished opus, I argue, provides the resources for salvaging a robust concept of nature without regression to a pre-critical realism: a necessity for a 21st century climate politics that doesn't cede the ground won from positivism on the politicization of nature. Many strands of ecological Marxism have recently attempted a re-naturalization of history, arguing, against Benjamin's insight that capitalism will not die a natural death, that nature herself will be its gravedigger. To this re-naturalization of history we must counter the political historicization of nature. Such a political historicization is continually re-inscribed in arts unconscious history writing, loaded with all the charge of the historical moment of its legibility. This line of inquiry is meant to forward the germinal project of the recovery of the aesthetic dimension of natural experience for Marxist ecology, recently revived by Andreas Malm (2018). It draws inspiration from Walter Benjamin's parallel endeavour to regain certain mythical concepts long left for dead by the left, then proving powerful ideological weapons for the Lebensphilosophical far right's endeavour that proved wildly theoretically successful, only half a century too late to be practically significant. Following the scent of a strange interplay between reactionary theory and revolutionary practice, Benjamin developed his philosophy of history through a theologically inspired implosion of the ideas of Jung, Schmitt, Kluge, and Sorel. The ecological crisis and its nascent appropriation by neo-fascism is strictly analogous to this situation.

## **A Discussion on the Implications and Limits of Industry 4.0: Is “Online Capitalism” Possible?**

**Ozgur Narin (Ordu University, Turkey)**

This presentation will first try to examine Marx's *Notebooks on Technology* and pave the way for conceptualizing robots and artificial intelligence as the development of his analysis. According to Marx, machinery is composed of three essentially different parts: the motor mechanism, the transmitting mechanism, and the tool or working machine. So in the first part we will try to examine the development of transmitting mechanism to Information and Communication Technologies and the development of working machine to Control and Computer systems hence to Robots and Automation. So this will set the background for understanding the Industry 4.0 project. Industry 4.0 is a European project that aims to integrate digital networks and manufacturing process with the whole commodity-value chain by using sensors and cyber-physical systems, that is, the integration of computation,



networking, and physical processes. The discourse of the project is that the Big Data collected by the cyber-physical systems, kept and processed on The Cloud would help systems to be integrated and decentralized at the same time. While these are the claims of the “Industry 4.0”, the presentation will focus on the the blackboxing of algorithms, optimization paradigms of the Industry 4.0 discourse. The discussion is built over two main sets of questions: (1) If the whole process is digitalized and controlled by computer algorithms as projected, can the industrial production as a whole be optimized and integrated? Do the Big Data and analytics make online capitalism possible? On the condition of the contradicting interests and profits in capitalist competition, is it possible to think optimization only as a technical problem? How can we elaborate the social contradictions in this capitalist project?; (2) Does “the invisible hand” of the market become visible by the Big Data gathered from cyber-physical systems? By unpacking these questions, this presentation underlines that the “Industry 4.0” project has significant limits and contradictions with respect to sociotechnical imaginaries due to the capitalist competition. The risks and instability created by profit seeking actors would be immense in the era of algorithms, artificial intelligence which try to predict preemptive steps of the competing actors. And blackboxing the algorithms, cyber-physical systems or Big Data and Analytics would not hide the problem of agency, the actors seeking for profit particularly under real-time competition. So, this would be an utopia for capitalism but reality for another world Imagining or discussing about a different world is possible. The infrastructure of the Industry 4.0 paves the way for the conditions of integration and co-production of the whole industry but under different social relations. At the end, the paper will discuss alternative usages of algorithms, possibilities of distributed planning versus centralized planning and try to integrate class movement with alternative organization of social production.

## **From Socialist Calculation to Political Ecology**

### **John O’Neill (Manchester)**

A central legacy of Marx's work, which remains an area of debate, concerns the nature and possibility of rational economic choices in a society beyond capitalism and commodity production. In an influential paper of 1920, Mises denied that rational economic choices were possible in a socialist society. He was not the first to make that claim, but the paper was influential in opening the more widely known debates about socialist planning that followed. What has often been missed in the subsequent accounts of the debates was important environmental dimensions of the debates that were central to the development of later ecological economics. In this paper I show why those often neglected dimensions of the debates retain their importance for current resistance to the increasing use of market modes of environmental governance. The first section of the paper outlines the different dimensions of market modes of environmental governance and their problems. The second section traces the source of some of the central criticisms of these modes of governance in the socialist calculation debates.

## **Capitalist Crises, Peripheral Restructuring, and the Rise of Authoritarianism: The 2008 Financial Crisis and Tanzanias Response**

**Sabatho Nyamsenda (University of Dar es Salaam)**

The aim of this paper is to study the causes and nature of capitalist crises and their effects on peripheral countries. It diverts from the mainstream scholarship both Neo-Keynesian and neoclassical which delinks crises from the internal nature of capitalism. Instead, it is anchored in a Marxian Political Economy that locates the crisis within the womb of the internal contradictions of the capitalist system. It interrogates different theses within the Marxist framework and settles on the over-accumulation thesis as the best framework to explain the origin and nature of capitalist crises. Furthermore, it shows how crises originating in the centre of the capitalist system have historically produced dire consequences in the periphery while, moreover, the periphery shoulders the cost of resolving the crisis in the centre. Using the 2008 crisis of neoliberal capitalism as a case study, the paper shows how the crisis affected Tanzania's economy, forcing the country to restructure in order to conform to the neoliberal reforms pushed by imperialist countries. It is this restructuring that led to the de-legitimation of neoliberalism among the working people, resulting in the election of an authoritarian populist regime with both nationalist and neo-fascist tendencies.

## **Primitive Accumulation and Accumulation by Dispossession through Environmental Conservation: Evidence from Tanzania**

**Joachim Abunuwasi Lugansya Mwami (University College of Jordan)**

While Marx's theory of primitive accumulation leaned more on the original process through which capitalist production emerged from pre-capitalist social formations in Europe, Rosa Luxemburg conceived of it as a continuous process. Using David Harvey's concept of accumulation by dispossession, I identify three principal means of primitive accumulation in Tanzania: the privatization of state-owned assets, the dispossession of peasant land, and the commodification of nature all in unison had the principal objective of transferring public assets into private use. I argue that given the stringent rules imposed on the bureaucratic bourgeoisie during the Nyerere era, the onslaught of neoliberal policies from the mid-1980s to date became an opportune moment for the erstwhile capitalist class to carve out an economic niche for itself which had been wrenched from it. To this end, a ruthless and despotic process of looting and dispossessing the public of their wealth or land started. What was originally considered to be the commons or public or social services of national interest like education, health care, water, knowledge and information, the sale of government buildings, the confiscation of herds of cattle, etc., are a case in point. Without exception all have been and are still being redirected for private purpose in the form of capital. Not only is land being forcefully dispossessed from peasants and pastoralists in the names of so-called investors both local and foreign, but also other forms of dispossession which are indirect, hidden, and subtle in nature such as formalization of property and

assets are being used to dispossess the public. The other form is the enclosure and the commodification of National Parks and other protected areas as a form of primitive accumulation for local and foreign capitalists. To substantiate my arguments, evidence is provided.

## The Blindspots of Digital Innovation Fetishism

Marko Ampuja (Tampere University)

Market-centred ideas surrounding innovation and entrepreneurship have established themselves as key ideological forms of contemporary capitalism. While innovation refers today to a host of different practices, including innovations in organisational structures or in marketing, the dominant way to understand innovation is to conceive it as the processes of bringing commercial technologies and products to the market. The role of digital information and communication technologies have been particularly prominent in mainstream discussions on capitalist development, often singled out as the defining technologies of the current age allegedly based on knowledge, imagination and human creativity. In this role, digital innovations have been endowed with fetishistic characteristics, that is, they are continuously associated with all things positive, always changing the society for the better. Historically, the technological dynamism of capitalism has served as a powerful basis to legitimise it and continues to do so in the present conjuncture characterised by deep social inequalities and the global climate change. Typically, digital technological innovations are imagined as solutions to the current social and environmental ills (e.g. jobs search apps or AI-driven clean tech), while their systemic connections to the capitalist mode of production is neglected. In this presentation, I will call mainstream views of digital innovation into question, identify their blindspots and contrast these with Marxist viewpoints. From an ideology theoretical viewpoint, public and academic conceptions of innovation can be split into two main camps: neoliberal pro-market perspectives and more state-centred (neo-Schumpeterian or Keynesian) understandings. I will first reconstruct these two main innovation paradigms and the economic and management theories on which they are based. The dominant pro-market accounts present us with a positive vision of market-driven creative destruction spearheaded by digital innovation entrepreneurs, technologies and applications of all kinds. These views are sanitised, however, glossing over the hierarchical social power relations to which the creation of newest innovations are attached to and their often destructive nature. The state-centred perspectives (represented e.g. by Mariana Mazzucatos work) are intellectually superior to the neoliberal conceptions, but are weakened by their instrumental view of the state that lacks a critical analysis of how the state is organized politically and ideologically in different contexts. These problems of mainstream innovation perspectives lead to the need to examine digital innovations and their production critically rather than affirmatively not as essentially good and desirable things, but as technologies whose development is embedded in the political-economic context of capitalist social relations and the capitalist state. In the second part of my presentation, I will focus on developing a critical alternative to the mainstream understandings, with the help of the writings of a number of scholars representing the

Marxist tradition, including Karl Marx, Ernst Mandel, Nicos Poulantzas, David Harvey and Tony Smith.

## **Deep roots of consumerism: the tangled relation between consumption and ecological devastation in Brazil**

**Giulia Falcone (Faculty of Philosophy, Letters and Human Sciences, University of So Paulo, Brazil)**

Despite some past attempts to overcome the model of associated dependency, Brazilian economy has not been able to guarantee its sufficiency. Therefore, in order to properly fit global capitalism, Brazil's economic growth is still based on the exploration of natural resources. During PT governments (2003-2016), the continuity of this system intended to conciliate the capitalist growth model to the party's original discourse, which defended the reduction of social inequality and income distribution. However, while the possibility of a green growth was not even put on the table, social inequality reduction and income distribution were confronted, but only palliatively with the expansion of consumer power. Such guidelines adopted by PT have proven to be not only precariously reformists but also environmentally devastating. From the intensification of mineration to the transposition of rivers to benefit the agrobusiness, PTs strategy of defending economic progress while repairing its collateral effects with consumer goods has, as its upmost example, the construction of hydroelectric plant Belo Monte. Beyond the disregard to ecological devastation, the government has implemented a so called emergency plan, in which indigenous populations damaged by the hydroelectric installation were not properly moved and accommodated, but were to be compensated with consumer demands such as cars, boats, TV sets or even Coke. Thus, this paper intends to analyse the roots of consumerism in Brazil, which is intrinsically and inevitably attached to ecological devastation. Even if the organism in which these elements articulate might precede PT governments, the abandonment of the party's original agenda has helped to consolidate the tragic conception that subordinates employment and improvement of workers' condition to economic expansion and life quality to consumerism.

## **Marx on Campus: A Short History of the Marburg School**

**Loren Martin Balhorn (Historical Materialism Book Series)**

Despite its impact on West German Marxism, in the Anglo-Saxon world the Marburg School is still largely unknown. Lothar Peters book *Marx on Campus: A Short History of the Marburg School* is the first monograph on the Marburg School of West German Marxism. The panel will introduce the book that will have been published two weeks prior to the Historical Materialism conference as the 195th volume of the Historical Materialism Book Series. Key representatives of the Marburg School from the older generation like Frank Deppe and Dieter Boris (tbc) will discuss the book, the intellectual and political achievements, theoretical shortcomings and the state of today's Marburg School in diaspora.

with Ingar Solty from the last generation of the Marburg School and Loren Balhorn, the books translator. Should his health permit, the author may also be able to join.

## **BRINGING BACK THE CLASS IN TURKISH POLITICS- CONSTITUTING THE CLASS BY A PROGRAM OF DECOMMODIFYING THE LABOUR**

**Mert Bykkarabacak (Yildiz Technical University/ Eitim Sen/ SODAP)**

The disappearance of the class in the political science and contemporary political thought is concurrent with its increasing weight in daily politics. This is the result of the neo-liberal hegemony and although this hegemony has been fading since 2008, the class can not still regain its central position in understanding our societies. The populist moment is directly related with this interregnum. The existence of the class distinctions are playing their role to demolish the central left and right political movements but the class can not build its sovereign subjectivity as a result of some ideological ( new political movements, post-Marxism, post-structuralism) and existential ( stratification of the class itself, middle class issue, precariousness, post-Fordism, outsourcing) factors. This disappearance of the class results in the culturalization of the political struggles. This trend makes it difficult for the working classes to build up their sovereign political actor and instead lead them jumping on the bandwagon. This situation reminds Marx's analysis of the peasantry in the 18th Brumaire of Louis Napoleon. If a class can not represent itself, it is represented by the others. The Turkish political scenery has been a good example of this since 2002. The working classes has been mostly represented by a layer of peripheric bourgeoisie ( Anatolian tigers) whose political representative AKP has reigned since then. The Gezi Revolt in 2013 indicated the disengagement of the urban middle classes from the ruling party, but the blue-collared working classes have mostly supported AKP until the economic crises which started in 2018 and continues with the retrogressive life standards of all the working and middle classes. Now this support has started to erode as well. At this critical juncture can the working classes in Turkey act as a sovereign political actor and create a political movement to lead the middle classes with a radical wealth redistribution and economic democracy program? I believe we are in political moment where we must build up the class sovereignty from upside down by a political movement with a radical economic program to commodify the labour

## **The chaos? Bolsonaro administration and the challenges to understand Brazil today**

**Marcelo Badar Mattos (Universidade Federal Fluminense - Brazil)**

This paper will try to update analysis previously presented in H&M Fifteenth Conference and in the H&M Forum on Brazilian Crisis. After the first months of Bolsonaro administration, it is not difficult to identify the main lines of intervention and the different groups and interests sharing power in a very conflictive way. The ultraliberal Minister of

Economy and his assessors represents the core of capital's agenda: pensions' reform, privatizations and reinforcement of the banks' supremacy. Militaries, in as many (or more) positions in the government than in the Dictatorship (1964-1985) are trying to occupy the space of a moderator power in a government of immoderate. And Bolsonaro and his close allies (specially the ministers of Education and Foreign Affairs) are more committed with the ideological combat (against the mythical "gender ideology"; "cultural Marxism" and so on) than to any other subject. That's why some of the main forms of resistance came from women's movement, since the electoral period, and from the students, after cuts in the educational budgets and ideological attacks against universities and scientific researches. In June, a general strike against the pensions' system reform put the organized working class in the battle front, but when this abstract was written it was impossible to advance any prognoses for the close future. However, this presentation has the aim of going beyond the day by day of political facts looking for answers to some wider issues. What impacts the electoral victory of a neofascist president has over the democratic regime constructed in Brazil after the political transition in the 1980's? What role a decade and a half of governments with a class conciliation program had in the political crisis which opened the door to Bolsonaro's election? How Brazilian bourgeoisie, historically committed with autocratic forms of domination, floated from the support to a class conciliation government to the bet in Bolsonaro? What social forces are strongly compromised with Bolsonaros ideological agenda and why? Which groups and movements could change the balance of forces against the presidency of Bolsonaro? Mobilizing categories and analysis from Antonio Gramsci and Florestan Fernandes, this presentation aims to answer some of these questions, trying to figure out the meaning of such right wing turn in the long-term tradition of Brazilian "permanent counter-revolution".

## **New Developments in Rosa Luxemburg Research and Biography**

### **Loren Martin Balhorn (Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung )**

Rosa Luxemburgs Depiction in Biographical and Literary Prose Julia Killet, historian, Kurt-Eisner-Verein (Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung in Bavaria) Rosa Luxemburgs thought and her advocacy of democratic socialism are still relevant even 100 years after her death. This is evidenced by the countless academic conferences on her life and work which have taken place around the world for decades. But authors, writers, and biographers have also engaged with Rosa Luxemburg extensively. Over 40 biographies along with novels, thrillers, murder mysteries, and literary prose about her have appeared well into the 21st century. Rosa Luxemburgs depiction in selected biographical and literary prose constitutes the central focus of this paper. Works are contextualized in their respective eras, before inquiring why these biographers were interested in Rosa Luxemburg and what they sought to convey to their readers. Rosa Luxemburgs Concept of Revolution: Against Well-Worn Misunderstandings Jörn Schtrumpf, historian, Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung No one on the Left was as strongly and systematically targeted by friendly fire after her death than Rosa Luxemburg. Rosa Luxemburgs denigration to a half-Menshevik (Stalin) was topped only by her elevation to the rank of Bolshevik, albeit an inconsequential one, as she could never have compared to Lenin, that measure of all earthly and unearthly greatness (She was



mistaken , she was mistaken , she was mistaken Lenin, 1922). Rosa Luxemburg was anything but a Bolshevik, not even an inconsequential one. In August/December 1906 Lenin, Zinoviev and Luxemburg debated the lessons of the Russian Revolution of 1905 in the Finnish town of Kuokkala. She argued for a temporary because not sustainable in the long run dictatorship of the proletariat, which could force the Tsarist regime to make legal concessions. For Luxemburg, the state secured the ground for any struggle for socialism desired and fought for by the majority of the working class. Socialism for Rosa Luxemburg was the extension of political freedoms into economic freedoms. For Lenin, on the other hand, social freedoms stood at the heart of the matter political freedoms, he believed, could be dispensed with if necessary. This would become the brand essence for 70 years of actually existing socialism it has been used to discredit every alternative to neoliberal barbarism ever since. Dr. Jörn Schtrumpf will present his findings in the new, revised edition of his book of the same name. Rosa Luxemburg: The Art of Politics Isabel Loureiro (Sao Paulo) Dr. Loureiro will introduce the revised edition of her Rosa Luxemburg biography.

## **Dead-end of the Polish way to socialism. The consequences of a failed workers' democracy reform.**

**Maciej Duklewski (University of Warsaw), Karolina Grzegorzczak (University of Warsaw)**

In this paper, we propose a case study of the main automotive manufacturer in the Polish Peoples Republic, the FSO (Passenger Automobile Factory), through 20 biographical narratives of retired employees. Individual workers histories reflect nation-wide processes and allow us to trace both perspectives of their experience the social, related to urban immigration and emerging class consciousness in a socialist state, as well as the subjective, related to disciplining the workers bodies and their affective conditioning. We single out three distinct periods: 1950 - 1958 when intensive industrialization caused an influx of unskilled workers challenging the position of experienced workers who learned their trade before WWII. 1958 - 1989 when workers councils were abolished and a new managerial and technical elite began to form. A patriotic/nationalist public discourse emerged. 1989 - 2009 when consecutive foreign investors introduced a new disciplinary approach, restructured the production, parceled the companys fixed capital and laid off a significant part of the workforce. The proposed periodization enables an exploration of various parallel processes impacting the workers agency. Firstly, our goal is to study disciplinary methods of bodily and affective control imposed on or invented by workers. During the initial period of the factory, the workers were involved not only in its construction, but also had a decisive role in starting and maintaining the production process. Their attachment fostered an expectation of collective governing in the factory. Secondly, we discuss the failure of the attempt to create a functional workers democracy. The decline of the workers councils petrified the influence of technocratic elites, hindered class coherence among workers and resulted in a preemptive adoption of the capitalist logic of production. We argue that without these changes culminating in the vulnerable position of the working class, the rapid and scarcely contested privatization of the FSO wouldnt have been possible.

Thirdly, we wish to examine the strategies of resistance among employees who defied late capitalist methods of labour rationalization and their peripheral role in the global chains of production.

## **Trotsky's Lessons of October: A Historiographical Disaster**

**Lars Lih ()**

In late 1924, as an introduction to a collection of his writings from 1917, Trotsky published *Lessons of October*. This short essay (around 65 pages) is probably the most influential single contribution to the historiography of the revolution of 1917 and the role of the Bolsheviks during that year. Its influence is evident in each of the three main streams of the historiography of 1917: the Trotskyist tradition, Soviet scholars, and Western academic historians. Unfortunately, this influence has been a disaster for genuine understanding of the political dynamics of 1917. Trotsky's overall interpretive framework of rearming the party fundamentally distorts the Bolshevik message to the Soviet constituency, the relation of that message to the party's prewar outlook, and the concrete meaning of 'All Power to the Soviets!' in 1917. An unflinching look at this undeserved classic is urgently called for. My paper will first document the actual argument of *Lessons of October* and its later influence. After an overall survey of the problems with its interpretation of 1917, I will confront Trotsky's 1924 interpretation with an vital but overlooked source: Trotsky's own collected writings from 1917, found in the same volume as *Lessons*.

## **Ownership in the hands of the few: a class analysis of the rise of the top 1% in the UK**

**Ben Tippet (Greenwich Political Economy Research Centre)**

Extreme and increasing wealth inequality is considered across the political spectrum to be one of the most pressing global challenges of the coming decade (World Economic Forum, 2017). The concern is driven by two stylised facts: (i) wealth is more concentrated at the top of the distribution compared to other economic variables, such as income, and; (ii) since the 1980s wealth has become more concentrated following its secular decline after the second world war (Piketty, 2014). Furthermore, with environmental constraints on the expansion of future production, the attention on redistribution will only continue to become more focused. While empirical work on wealth inequality has only recently flourished within mainstream economics following the publication of Piketty's best-selling *Capital in the 21st Century*, questions of ownership have always played a central role within Marxism. This paper aims to bring this Marxist theoretical analysis to this recent empirical work, by assessing a class based explanation for the rise in the share of wealth going to the richest 1% in the UK. The paper first discusses the theoretical link between the top 1% and the capitalist class (Rehm et al., 2016; Wolff and Zacharias, 2013; Wright, 2015). It will argue that the top 1% is not simply an arbitrary definition, but represents a group with some key features of the capitalist class: the ability to live off capital income,

ownership of the means of production (in the form of business assets), and a dynamic of reproduction through inheritance and bequests. Secondly, the paper estimates how macroeconomic shifts in the bargaining power between labour and capital are responsible for the rise in top 1% wealth shares. Using data for the UK, the paper tests the different channels through which class power impacts top 1% wealth shares: the suppression of wages in the labour market; the rise of financialised capitalism and asset price inflation of portfolios held by the rich; the commodification and concentration of housing assets; the selling off of public state enterprises; changes in taxes; the rise of a managerial class of top earners and the offshoring of wealth. The significance of relative importance of these channels will be tested econometrically using time series analysis. The paper concludes with an analysis of policies proposed to tackle wealth inequality. These include an increase in taxes on capital income and wealth; increase in taxes on top incomes; trade union legislation; worker ownership funds funded by capital gains tax, and the re-nationalisation of assets. The paper argues that only structural transformation of financial and labour markets will reverse the concentrating dynamic of wealth over time, and that marginal tweaks to taxation will have only limited impacts. Bibliography Piketty, T., 2014. Capital in the twenty-first century 685. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11127-014-0188-9> Rehm, M., Naqvi, S.A.A., Hofmann, J., 2016. Different but equal? classes, wealth, and perceptions in Europe, Materialien zu Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft. Kammer für Arbeiter und Angestellte für Wien, Wien. Wolff, E.N., Zacharias, A., 2013. Class structure and economic inequality. *Camb. J. Econ.* 37, 13811406. <https://doi.org/10.1093/cje/bet026> World Economic Forum, 2017. The Global Risks Report 2017 12th Edition, Insight Report. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107415324.004> Wright, E.O., 2015. Understanding Class. Verso.

## Waste, Race, Capitalism, Feminism

### Françoise Vergès ()

Without the work of women of color, which is necessary but must remain invisible literally and invaluative terms neoliberal and patriarchal capitalism would not function. Upper class, white, neoliberal, and even liberal people must enter these spaces without having to acknowledge, to think of, to imagine, the work of cleaning/caring. It is a global situation and it is primarily white women who act as supervisors and regulators of this labor done by black and migrant/refugee women. The contradiction and dialectic between the male neoliberal bourgeois performing body and racialized female exhausted bodies illustrate the connections between neoliberalism, race, and heteropatriarchy. It also uncovers new borders that have been drawn between cleanliness and dirtiness in an age in which concerns are growing for clean air, clean water, clean houses, clean bodies, clean minds, and green spaces. The growing concern for a healthy/powerful body and mind is built on the New Age ideology of the 1970s, which appropriated Eastern and indigenous conceptions and practices, or esoteric Western ones. It has developed into a major and lucrative market, offering meditation and herbal teas, yoga and exotic whole grains, gyms and massages for every age, founded on class privilege and that very cultural appropriation. Its aim is personal efficiency and a maximization of physical and mental

power. It has even fed a desire to outlive human constraints, and led to research programs for life extension, antiaging, and solving the death problem, financed by the theocracy of Silicon Valley. Franoise Vergs examines race, gender, migrations and the cleaning/caring industry drawing on marxist feminist theory on social reproduction but by looking at social reproduction out of the domestic sphere.

## Popular sovereignty from common sense to strategy

Michael Bray (Southwestern University)

In an era of resurgent populist politics, no project grounded in common sense can avoid the question of popular sovereignty. This concept and that of the people which underpins it are deeply contradictory. The question is: how might they be rendered coherent? This paper moves towards an answer by highlighting contradictions internal to the concept of the people. First, it sketches the tension articulated in Poulantzass dual conception of the people: on the one hand, a strategic concept naming the common condition of the dominated classes and their potential alliance with the new petty bourgeoisie of mental laborers; on the other, an ideological product of the state (the incarnation of mental labors separation from manual), as a nation-people, with its own fictive ethnicity, etc. If this split can appear a symptom of the concepts incoherence, tracing the concrete contradictions internal to its sides in light of the character of populisms as social reproduction struggles articulates elements for a coherent contemporary strategy. As a form such struggles take in conjunctures of class de-composition, populism re-aligns the people as a strategic concept, especially regarding class alliances. Resentment of the private government of elites is intertwined with an increasingly central experience of class: the control functions assigned by capital and state to a mental labor (and its bearers) separated from material processes of production and reproduction. Graduates without a future mourning aspirations for control are as much a danger as an opportunity for alliances. Democratization must involve an explicit dismantling of the privileges of mental labor in production and politics. At the same time, a nation-people imagined not via producerism but from the perspective of social reproduction struggles can tendentially exceed the nation-form, centralizing subaltern demands of the racialized, feminized, disqualified, etc. as the common condition of a people defined by its right to be where it is and by relational conditions of exploitation, domination, exclusion that are globally shared. A coherent strategy today must develop out of and fundamentally breaks with common sense conceptions of the people, inventing both ways to facilitate the organization of those traditionally excluded from politics and to tendentially break with traditional intellectual leadership and control (without falling into illusions of immediate horizontalism). These complex tasks define the core of a popular sovereignty worth the name. Teachers strikes and electoral politics are considered, in closing, as augurs of the possibilities and problems for such a strategic approach.

## **RED LIGHT YUGOSLAV PARTISAN PHOTOGRAPHY AND SOCIAL MOVEMENT 1941-1945**

**Davor Konjikusic (Independent scholar)**

Darko Konjikusic's recent book, "Red Light", features over 400 archival photographs from the Yugoslav partisan liberation war of 1941-1945, reclaiming these images for posterity and demonstrating the central role photography played in conveying and articulating the self-understanding of the movement at the time. This paper explores how photography was used for propaganda conveying the goals and values of the partisans, while also tracing the systems of distribution that made its success possible and how it can be related to Yugoslav resistance more generally and the theorization of the partisan war as a social movement. The author will also show and discuss some photographs from his collection.

## **Containing capitals outcasts: state sovereignty and border externalisation**

**Hassan Ould Moctar (Department of Development Studies, SOAS, University of London)**

The complex reconfigurations of space and sovereignty entailed by the process of EU border externalisation has been much reflected upon in critical scholarly literature, but there is less commentary on how these reconfigurations relate to parallel processes of capitalist development. This paper argues that the implications of EU external border policy for sovereignty can be grasped by situating the externalisation process against the backdrop of accumulation by dispossession, and the problems of filtering and containing those dispossessed to which it gives rise. Drawing upon 11 months of fieldwork in Mauritania consisting of qualitative interviews with migration and border management officials as well as ethnographic analyses of migrant labour in the urban informal economy, the paper highlights the intrinsic link between the relocation of EU border functions to Mauritania and the country's role within the global capitalist system. The reconfiguration of sovereignty at stake in the externalisation process emerges as a further reflection of the state's peripheral and subordinate integration into the world economy.

## **Russia's State-led Economy and "State Capitalism" Theory: Some Views from Japanese Marxist Political Economy**

**Takeo HIDAI (Wako University)**

After the inauguration of Vladimir Putin, contributions of economic activities by the state and state-owned companies toward the Russian economy as a whole has become significant, and the proportions of those actors to the Russian GDP are still increasing. According to the Federal Antimonopoly Service of Russia, around the financial crisis of

1998, the ratio was about 25%, in 2008 — 40-45%, in 2013 it became majority— over 50%, and in 2017— it became 60-70% (source: The Report on the Conditions of Competition in Russian Federation 2018, by the Federal Antimonopoly Service of Russia). This proportion means that the economy of Russia is not an ordinary market-led economy, but a kind of state-led economy. In the background of this situation, we could see the economic policy of Putin administration, and we could analyse it by using the Marxist theoretical concept of “state capitalism”. Then, we will review the Marxist approach to the analysis of “state capitalism”, from the theories of Lenin and Bukharin to the recent theories, including some approaches by the theorists of Japanese Marxist political economy. Finally, we will apply the “state capitalism” theory to the analysis of current Russian economy.

## **Back to the '30s? Crisis, Repetition and Transition in the 20th and 21th Centuries.**

**George Souvlis (European University Institute)**

Back to the '30s? Crisis, Repetition and Transition in the 20th and 21th Centuries. Invocations of the 1930s are a commonplace of contemporary public culture: The Great Recession is compared to the Great Depression, while others hearken to the political movements of the 1930s to understand the contemporary rise of populism and right-wing authoritarianism. This panel by drawing on the Marxist literature brings together an interdisciplinary group of papers to reflect critically on the meaning of this comparison, asking what it takes to draw these parallels and how they might contribute (or misdirect) the work of intellectual and political analysis. We ask in this panel what forms do connections between the 1930s and today assume in scholarly work and in broader popular cultures of comparison? What makes them epistemologically legible, affectively potent, and politically efficacious? And what can such explorations contribute to understanding trans-historical comparison, both as a phenomenon of contemporary public culture and as an analytical and hermeneutic tool? This panel brings together a multidisciplinary group of papers to address these questions, examining the relationship between the 1930s and today through a wide range of social, political, cultural and economic processes, in diverse regional and national contexts. Importantly, each paper engages both periods offering a collective engagement with the meaning and methodological significance of historical comparison (or juxtaposition) for disciplines which frequently employ more presentist research methods, as well as on the writing of history from the present.

More precisely, the first paper by Jeremy Rayner deploying the Gramscian notion of passive revolution attempts to understand the political crises that emerged during the 1930's and led to authoritarian regimes like this of Hitler and Mussolini and the current one that destabilized the regimes of extreme center. The next three papers examines how this crisis articulated in different national contexts. George Souvlis by using the concept of organic crisis by Antonio Gramsci examines the crisis of parliamentary politics in Greece in 1930's and 2010's and attempts to offer an explanation to the causes that in the first case



led to the establishment of Ioannis Metaxas fascist regime and in the second period to the emergence of Syriza. David Broder's paper focuses on the instrumentalized uses of Karl Marx's work by the current Italian far-right and this of interwar period arguing that we can induce from the different perceptions of his work different diagnoses on the capitalist condition itself now and then. The last paper of Burc and Tokatli attempts to offer a comparative analysis of the authoritarian ways in which the republic was established in 1930's and the current autarchic regime of Erdogan. Summing up, this panel by critically engaging with the apparent commonalities between the 1930s and the present, including the Great Depression and the Great Recession, the rise of populism, nativism and right-wing authoritarianism and the limits of liberalism as a political, economic and cultural framework attempts to make a distinct and timely contribution to our understanding of the past and the present, as well as the stakes, strategies and rhetoric of historical comparison itself.

Jeremy Rayner, "The 1930's moment: from financial expansion to passive revolution" This paper identifies the elements of a recurrence of the "1930s moment" in the global capitalist political economy during the last ten years. The stage is set for the 1930s moment by decades of financial expansion culminating in a global financial crisis, which is itself the reflection of the exhaustion of opportunities for profitable material production within the existing regime of accumulation. As it becomes increasingly difficult to articulate hegemony through appeals to shared progress within the existing order, constituent power is mobilized as more or less revolutionary appeals to popular sovereignty and "change". Diverse demands for social protection of threatened livelihoods and despoiled natures may be partially accommodated through the politics of decommodification, or redirected towards fetishistic misrepresentations of capitalist processes, drawing on the persistent logics of racism and nationalism. A capitalist exit from the 1930s moment, however, depends on the reconstitution of profitable production through the coordinated action of state and capital to establish a new regime of accumulation; a substantially more complex task of political and economic articulation. It is argued that the characteristic political expression of the 1930s moment is, therefore, passive revolution, understood in its twin sense as cooptation of revolutionary impulses from below and as a capitalist modernization from above—without prejudging the success of either project. Jeremy Rayner, Instituto de Altos Estudios Nacionales, [jeremy.rayner@iaen.edu.ec](mailto:jeremy.rayner@iaen.edu.ec)

George Souvlis, "Gramsci and the crisis of parliamentary politics in Greece: Organic crises and counter-hegemonic responses in the interwar and memoranda eras" This paper applies a Gramscian analysis to the crisis of parliamentary democracy in Greece during the interwar period and after the implementation of the austerity regime in 2010. In both cases, the crisis of the parliamentary regime emerged after the breakup of a global financial crisis that severely affected the political system of the country. However, despite common causes of the political crisis, the results were different: the establishment of the authoritarian regime under Metaxas during the interwar period and, eight decades later, the electoral victory of the left-wing party of Syriza. As a point of departure for our analysis of how these different political developments emerged from the same structural causes, we take Gramsci's definition of an organic crisis or a crisis of hegemony. Under these conditions, the social classes are detached from their parties and an increased political

mobilization takes places that leads to a crisis of parliamentary representation. the political response to this type of crisis is a counter-hegemonic confrontation in cultural and ideological terrains based on political identities that breaks effectively with hegemony, affirming two antagonistic positions: us (the people) in front of them (the bourgeois). Adopting this methodological viewpoint, we argue that the political actors who established themselves in response to the parliamentary regimes are those who effectively managed, despite their different ideological positions, to offer a counter-hegemonic project to the conjunctural crisis of hegemony that emerged after the two global financial crises. George Souvlis holds a Phd from EUI, [george.souvlis@eui.eu](mailto:george.souvlis@eui.eu)

David Broder, "The Fascist critique of Karl Marx", Leafing through the pages of CasaPounds Il primato nazionale one may be surprised by the references to Karl Marx. Both movement leaders like Gianluca Iannone and intellectual inspirers/fellow-travellers like Diego Fusaro deploy themes like the reserve army of labour and critiques of commodification in an incoherent rehashing of Marxian anti-capitalism, studded with positive references to left-wing heroes from Che Guevara to Hugo Chavez. Within today's Italian fascist/ milieu CasaPound is both among the more social and theoretically-developed. This chapter explores its intellectual hinterland in the left-fascist and (separately) syndicalist currents within 1920s-30s Italian fascism, insofar as both attempted to symbolically capture Marxian reference points while combining them with utopian and non-Marxist socialists from Proudhon to Sorel and Lagardelle. The chapter nonetheless contrasts these currents response to the respective global economic crisis following 1929 and 2008, emphasising that while the left-fascists of the 1930s were able to identify a vast range of contemporary experiences (the USSR, Japan, later the New Deal) as embodying a general managerial-plannerist drive toward social harmony consonant with their own supersession of Marx, this forward-looking and indeed utopian politics is essentially absent from today's Italian fascist milieu, instead pivoted on a purely negative critique of contemporary global capitalist institutions. David Broder is member of HM book series, [davidbr1988@gmail.com](mailto:davidbr1988@gmail.com)

Rosa Burc & Mahir Tokatli, "Old-New Turkey: Second foundation or return to default settings of the republic under AKP post-2015?" The aftermath of the June 2015 elections, as well as the failed coup attempt in 2016 have been critical junctures in recent Turkish politics that have given the government under Erdogan power to put Turkey on the course of consolidated authoritarianism, also widely called the second foundation of Turkey. Techniques to normalize emergency rule by routinizing executive decrees and eliminating the role of the parliament as an arena for deliberation, restructuring processes of other state apparatuses, re-securitizing the Kurdish issue, as well as using body politics as a tool of power preservation, undoubtedly remains in the center of regime change under AKP. This paper contributes a comparative analysis of the similarities and differences between the long 19030s and today by shedding light on (1) constitution, (2) nation building and (3) body politics/womens question, to then argue that regime change under AKP has been possible by necropolitical reignition of the default settings of the early Turkish republic, hence the recourse on: one (male) state, one nation, one flag, one language. Rosa Burc, Phd candidate at SNS, [rosa.burc@sns.it](mailto:rosa.burc@sns.it) Mahir Tokatli, holds a PhD from the University of Bonn, [mtokatli@uni-bonn.de](mailto:mtokatli@uni-bonn.de)

## **Is there another resilience possible? The complex relation between the TINA doctrine and resilience thinking**

**Alkistis Prepi (PhD candidate, National Technical University of Athens, School of Architecture, Department of Urban and Regional Planning)**

Resilience is the new trend, encountered in multiple different contexts and meanings. Emerging as a catholic answer to looming threats and disasters, resilience has become the absolute and universal crisis management tool, promoting the new, adaptive risk management approach on various levels: ecology, economy, developmental policies, psychology, even individual trauma management. Resilience is becoming a way of life. Within this context arises a wide current of critical approach to resilience, clearly connecting it to neoliberalism, as a tool for the implementation of governmental and economic reforms, austerity and social control policies. However, an important part of this literature reads resilience as a notion that, though used by neoliberalism, could also be applied outside the neoliberal context, and could therefore constitute a positive and useful tool for creating the means of resistance. This presentation stresses precisely the structural link between neoliberalism and resilience, therefore arguing that no other resilience is possible, since resilience is the opposite of resistance and social change. Within the contemporary predatory financial capitalism, resilience creates subjects who are called not to resist, but to purely survive, by accepting and adapting to the disastrousness of the capitalist reality. Resilience thinking reproduces the TINA reasoning, not only through the process of adaptation to the perpetuate capitalist economic dispossession, but also through the dispossession of the possibility to imagine and claim a different world. The first part of our argument will be developed through a short presentation of the genealogies of the term, showing its aims, its limits and why resilience advocates the classic Thatchers moto there is no such thing as a society. There are individual men and women and there are families the neoliberal demand for individual responsibility. In the second part we will give a concrete example of how resilience theory becomes policies, focusing on the Rockefeller Foundations 100 Resilient Cities programme. The parallel participation of Tel Aviv and Ramallah is indicative of how resilience neutralises social problems, power relations and specific political choices. The different meaning resilience takes in Tel Aviv and Ramallah show how resilience of the Global North depends on the dispossession of the Global South, in a context where their distance is limited to some 40 kilometres. Finally, we will draw our conclusions based on a theoretical framework by thinkers who share a structural critique to resilience, in order to perceive its true perspectives and why resilience, as a development imperative encompasses the neoliberal theoretical and practical corpus.

## **Popular Deterrence**

**Grey Anderson (University of Caen Normandy)**

The flourishing of new global histories has resulted in stimulating accounts of cultural and intellectual flows beyond national frontiers, but military affairs have been puzzlingly

sidelined. Like economic expertise, military expertise is responsible for vast mobilizations of people and resources with potentially devastating consequences. "Military techniques," wrote the American historian Edward Mead Earle in the introduction to *Makers of Modern Strategy*, the classic 1943 anthology, "are responsible for a kind of international freemasonry of war, so that the development of strategy cuts across national lines. So do ideas and ideologies mercantilism; free trade; liberty, equality, fraternity; totalitarianism; socialism; pacifism which are related to the causes and conduct of war. This paper investigates a case study of this dynamic: coldwar attempts to develop a strategic concept of non-nuclear deterrence. Chiefly clustered on the political left, theorists of "popular deterrence" could draw on an abundant literature addressing questions of citizens' militias, guerilla warfare, terrorism and non-violent resistance. Reconstructing the genealogy of the concept and accompanying debates helps illuminate a subterranean history of socialist military-strategic thought.

## **The Transition to Agrarian Capitalism in Spain: From Liberal Stagnation to Fascist Breakthrough**

**Javier Moreno Zacars (University of Warwick)**

Some historians trace the origins of Spanish agrarian capitalism to the rise of an Atlantic economy during the early modern period. Others point towards the abolition of feudalism during the bourgeois revolutions of the nineteenth century. By contrast, this paper argues that these events only served to entrench and extend pre-capitalist forms of agricultural production. Building on the theoretical insights of political Marxism, a tradition recently reinvigorated by a new wave of studies, this paper traces the capitalist breakthrough in Spanish agriculture to the technocratic policies of General Franco's dictatorship. In the process, the paper uses the Spanish historical experience to explore the relationship between capitalism, liberalism, and fascism.

## Hydrocarbon Explorations and Aspirations in Greece during the Greek crisis and beyond

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Shortly after the recent outbreak of the Greek crisis, the discussion concerning hydrocarbon exploration in Greece resurfaced after years of silence. Despite its intensity and complexity, this discussion is characterized by an almost total absence of relevant historiographical contributions, made all the more interesting if we take into account that oil exploration in Greece is being attempted since the mid-nineteenth century. From our research we know that although they remained for the most part fruitless, past Greek hydrocarbon exploration ventures proved to be productive in more ways than one. For example, they led to the emergence of a new kind of expert, preoccupied with petroleum knowledge. Our primary working hypothesis is that by focusing on the history of these experts, we will be provided with an important point of entry into the complex history of hydrocarbon exploration in Greece. Yet, this is a history comprising much more than experts. By turning our attention to the materiality of oil and the relevant socio-technical system, we discern four research questions. We address firstly, the development of hydrocarbon knowledge and technology in Greece, a country in the intersection between Global-North and Global-South. Secondly, the triangular relation between petroleum experts, major oil companies and the Greek state. Thirdly, the subject of the Greek shipowners involvement in petroleum transport, refining and exploration attempts. Finally, the aspirations of subterranean wealth and their disapproval, as they manifested during exploration attempts. This paper is part of a project we are currently working on that is designed to involve the humanities in a current discussion that is heretofore conducted in their absence. This is by no means an easy task, the principal difficulty stemming from precisely this lasting absence and the resulting historiographical void. However, it remains our firm belief that involving the humanities in technical matters of such acute social significance, is necessary and becomes more urgent by the day. In this way, we will be able to deal with crucial questions such as Which assumptions are shared, and which are not, when approaching Greece's hydrocarbon aspiration as a country part of the European South? What are the narratives around concepts such as progress, development, sustainability, resource scarcity and security?

## **A Peoples History of the Portuguese Revolution(Pluto Press, 2019)**

**Raquel Cardeira Varela (Universidade Nova de Lisboa)**

Raquel Varelas book, *A Peoples History of the Portuguese Revolution* (Pluto Press, 2019) uncovers the history of the revolution between 25 April 1974 and 25 November 1975. Portugals revolution was the most powerful and inspiring example of revolutionary process to take place in Europe since the Second World War. The revolution started on April 25 1974, when a group of junior army officers from the clandestine Armed Forces Movement (MFA), sick and tired of the failing wars against the anti-colonial movements in Africa organised a coup and overthrew the regime. The Portuguese people flooded the streets of Lisbon, placing red carnations in the barrels of guns and demanding a land for those who work in it. This became the Carnation Revolution. People met and talked and organised everywhere in all sorts of ways. Democracy from below flourished. Within a week there were 97 strikes. Thousands of workers and residents commissions were set up. Maybe 1000 workplaces were occupied, or taken over because bosses and managers abandoned them. More 12,000 people who had links with the old regime were removed or suspended from workplaces despite calls for moderation by both the Socialist Party and the Communist Party. Thousands of houses were occupied. The scale of the Agrarian Reform that took place in Portugal was unprecedented; most the large latifndios (landed estates), predominantly in the south and the centre of Portugal were taken over by the workers on the land and turned into co-operatives. Tellingly the number of tractors increased from 2,630 to 4,150 and that of harvesting machinery from 960 to 1720. At many moments the army sided with the working class, and not with the major political parties. Tens of thousands of soldiers rebelled. The revolts by rank and file soldiers against their officers, epitomised gathered pace towards the end of the revolution. Those who want to help foster a revolution will have plenty to draw upon, hence the significance of Varelas book and research. A measure of the importance of the Portuguese revolution was the response from the Western Powers. At the time, Western capitalism was extremely worried by what was happening in Portugal and a Chilean solution was fresh in the memory. The fear of a return to fascism skewed the movement and resulted in an underestimation of the capacity of capitalism to adapt and reform, using the tools of social democracy. The experience of reformists in power, commonplace elsewhere, was unknown in Portugal. The revolution ended on November 25 1975 when a group of reformist officers quenched, with remarkably little bloodshed, a number of insubordinate barracks. Fundamentally it was not defeated by violence and imposing a dictatorship but ended by consensus and with very large social reforms won by the working class. Representative democracy is thus shown as the destination of the revolution. The victors, and many theorists and academics have in general airbrush dismissed the revolution, to see it as part of modernisation. Varela argues that representative democracy defeated direct democracy. This was an astonishing period in which ordinary people took control through direct democracy. Yet it has been almost forgotten, as if it had not happened. All this is part of our heritage and needs to be uncovered. The panel will comprise Person Biography Abstract Raquel Varela [raquel\\_cardeira\\_varela@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:raquel_cardeira_varela@yahoo.co.uk) Raquel Varela is a Professor at New University of Lisbon, and Senior Visiting Professor at the Fluminense Federal University. She is the author of *A People's History of the Portuguese Revolution* (Pluto, 2019). She is



also president of the International Association of Strikes and Social Conflicts and co-editor of its journal. Raquel will explore the role of workers commissions, residents and the development of the broader social movements, providing a rich account of the victories gained through revolutionary means. She will also consider the threat to capitalism and how it contained and learnt from the Portuguese experience. Bob Light [luluze@sky.com](mailto:luluze@sky.com) Bob worked on the London docks at the time. He was sent over to Portugal a number of times by the international socialists at the time and helped organise solidarity in the UK. He reported on the events at the time and has since written in the International Socialism Journal and Socialist Review. Bob will draw on some brilliant memories and amplify lessons for revolutionaries from the UK. He will also ask Why has the Portuguese revolution been forgotten?. Peter Robinson [peterfrobinson@ntlworld.com](mailto:peterfrobinson@ntlworld.com) Peter was in Portugal for some of the time as a political organiser for the British International Socialists and subsequently interviewed and wrote about these events. His writings include: Portugal, the forgotten dream (1989) and a M.Phil thesis Workers Councils in Portugal 1974-75. Peter will refer briefly to the embryonic workers councils, look the role of the military and its radicalisation and how the radicals in the armed forces skewed the revolution.

## **Reclaiming Abolition: Sex Worker Solidarity and Intersectional Organizing**

**Cassandra Lea Troyan (Linnaeus University)**

On June 28th 1970, the first anniversary of the Stonewall uprising, two trans women of color, Marsha P. Johnson and Sylvia Rivera, marched with thousands of others to commemorate the sex workers and queer black and brown folks who refused to sit back and be brutalized during the police raid on the Stonewall Inn (Stanley et al. 115). Chants of Whose streets? Our streets! defiantly rang out and spurred others to join the marchers as they headed toward the New York Womens House of Detention in solidarity with the incarcerated Black Panthers Joan Bird and Afeni Shakur (Gossett). When the march arrived at the jail, the chant changed and the marchers began shouting Free our sisters! Free ourselves! In that moment, Johnson and Rivera, along with thousands of others, formed a politics of solidarity that argued trans and queer liberation were coterminous with the struggle against the prison-industrial complex (Gossett; Kunzel 11-37). Regarding Johnson and Rivera's 1970 action, the contemporary radical prison abolition group Queer (In)Justice pointedly asks, Rather than a relic of another time, how might we read this history as an analytic of the present? (Stanley 115). The following paper is an investigation into this complex problematic, which proposes questions, interventions, and observations to re-conceptualize sex worker histories of lived struggles, not as historical moments of the past, but analytics of the present. In doing so, this also requires not only re-imagining legacies of resistance and intersectional solidarity, but re-claiming the political practice and historical lineage of abolition. Due to narratives espoused by anti-trafficking NGOs and non-profits that wish to align themselves with libratory politics, rather than the colonialist white-saviorist logic that they actually follow, refer to their fight being against modern day slavery, and accordingly refer to themselves as abolitionists. Yet, the ways in which

present-day abolitionists seek the end of the sexual slavery is by enforcing policies such as End Demand or the Nordic Model, which criminalizes the client buying sexual services rather than the sex worker. It has been proven in numerous studies that this model actually harms sex workers, by giving them less autonomy and safety for how, where, and under what conditions they perform their work. Here, the abolition of modern day slavery, includes with it a massive funding nexus for NGOs, immigrant detention centers, and sex trafficking rehabilitation centers, referred to by Elizabeth Bernstein as militarized humanitarianism. Thus, those who are supposedly saved by abolitionists are actually punished through increased criminality, incarceration, and deportation. Due to the complete illegality of prostitution within the United States (outside of certain regions in Nevada), it necessitates solidarity with migrants, refugees, and those incarcerated in prisons and detention centers, to echo as Johnson and Riviera said, Free our sisters! Free ourselves! With this comes the power of autonomy and possibility of a liberatory politics of abolition. To reclaim abolition for the sex workers rights movement today means the freedom of sex workers cannot end where the freedom of others who are still criminalized has not even yet begun. Sex workers must stand in solidarity with everyone who is marginalized and criminalized in society beyond the spectrum of sex workers. To collude with others who have also been named as criminals and the forms of solidarity that can emerge from such identification and refusing that others be left behind. In relation to the recognition of migrant and sex worker rights, Juno Mac and Molly Smith brilliantly state in *Revolting Prostitutes: The Fight for Sex Workers Rights*, To defend the migrant prostitute is to defend all migrants: she is the archetype of the stigmatized migrant. Borders were invented to guard against her. There is no migrant solidarity without prostitute solidarity and there is no prostitute solidarity without migrant solidarity. The two struggles are inextricably bound up with one another (Mac and Smith 86). Gossett, Reina. "Sylvia Rivera Law Project Teach-In." Occupy Wall Street, 26 10 2011, Zuccotti Park, New York City, New York. Speech. [www.vimeo.com/102272079](http://www.vimeo.com/102272079). Accessed 29 1 2019. Kunzel, Regina. *Lessons in Being Gay: Queer Encounters in Gay and Lesbian Prison Activism*. *Radical History Review*, no. 100, Winter 2008, pp. 11 37. doi: 10.1215/01636545-2007-020. Mac, Juno and Molly Smith. *Revolting Prostitutes: The Fight for Sex Workers Rights*. Verso, 2018. Stanley, Eric A., et al. "Queering Prison Abolition, Now?" *American Quarterly*, vol. 64, no.1, 2012, pp. 115-127. ProjectMUSE, doi:10.1353/aq.2012.0003.

## Is there something like an Islamic social formation?

**Jean Boris Batou (University of Lausanne)**

Some twenty years ago the Andalusian historian Manuel Acin Almansa (1997, 107) developed the concept of the Islamic social formation, the religious term Islamic being used here only for convenience. In the important foreword to the second edition of *Between Feudalism and Islam* (in Spanish), he defined such a formation by these two parameters: hegemony of the private at the abstract level and predominance of the urban at the concrete level. Although he did not clearly specify the period for which his concept applied, it should certainly be the case for the whole Middle Ages. Taking for granted the distinction between modes of production and social formations, the former labeling basically

descriptive and heuristic models of economic relationships, the latter depicting concrete social realities, I will go beyond Acin Almansas skimpy but suggestive definition, and try to give more substance to his Islamic social formation. Beyond the centrality of the private and of the urban, I would like to introduce two additional characteristics: the pivotal function of the semi-nomadic tribes of herders, and the central role of arbitrator of the state. Although the typical Islamic social formation should be understood as a specific sub-type of the tributary relations of production, it rests upon a special dialectics between three social agents: the tributary state apparatus and the landed aristocracy subordinated to him; the nomadic pastoralists of the semi-arid zones; and the traders of the cities. The first controlled the bulk of the agricultural surplus; the second forged alliances with urban merchants, protecting their trade routes for material counterparts, and jeopardizing at times the stability of the state; the third took advantage of their cultural dominant position to evolve a system of private law, based on religious traditions, supporting the accumulation of private wealth.

## **Struggle Again, Struggle Better! The Complex Relation between Inquiry, Organization and Capacity-Building**

**Kostas Gousis (Roehampton University, London), Mark Bergfeld (Independent Researcher.) Daniel Gutierrez (Freie Universitt Berlin)**

Panel abstract The aim of this panel is to put forward a necessary dialogue on collective forms of organizing, combat structures and knowledge production. If inquiry is the capillary connection to the grassroots, where is this knowledge supposed to circulate? There are a number of magazines, blogs and journals that provide a circulatory function, but that function is usually removed from a practical function. Inquiry is supposed to function as a kind of feedback loop to organizations that clarifies the conditions of struggle and hopefully exposes an avenue of engagement. We try to examine the development of a circulatory system of knowledge not only of the terrains of struggle, but of how to struggle better. Through theoretical references and case studies, this dialogue will be concretized into different kind of combat structures, like organizations, trade unions and social movements, including presentations on: migrant labour and alternative labour organizing, b. the relation between the party-form and militant research and c. the idea of a movement school grown out of the inquiry produced in Solidarity City Berlin. It is part of an ongoing exchange of experiences aiming at a network of researchers engaged with actual struggles, addressing the difficulties of articulating militants and research and rethinking the organizational question behind militant research.

1. Title: How immigrant workers are changing the world of work. Mark Bergfeld Based on his PhD which contained more than 100 semi-structured interviews and more than 230 hours of participant observation, the author argues that immigrant workers are central to understanding the changing nature of the world of work. In his presentation, the author will address how migrant workers and automation need to be linked? To what extent does immigrant workers' self-organisation challenge and reproduce contemporary management practices? What role will migrants play in the future world of work? In his presentation, the author will focus on how

immigrant workers are changing the state's and employers' management of labour, and trade unions' strategies of representation to address these questions. Mark Bergfeld has signed a book contract with Zed Books.<sup>2</sup> Title: Party Members as Militant Researchers: Examining the Gap between Learning Processes and the Party Line. Kostas Gousis While the discussion on militant research, as a method and practice, is usually restricted to the autonomist tradition, this presentation examines a growing literature on Marxist approaches to collective action and historical examples of militant research within multiple Marxist traditions. Based on these resources, I will try to contribute to a Marxist approach to militant research that is critical of autonomists hostility to the party form and the motto Change the World without Taking Power. At the same time, I will try to address the paradox that the more nuanced the defense of the party form, the more evident the gap between this defense and the actually existing communist organisations/parties/left alliances globally. Indeed, in contemporary left there are many cases that militant research is an independent activity by party members outside the party, sometimes within research collectives, journals, and conferences inside or outside academia. The questions to be addressed are the following: How can the organization benefit from this research activity and vice versa? Can militant research be decided and practiced collectively by an organization? How can you guarantee a relation between militant research and decision making processes that does not degrade research to an a posteriori justification of the always correct party line? Under which circumstances and to what extent is it possible that all party members are militant researchers? Building on interesting re-readings of Gramsci's organic intellectuals, Lukacs' theorization of processes or Ilyenkov's Activity Theory, I will examine actual cases and alternatives to the strategic crisis of the left that instead of militant research reproduces a disastrous mixture of empiricism, sectarianism and opportunism.<sup>3</sup> Title: Mapping Methods: Inquiry and the Excavation and Circulation of Combat-Organizational Knowledge Daniel Gutierrez At HM Athens, I explained how inquiry was deployed in the Berlin migrant struggle in order to uncover a key finding. Within the movement ecology of Berlin, a symbiotic function was missing, preventing the circulation of what I term as combat-organizational knowledge - practical and methodological know-how regarding the dialogical practices and processes necessary to organize across terrains and subjectivities. That is, institutions, practices, and memories that congeal data from the field of struggle into combat-organizational know-how fails to systematically circulate. Without infrastructures of dissent that provide a space for the development of militant capacities and resources, it remains trapped in the minds of discrete individuals. This observation leads to the following hypothesis: perhaps if we can establish a movement school (that does not focus as an incubator of a political viewpoint but of a political praxis) then perhaps can serve an ecological function that will have force multiplying effects across the movement ecology of Berlin. My presentation this time will focus on the development of the Werkstatt für Bewegungsbildung (the movement school) that grew organically out of the inquiry produced in Solidarity City Berlin. I will go over the organizational structure of the movement school, its curriculum production process that attempts to conceal combat-organizational knowledge gathered from translocal experiences, and the sited methods of distribution through which we attempt to systematically circulate this knowledge and build militant know-how. I will also map this infrastructure within the broader movement ecology of Berlin and demonstrate the actual and potential articulations that can produce a circulatory system of combat-organizational knowledge that circulates knowledge flows

from terrains, to movement schools, to think-tanks, to combat structures (unions, parliamentary parties, extra-parliamentary organizations), and back through the network and its nodes. Recognizing Panagiotis Sotiriou's insistence on the necessity of strategic experimentation, inventiveness, and collective ingenuity, this attempt at inventing the unknown is considered an experiment in the ecology of class war and dual power. My hope is that the forum provided by HM London will allow to circulate this actual development and receive constructive feedback.

## **Biopolitics and 18th-century masses. How to use philosophical concepts on the level of historical research? The case of Warsaw police institutions.**

**Gabriel Klimont (Polish Academy of Sciences, Institute of Philosophy and Sociology)**

Was there a biopolitical regime in Poland before the industrialization process has even begun? This paper uses the official 18th-century police documents from Warsaw to critically examine this case. On the empirical level, I analyze the changing *Polizeistaat* discourse on social mobility and "poor laws" from years 1762-1794, and estimate, to what extent does this change follow the model presented by Foucault in the last lectures of "Security, Territory, Population". In the second step, I contrast my findings with similar research done on London data (Shoemaker and Hitchcock). What were the main differences and what does they tell about the primitive accumulation on the peripheries? This comparison will lead me to the final question: did the Polish biopolitical project fail, because of its peripheral character or was it rather because of the strength of the masses (Montag), that it tried to incarnate? And how to (from the methodological point) even estimate such answer? The paper will hopefully contribute to a more detailed understanding of the process of primitive accumulation in the peripheral context. Consequently, on the theoretical level, it will show the limits of the operationalization of some philosophical concepts (such as "population or"masses") in Marxist historical research.

## **How to come to terms with the rise of Authoritarianism in the era of Financialisation within a Comparative Framework**

**Galip Yalman (Middle East Technical University)**

Galip L. Yalman Aylin TopalThe last decade has witnessed a series of traumatic changes in the ways in which capitalist societies have been governed as they have struggled to cope with the repercussions of economic, social and humanitarian crises that have engulfed them. This has, in turn, stirred a series of theoretical responses to come to terms with the political outcomes which ensued in the context of the protracted period of crises. From authoritarian neoliberalism to post-fascism, these responses aimed to provide an

understanding of the transformations in the state-class relations, as the era concerned is tended to be portrayed as the de-coupling of liberal democracy and neoliberalism. In these endeavours, there is also a quest to develop the most apposite concepts so as to establish analogies and differences across different geographical locations and historical time periods. Put differently, as these conceptual categories tend to function as tools of periodization, there arises the need to problematize them so as to assess their saliency to account for their characterisation in terms of both continuity and difference. This paper will attempt to contribute to the debate on the transformation of state in different historically specific contexts by exploring the reorganisation of social forces and reallocation of state power with a particular focus on crisis management strategies pursued as several emerging market economies encounter the pitfalls of finance-dominated model of capital accumulation. As the contemporary authoritarian turn has been experienced with or without a regime change, it becomes imperative to focus on the modalities of changes in the forms of state in both senses that Nicos Poulantzas had alluded. The paper would also ponder whether several countries experiencing the authoritarian turn from Brazil to Turkey and India could be considered as going through a process from crisis in neoliberalism to crisis of neoliberalism to the extent that their predicament could be described as a crisis of crisis-management, indicating an inability to go on in the old way and demanding more radical solutions.

## **Science against the people: Which side are you on?**

**Zachos Christodouloupoulos (National Technological University of Athens)**

Science and the notion of progress create an explosive mixture. The evolution and the development of means of production are the solution or constitute the problem?. Marx had stated that the criticism of religion is a presupposition for any kind of criticism. Today when the capitalist economy within the context of the knowledge societies is going through such a serious ideological and political crisis, it may be pertinent to note that criticism to science is a presupposition for any kind of criticism. Society must have access to all the data and the ability to intervene, criticize and disrupt the process of scientific research. Scientists and intellectuals as Boris Hessen (with his notorious paper in the 1931 London Conference), J. Bernal, J. Needham, E. Zilsel and others, claim that development of science has been tied to what was happening in society, with the evolution of capitalism. Students movement in USA through organizations like Science for the People fought against famous scientists who had a crucial role in the dirty Vietnam War( because they want to be insiders in the process of scientific evolution, they made war research like JASONs etc ). As we face the danger of extinction the role of science will be crucial to the struggle of survival.



## **Critique of the anti-politics (about a certain mood in political philosophy from Rancire to Agamben)**

**Frederic Lordon (CNRS, CESSP-CSE, Universit Paris 1 Sorbonne)**

Living without without State, without institutions, without being governed , that could be the motto of a certain political mood, best epitomized for instance by the french Comit Invisible. Not all the people, it is likely, are fully aware that these slogans they chant when taking on to the streets in fact stem from quite convoluted philosophical constructions. If we hold the Living without imaginary as one of the most dynamical and influential streams of the contemporary political thinking, we must acknowledge that we are faced with a two-tier intellectual construction, the exoteric layer (we are ungovernable) relying on an esoteric basis, quite harder to identify and discuss. And all the more so that this esoteric basis in itself is not homogeneous, but rather made of parts of major philosophical works which here intersect and resonate. Whatever different, Deleuze, Rancire, Badiou and Agamben philosophies find themselves together in nurturing a theoretical mood the living without imaginary is deeply inspired of. This theoretical mood, we can call anti-politics. The composite anti-politics philosophy displays two typical figures, two main ways of being anti-politics. The first one consists of a view of genuine politics as reduced to intermittence. The becoming (Deleuze), or simply politics as opposed to police (Rancire) : all theses categories encapsulate true politics, politics in its higher sense, into singular events. Singular and rare. That could be the first proposition of anti-politics philosophy: politics is rare. What we usually call politics in fact is not politics, does not deserve to be called so, but is something else ordinary stuff of collective life unfit to be truly called politics. Regular times are infra-politics. Politics is intermittent. The second figure of anti-politics consists in politics for virtuosi (only). For instance, Badiou's figure of the activist is so demanding that it very much looks like Spinoza's free man, not a very common type. Agamben's political subject requirements are no lower. Here again, Spinoza's free man offers a relevant benchmark: Agamben's political ideals (deactivating devices, shifting from actions to gestures) could be likened to Spinoza's adequate causality which is typical of his very high-flying life under the guidance of reason and active affects again: the predicates of the free man. Especially in the case of Agamben which, as it is well known, the Comit Invisible is very close to, it seems that we are faced with an ethical turn of the political thinking, definitely not in the wicked sense of managerial ethical bullshit, but in so demanding a philosophical sense that politics does not belong to our world any longer.

## **The Year of Families - An Examination of Demographic and Ideological Engineering in the Contemporary Far-Right State Apparatus**

**Hanna Gal (rs21)**

In 2018, a string of demographic policies have been introduced in Hungary, with the purpose of protecting families and countering the country's consistently falling birthrates, as well as an intensive government propaganda program, branding the year The Year of

Families. Posters praising the joy of children, family life and the benefits of the new forms of government assistance, such as state-subsidised mortgages for young families flooded the streets, radiating optimism and encouragement to reproduce. It is clear, however, that it is only a specific subset of the population that is encouraged to reproduce, or even exist in contemporary Hungary. Alongside the fluffy imagery of happy families, a different series of propaganda posters caution the public to defend the borders, the dangers of illegal migration and terrorism. Legislation passed in 2018 effectively criminalises migrant solidarity work, and the country's border policing is growing ever more violent, with several reports from 2019 of refugees, families with children in many cases, detained for days on end without food or water. Even among its citizens, it is obvious that only a certain group of desirables is permitted the privilege of happy and secure family life. Hungary's sizeable Roma population has been subject to ongoing state-sanctioned violence by demographic policies and propaganda, such as segregated schooling, the removal of children from families into care institutions as a punitive measure, attempts to introduce laws criminalising parents or removing childcare benefits for truancy, as well as fearmongering of Roma overpopulation. A truism in Hungarian sociology discourse is that Hungarians are extraordinarily family-friendly in comparison to other European countries. Through the examination of demographic policies, both rewarding and punitive, as well as the systematic propaganda surrounding it, this paper attempts to explore the role of biological and social reproduction in the solidification of support for the far-right Fidesz government in Hungary.

## **Germany's Last Communist: The Life and Work of Theodor Bergmann (1916-2017)**

**Loren Martin Balhorn (Independent historian, translator, and author)**

Largely unknown outside of his native Germany, Theodor Bergmann was the last of his kind. Born the son of a Berlin Rabbi in 1916, he became a Communist by age 11 and within a year had defected to the "Right Opposition" (KPO) around Heinrich Brandler and August Thalheimer. He spent the first years of the Nazi era on a kibbutz in Palestine, before moving to the Sudetenland at age 19 to engage in illegal resistance work with other KPO comrades. After the war he returned to Germany, where he led what remained of the KPO as the editor of its paper, "Gegen den Strom", into the early 1950s. Following a successful academic career as an agronomist, he spent the last 35 years of his life writing and researching the theory and history of Marxism and the workers' movement, publishing nearly a book per year until his death at 101 years of age two years ago. I conducted a lengthy interview with Theodor Bergmann shortly before he passed, set to be published in Jacobin Magazine later this year. This paper will introduce his career and the main contours of his thought to an international audience, before offering some general reflections on the relevance of his work and the role of such eyewitnesses in carrying on ideas whose organizational embodiments have long ceased to exist.

## On the Historicity of the ISA: Althusser and Benjamin

Jon Short (York University, Toronto)

The concept of ideological state apparatuses in Althusser's work has garnered enormous critical attention on the left. Not only this, but the concept of apparatus itself (as a translation of the French *Dispositif*), has been elaborated by Foucault, Deleuze, and Agamben. In this paper, I will delve into the concept of the apparatus, arguing that it holds significance for the left in these times of rightist resurgence and planetary danger. Focussing on Althusser's claim that a materialist history must be viewed as a process without a subject, we can see that his statement is also the correct way to understand the concept of the apparatus, especially in the context of the two that Althusser treats: those of coercion and ideology. Such a conception of the ISA, in particular, disabuses us of the problematic notion still all too prevalent on the left today that ideology consists merely of a set of intentionally distorting beliefs foisted on a benighted populace by the ruling class. The populace in this scenario is always lamented as too easily duped to see the extent of their real subordination. In contrast to this, Althusser's conviction in which he is joined by Foucault that an apparatus is a material and historical assemblage of reference points, practices, and relations, allows us to make sense of his somewhat enigmatic claim that ideology consists of an imaginary relation to the conditions of social existence (rather than of a direct, albeit distorted one). An important aspect of the paper will be my contention that to fully appreciate the temporal-historical dimension of the apparatus we need to turn to the work of Benjamin. While some might object to the reading of Althusser the staunch anti-Humanist alongside Benjamin the anthropological materialist, I will contend that Benjamin's grasp of historical sediment, perhaps in opposition to his own intention to use this concept to empower the left, helps us better understand the specifically ideological dimension of the ideological apparatus. In the latter, the right goes with the sedimented grain of history, whereas the materialist in Benjamin's terms continually brushes against it. My ultimate intention here is not mere pessimism, but rather to suggest that the kind of solidarity the left alone is capable of fostering is of a different order than that of the rightist retrieval of what must be called the utopia of dystopia.

## Basic Income and the Politics of Post-Work: A Postwar History

Anton M. M. Jger (University of Cambridge)

In previous years, basic income proposals have gained a new centrality in the European left-wing thought. Often serving as the correlate to new post-work visions, the scheme figures in books by Alex Williams, Nick Srnicek, Nick Witherford, Guy Standing and Paul Mason. These often come with histories of the proposal, ranging back to Thomas Paine, Thomas More and other early modern luminaries. Often enough, such histories of the Basic Income suffer from what one might call a tendency of retrospective incorporation. Any proposals vaguely similar to our current UBI (Paine's land grants, Joseph Charlier's territorial dividend) are regularly treated as perfect antecedents to our contemporary version, slotted into a transhistorical narrative respecting neither spatial or temporal

boundaries. A closer look at those previous versions, however, quickly reveals one abiding difficulty. All the antecedents marshalled from Paine to Rhys-Williams share the same proviso on the necessity for the recipient of the grant to enter into a labour contract with society as a whole, thereby stipulating their necessary participation in a productive sphere. Even when receiving this nominally unconditional fee, in short, citizens would still have to work. This paper seeks to investigate the slow dropping out of this employment clause in our current UBI, and asks how this post-work, precondition first came into place. It takes as a case-study two interrelated European debates on the basic income, in Belgium and the Netherlands, going from the late 1960s to the mid-1980s, when the BIEN (Basic Income European Network) was first founded. This paper will hone in on the case of the Netherlands and Belgium here, where a national debate on the crisis of welfare in the late 1960s gave rise to the first comprehensive calls for a basic income in 1968 and 1969. Drawing on American precedents as Milton Friedman and Robert Theobald, Dutch and Belgian thinkers on social policy such as Jan-Pieter Kuiper, Jan Tinbergen Robert van der Veen and Philippe Van Parijs first theorized specifically European version of a basic income policy towards the late 1960s when confronted with what they saw as the crisis of the society of labour (*arbeidsmaatschappij*) in Europe. Although not initially a bipartisan affair, this enthusiasm quickly spread across the political aisle. Here, the UBI appealed to left-wing thinkers inspired by thinkers as disparate as Pierre Clastres, Félix Guattari, André Gorz, and Michel Foucault, who all shared an image of the worker as steadily vanishing within the entrails of late industrial society. The legacy of this post-workerist moment was paramount for our current UBI. Not only did it initiate a retreat from the sphere of production as the arena for the battle over needs; it also stipulated, for the first time, the revolutionary character of consumption over production, explicitly celebrating the non-normative inclinations of the basic income. In the end, this postworkerism also served as a key prerequisite for the UBI familiar to us today.

## **The operation of colorism in Brazil: political tensions in Brazilian black feminist movements**

**Larissa da Silva Fontana (State University of Campinas)**

This paper aims to discuss, from the precepts of the Materialist Discourse Analysis (PCHEUX, 1975), the operation of the colorist discourses that have materialized in the designations and ways of subjectivation of black feminist women in a Brazilian context, which is singled out by the structural racism marked by policies of miscegenation and whitening that resulted in the myth of racial democracy (KABENGELE, 1999) that surrounds the country. Thus, our research seeks to investigate the processes of constitution, formulation and circulation of nominations such as *mulher negra*, “*mulher preta*”, “*mulher parda*” and “*mulher mestia*” (which are ways of nomination addressed to Brazilian black women on their different skin tones) and descriptions / predications such as “*pele clara*”, *traos finos*, “*pele retinta*”, “*traos acentuados*”, when these women enunciate themselves (CESTARI, 2015) and enunciate other women in the spaces of political practices. In this context, our study aims to analyze two points: firstly, how discursively the political tensions and disputes constitute a space of legitimacy to recognize who is a black

woman (or not) and, consequently, which women should have access to the spaces of resistance conquered by such movements, as the racial quotas and the spaces of political-institutional representativeness; secondly, how these nominations, descriptions, and predications bring back memories of Brazil's colonialist history. Our analysis material, made up of videos about colorism, produced and put into circulation by some black women YouTubers, points out, so far, the impossibility of singling out only one subject of discourse, "the black woman", and the return of memories from the functioning of racist policies developed in the colonization period that still affect the identity of Brazilian black women.

## **Uncovering the self-perspective of lower-class resisters. A case study of the "Ehrenfeld Group"**

**Imogen Pare (University Leipzig)**

In November 1944 thirteen working-class boys and men were hanged by the Gestapo in Cologne. They - the Ehrenfeld Group - had been accused of being a criminal terrorist resistance group (Terrorbande) which makes them exceptional in a time when the record of resistance by German citizens was underwhelming. But the trial proceedings documented their defences and their actions: varying from killing NS officials, to creating underground structures and petty theft. This paper assumes everyday forms of resistance as the resistance of the lower classes. Studies of this kind, however, are punctuated by serious and seemingly inextricable issues, such as those of definatory power, intention and effectiveness. Therefore, I proceed by a primary inquiry that asks how and not why resistant, analysing the group's descriptions of actions, rather than their veiled, tactical answers when interrogated about motives. Further, consumption patterns and glimpses into the boys' and men' pastime activities, irrelevant for the Gestapo, play an important role in the study, thus recognising the resisting potential of self-preservation and consumption. These passages read as less calculated and more amenable for linguistic analysis. The same passages then allow a deeper understanding and then contextualisation of resistant tactics and transgressions. I also present conclusions on the stakes of analysing this group's resistance strategies. The members of the Ehrenfeld Group serve as a case study for well established methodological problems of uncovering the voice of the powerless resisters from primary sources of powerholders and institutions. The close linguistic analysis of the testimonies in the Gestapo terror files finally allows me to test the limits of concepts of the everyday and its precarious status as a scientific subject (see Michel de Certeau and James Scott). In sum: This paper is concerned with these resistant German workers not only as an exception, but also as practices which directly pertain to broader questions about researching lower class non-conformism.

## The Actuality of Hegel's Logic

Jesse Lambourn (Monash University)

Robert Pippin's recent work *Hegel's Realm of Shadows* is a landmark work both in the recent rehabilitation of Hegel in analytic philosophy, and on the Science of Logic and its place in Hegel's broader system. Discussions of the Logic in the analytic tradition have tended to be divided on the question of the metaphysical significance of categories, considered to be either somehow constitutive of being, or merely explanatory and normative. Pippin persuasively argues that this is a false opposition. Drawing on Pippin's discussion of actuality (*Wirklichkeit*) as 'being at work', this paper argues that Hegel's logic consists in 'thinkings determination of thinking' in a sense which posits the inseparability of thought and being, yet in a way which preserves their distinction. Pippin shares Gillian Rose's resistance to the idea of absolute knowledge as the wholly complete and self-conscious thought. Thinking is not simply identical with what is. Rather, thinking's actuality is both concrete and indeterminate, both real and ideal. Hegel's philosophical project insists upon the openness of thought's distinct being-at-work, and always remains critical of modernity's promise of a final emancipation.

## Titles are attached

Gareth Dale (Brunel University)

Dear HM eds, My recent research has been in the ecology/economy area. I'd be keen to present a paper at this year's HM, if there's space on a panel. I'm not sure which of my topics would best suit. I could speak on any of these three: 1. Capitalist time and ecological time The thrust of this paper consists in a critical enquiry into the background conditions that make possible the sensibility of linear and limitless economic progress. It is concerned with temporalities: the times and timescales of capital, states, social reproduction, and nature. It presents capitalism as a regime of coordinated temporalities under the dominance of the abstract time of capital, a system that, being organised around abstract time and an accelerative dynamic, necessarily forgets nature. In the quest for value expansion, profit rules. The paper tours through the history and meanings of abstract time, finds some sources of a peculiarly modern temporality, economic infinity, and finds resources in Walter Benjamin's thesis on empty homogeneous time, with which it addresses the questions of ecological time and geological time. It, finally, speculates on the outcome of the potentially catastrophic contradiction between non-linear accelerative propensities of the climate system and the linear accelerative time of capital. 2. Marx, Polanyi, and the Green New Deal. This is a talk lined up for a Karl Polanyi symposium at Bennington College, Vermont, in late October. Unfortunately not abstract yet, but I can get one worked up by July. 3. A rising tide lifts us all: don't rock the boat! Economic growth and the legitimization of inequality This paper kicks off with the aphorism a rising tide lifts all boats. Economic growth, it tells us, overcomes poverty and ameliorates inequality. The metaphor is peculiarly modern, in its envisioning of the economy as a law-governed natural phenomenon. (Here, I briefly survey the contested topic of when the economy came into



being.) I next identify the late eighteenth century as a critical moment in the linking of economic growth, welfare, and poverty reduction, developing the point through analysis of the work of British political economists and philosophers (e.g. A Smith, W Paley). I trace this ideological nexus through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, with a particular focus on the growth/poverty-reduction couplet in Western European social democracy. In a penultimate section I return to the rising tide idiom. It entered popular discourse following to a speech by John F. Kennedy in which he laid out his Smithian-Keynesian version of the growth paradigm. I analyse the JFK speech and its context, before concluding with reflections on what it tells us of capitalism and growth.

## **Curse of Uncertainty The Case for a Marxist Critique of Economic Notion of Uncertainty and Risk**

**Tomasz Plominski (University of Warsaw Theoretical Practice Journal)**

Concepts of risk and uncertainty have been central to modern developments in bourgeois economic theory. As inescapable uncertainty for capitals operation had long been known as a constant challenge for its growth, theorists from 1920s on have worked on creating a quantifiable (measurable) notion of risk, rooted in modern statistics, that would help tackle uncertainty towards future (Knight 2009, Arrow 1951, Tobin 1958). This approach was challenged among others by Keynes (1921), who argued for existence of irresolvable, ontological uncertainty. Ultimately, post-1945, the first strand has caught on in form of radical affirmation of risk-based epistemology, giving birth to new modes of capitalist management, accounting and most importantly, modern finance theory. While (post)Keynesians have rightly pointed out the limitations of mainstream economists approach (Davidson 2002), I would like to argue that a Marxist perspective (and a return to Marx's project of critique of political economy) is necessary to highlight mystifying (in Capital's sense) aspects of economic theory of risk. These include 1) critique of profit as reward for risk; 2) locating the source of capitalist uncertainty in the realm of class struggle; 3) fictitious capital as a way to appropriate future (Durand 2017); 4) development of working class debt relation for secondary value extraction; 5) crisis tendencies resulting from mystified contradiction of capital and uncertainty. In consequence, I claim it is not enough to merely argue for making a correct separation between measurable risk and unmeasurable uncertainty. Both the mystifying status of risk and the nature of uncertainty are central problems of late capitalism and, at the same time, possible causes of its demise.

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## The uprising in Sudan

Elia El Khazen (), Raga Makawi () Mohammed Elnaiem () Sara Abbas ()

Many are watching with growing astonishment as the Sudanese uprising has emerged over the past few months, defying the counter-revolutionary wave that swept the region following the Middle East and North Africa uprisings of 2011. Ironically, Omar al-Bashir's last international visit was to Syria's Bashar al-Assad to show his support to the surviving ancien regime that looks to have weathered the storm, only to return to an uprising that has challenged everything from IMF austerity measures to the authoritarian and patriarchal nature of the regime. Though the protests have been ongoing for several months now, mainstream international media has only just started to take notice. The level of sophistication of organizing in the Sudanese uprising reignites the hope that a new wave of uprising can achieve the initial demands of the revolutionary processes started in 2011 in their quest for dignity, equality and freedom. The Sudanese diaspora has played a crucial role in spreading the revolution beyond national borders, calling on all those who believe that the struggle should be international to join them. At the time of writing, the Sudanese uprising has already succeeded in removing and imprisoning Omar al-Bashir—who has been wanted by the International Criminal Court for crimes against humanity, war crimes, and genocide since 2009. As he has been forced out of power, his successor, army lieutenant Awad Ibn Auf, was himself not able to hold office for more than twenty-four hours. Protestors have also called on Ibn Auf's successor, General Abdel-Fattah Burhan, to bow out and oversee a transition to civilian power. In Sudan, the overthrow of individual figureheads of the regime is understood to be far from enough. The call is to continue and deepen the uprisings until fundamental political and socio-economic changes are made in favor of the popular classes, completely replacing the old regimes and their rulers. The Sudanese protesters have learned from their past revolutionary struggles and from the neighboring counter-revolutionary regimes that only through popular resistance, mass participation, and self-organization will they be able to achieve radical change and democratic and socio-economic rights. Various dictatorial regimes, regional and imperialist powers have witnessed the developments of this popular uprising with fear, viewing it as a threat to their own interests and powers. In response, they have expressed their support to the Sudanese head of the army and encouraged them to retain control. Alongside these calls, these regional and international actors have warned directly or indirectly against the continuation and deepening of the revolutionary process. During this critical period, only pressure from the streets in and outside of Sudan can guarantee the success of the second wave of the Middle East and North African uprisings.

## **Utopia or fetish: Which technology will be part of our socialist future?**

**Irina Castro (Centre for Social Studies & Faculty of Economics, University of Coimbra), Joo Carlos Lou (Instituto de Histria Contemporanea, Faculdade de Cincias Sociais e Humanidade, Universidade Nova de Lisboa)**

The hyped promises of the last century technological breakthroughs have reinforced a technological-fix bourgeois ideology that has failed to provide the wonderful dreams that science and technology, as a force of production, have been endorsed with. Rather than having flying cars, travels to Jupiter, clean water and collective health care systems run by intelligent robot doctors, we live in a petro-dystopia of plastic islands, unbreathable cities, and emergent new epidemic diseases. The urgency to act, before a going planetary extinction, no longer validates the reformist approaches that try to humanize capitalism. Nor legitimates the capitalist enlightenment and its progressive technological revolutions. The emerging capitalist technologies, such as the gene drives, or the new industrial narratives, such as the 4th industrial revolution, are no more than an old capitalist strategy to restructure the modes, and relations of production, which have only provided us with destructive experiences and collective suffering. But can socialism change that? Are we on time? How will that socialism be? It is not the first time that socialists pose the question of how a post-capitalist society would look like. In the wake of the socialist revolution at the beginning of the 19th-century dreamers such as Alexander Bogdanov gave us utopias on how socialism would be like, inaugurating the dreams of a cyber-communism. Such proposals were immensely anchored in a technological hope. But even in such lunatic minds, that were able to make way for us to distinguish the essential from the accessory, contradictions were embedded. Any form of production that is based on the utopia of growth will lead to a social-spatial reconstruction with impacts in the totality of the world. In this paper, we explore how capitalism fetish of technology has fed sectors of socialism with a childish hope in technology. By doing this, we intend to differentiate fetish from utopia, the latter being a necessity for the socialist revolution and the first a consequence of the specific modes of capitalism ways of production. This distinction is a necessity to understand which technologies, and pathways of technology, present today, play an important role in socialism from the ones that need to be the target of our revolutionary anger.

## **Instrumental rationality and the interpretation of the environmental crisis**

**Georgi Medarov (Bulgarian Academy of Science)**

In this paper I will look in the potential for contemporary widespread interpretations of the environmental crisis to question the modern articulation between notions of progress, the expansion of instrumental rationality and the idealization of the methematizability of nature. I will juxtapose major interpretations of the current environmental crisis based on their incommensurability in relation to modernist suppositions. Do interpretations of the

environmental crisis fit within the logic of the expansion of instrumental rationality or are they ultimately pointing beyond its hegemony? Are they merely a tool for the expansion of capital or are they indicating its limits? In order to answer those questions I will turn to the incommensurabilities of the three main discursive strategies of explaining the environmental crisis. Firstly, the liberal-optimistic interpretations of the current environmental crisis are entangled within modern instrumental rationality and are ultimately intelligible within the market logic, as in the case of emissions trading; environmental services; or the ECs plans to reduce biodiversity to a quantifiable universal equivalent. Secondly, the conservative-pessimistic interpretative strategy could be seen in the discourses of the technological utopias for adapting instead of overcoming climate change and related visions for environmentally sustainable ways of life which presuppose the exclusion of the “surplus” (from capitals perspective) populations. Here modernist assumptions regarding the mathematizability of nature and the expansion of formal rationality are sometimes put into question, nevertheless this is at the expense of formal equality and humanist ideals. In the latter the very anticipation of an apocalypse to come may function as naturalization of social inequalities and the substantialization of classes. Thirdly, there are the critical interpretation of the crisis, namely discourses on the developed countries colonial-climate debt; the critiques of the financialization of nature; and the degrowth movement. On that point I will unpack cases of overlaps and tensions between modern notions of progress, mathematizability of nature, formal rationality, and, on the other hand, critical interpretative strategies of the environmental crisis that render the crisis insurmountable within the modern capitalist regime.

## **The domestic labour debate. What can we learn?**

**Giovanna Vertova (University of Bergamo)**

The feminist debate of the 1970s over domestic labour had the merit to highlight two important, and today taken-for-granted, insights: (i) capitalist production is not self-sufficient but depends on domestic labour; (ii) mens and womens participation to the labour market differs also due to their unequal domestic responsibilities. Within Marxism feminism the domestic labour debate revolves around some issues. One dispute centres on whether domestic labour constitute a mode of production in itself, with its own ruling class (husbands) and the producing class (women). In this case, marriage is considered a universal instrument for the subordination of women through husbands appropriation of their wives labour power. A second aspect of the debate deals with whether domestic labour should be seen as productive. Within Marxist theory, productive labour is the labour that directly produces surplus value, upon which the capitalist system depends upon. The Wages for Housework campaign was based on the assumption that, since domestic labour is productive of value, it must be paid. A third issue related to who gains from domestic labour. For those believing that domestic labour is productive of value, the question is how and by whom the surplus value is appropriated. Rethinking the domestic labour debates gives the opportunities to look at some issue of contemporary capitalism: the difference of productive and non-productive labour in the view of the new jobs and the new forms of exploitation, such as the gig economy and the like; the political claims for money for some

forms of unpaid work; and last but not least, women's conditions in this new phase of capitalist accumulation. Looking at those issues is the aim of the paper.

## **The contradictions of the agenda of the Brazilian Foreign Policy in the Lula's Era: a study on South-South cooperation and trade policy**

**FLVIO FRANCO SANTANA DE JESUS (State University of Campinas)**

The present study analyzes how the international insertion of Brazil, during the Lula government (2003 - 2010), from its foreign policy agenda, was related to the political hegemony of the power bloc of neoliberal global governance, in order to verify in which the Lula Era contributed or not with the processes of counter-hegemony to neoliberal globalization. From the adoption of the epistemological perspective of Neo-Gramscian Marxist Critical Theory, this article identifies that contemporary globalization presents a historical structure of the hegemony of global neoliberal capital, which produces unequal relations of global power through a historical bloc led by the hegemony of the capitalist class transnational organization of the United States and its allies, which maintains its hegemonic project supported by the ideological apparatus of power, through international organizations and regimes. In Brazil, with the arrival of former President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva to power, Brazil's international insertion through its foreign policy was marked by the assimilation of hegemonic and counter-hegemonic aspects, reflected in the disputes between the different social forces, which sought to influence and influence the direction of Brazil, in international geopolitics, in the context of neoliberal globalization. Thus, this study investigates the contradictions of the Brazilian foreign policy agenda in the issues of trade and cooperation policy, through the literature on Brazilian foreign policy, as well as the official declarations of Lula, verifying the assimilation of hegemonic and counter-hegemonic aspects in these two agendas of Brazilian Foreign Policy.

## **Fascism, antifascism and feminism for the 99%**

**Stefanie Maria Prezioso (University of Lausanne)**

Fascism, anti-fascism and Feminism for the 99% Raised like a standard, the word fascism is on every lip and functions as a call for action in the face of the (un)stoppable ascension of the extreme Right in Europe, even as the latter continues to expand in the West beyond the terms apparent political grammar. Radical rights have indeed continued to develop everywhere. They represent a substantial electoral force in Austria, Germany, Italy, the United Kingdom or France. A "silent counter-revolution", according to the Italian political scientist Piero Ignazi, which mixes the transformation of the heirs movements of the fascist tradition and considerable echo beyond the borders of the far right political grammar (ultra-nationalist, patriarchal, racist speeches, antisocialist, based on the stigmatization of the "less productive", the poorest, the profiteers of social insurance, sexual minorities, etc.). Ecological, economic, social, political and cultural crises add up and combine. They are accompanied by a more general bankruptcy of politics and its proper expressions. An

unprecedented situation, where the two blocs that share the majority of votes, social-liberals and conservatives, lose their footing in the public opinion. The trajectory of a possible disaster including in France is thus evoked in the last book of Ugo Palheta (*The possibility of fascism*, 2018). The French sociologist insists on the need for the emergence of a new antifascism capable of leading the fight against the far right and against the destructive policies that favor its ascent. The “99% feminism” is one of the main motor of this new antifascism. A global feminism that articulates struggle for equality and social emancipation. All over the world, women, *often young, precarious, exploited, poorly paid rise, protest and organize, thus constituting a new political subject in its own right. They resist attacks on their most basic rights and aim them in their person. This feminist wave tirelessly articulates these struggles with those that arouse daily, in workplaces and housing, the rise of social inequalities and the precariousness of which women are the first victims. The unprecedented mobilizations of millions of women* all over the world feed the demonstrations for the defense of the environment, and the environment, against exploitation and racism. Everywhere women go on strike even in Switzerland ....

## Technotopias and the Transformation of (Re)production

Sinead Petrasek (University of Toronto)

In a recent Jacobin essay, Nicole M. Aschoff (2019) points out that the sphere of major tech corporations is increasingly expanding from the invisible and intangible to the concrete exemplified in numerous city-building projects of varying scales. What is it that these giant tech corporations find so valuable and alluring in urban centres, and in city-building projects? As Aschoff and others have noted, it is the same promise of capitalist expansion that produced the company towns of the twentieth century. However, relations of production and reproduction have changed, along with urban form. In this paper, I suggest that popular concerns with tech-led urban development can be better understood as concerns about social reproduction. Following the work of Nancy Fraser (2014) Tithi Bhattacharya (2017), and Kathi Weeks (2011) among others, I will argue for increased attention to social reproduction theory in the discourse on smart urbanism more specifically, on the attempts by global tech corporations to transform production and reproduction in cities. Social reproduction has been theorized as the background condition for capitalist production and expansion, but this paper will question whether that presumption still holds, and what this means for Marxist critique. Further, given the overarching theme of the conference, I will offer some thoughts on the proliferation of neoliberal techno-utopianism and how threats of climactic destruction have arguably led to more mainstream discourse on transformations of work and living that cut across class demarcations. The struggle to organize working, living and social relations, and more particularly, the question of who will do this (either for wages or not) becomes paramount. Works Cited Aschoff, Nicole M. Tech Billionaires Think SimCity is Real Life. Jacobin. May 2019. Bhattacharya, T. Introduction: Mapping Social Reproduction Theory. *Social Reproduction Theory: Remapping Class, Recentering Oppression*. London: Pluto Press, 2017. Fraser, N. Behind Marx's Hidden Abode: For an Expanded Conception of Capitalism. *New Left Review*, 86. Mar-Apr 2014: 55-72. Weeks, K. The Problem with Work: Feminism,



Marxism, Antiwork Politics and Postwork Imaginaries. Durham: Duke University Press, 2011.

## Reading Debord through Pippins Hegel: Spectacle and Normative Social Practice

Tom Bunyard (University of Brighton)

The aim of this paper is highlight some of the primary aspects of the Hegelian and Marxian ideas that underpin Guy Debords theoretical work, and to propose a means of developing those ideas further, beyond Debords own immediate concerns. My suggestion will be that the pertinence and philosophical coherence of Debords ideas can be augmented if his basically existential Hegelian Marxism is re-articulated via a slightly different set of conceptual tools: namely, those provided by a) Robert Pippins Kantian and non-metaphysical reading of Hegel; and b) aspects of a value-form approach to Marxs critique of political economy. Pippins reading of Hegel re-casts the operation of Spirit in broadly Kantian terms: Kants self-legislating subject becomes a collective, social process of generating, accepting and contesting the norms that render the world intelligible to us, and which articulate our social activity. Spirit is thereby understood as a self-determinate process of rational, collective self-constitution: a process of giving and asking for reasons. Freedom, for Pippins Hegel, lies in our ability to identify with and justify our actions; it is undermined when we become distanced from roles and modes of behaviour that seem meaningless and other to us. I shall try to argue that this approach to social activity can afford a fruitful basis for a re-interpretation of Debords theory. This can help to clarify and render more precise Debords principal concerns, thereby assisting the degree to which his work is able to address the pathological breakdowns of coherence and shared meanings that seem to characterise contemporary society. Moreover, it also affords a means of pursuing Debords proximity to contemporary Marxian value theory. For the latter, value is not a mysterious substance imbued by labour into its products (as in some iterations of traditional Marxism), but rather a wholly abstract, independent system of governing and regulating social behaviour and interaction. It can be understood, therefore, as a complex of norms that have become relatively independent from those who produce and perform them; a set of norms, moreover, that now inform practically every aspect of social life. My aim is to show that Debords theory of spectacle can be read in these terms. I hope that such an approach may serve to both signal the potential interest of Debords largely ignored Hegelian Marxism, whilst also indicating a way in which it could be critically developed in such a way as to facilitate its pertinence to our contemporary circumstances.

## **Biodiversity loss, Market Environmentalism and Working-Class Struggle**

**Baba Aye (Socialist Workers and Youth League (Nigeria))**

Capitalist development is accelerating species loss. Global biodiversity loss now ranges to upwards of 1,000 the rate normal extinction rate. Market environmentalism has been the response of defenders of the capitalist logic of maldevelopment, in a manner similar to green washing in response to the climate crisis. The paper intends to interrogate such concepts as Biodiversity Offsets, Natural Capital Accounting, Ecosystem Services and Financialisation of Nature which are central to the New Economics of Nature. It will also involve a critique of the forces and dynamics behind this mainstreaming of the green economy, including states, international organisations, lobby groups, foundations and hegemonic NGOs in the environmental movement writ large. The broad array of alternative perspectives and agendas covered by just transition, radical environmentalism and post-environmentalism would be analysed and their shortcomings for socio-ecological transition identified. Starting from an otherwise obvious perspective of capitalism as the enemy of nature as much as of working-class people, the paper would also examine arguments of more recent expressions of rebellion to save the earth such as Extinction Rebellion and Earth Strike on the specific question of biodiversity loss, as well as those of the international trade union movement. The paper would equally critique the international trade union movements reformist agenda for tackling the environmental crisis and consider possible strategies and tactics to radicalise this, and for furthering the revolutionary potentials of rank and file working-peoples actions in the struggle to prevent the environmental catastrophe at hand. In its conclusion, the paper would argue for overthrowing the capitalist system as being inseparable from this aim and as well present a perspective of what an eco-socialist future could be.

## **Labour of Art, Art of Labour**

**Joe Hayns (University of Oxford)**

Labour of Art, Art of Labour The size of the global market for creative goods increased nearly 300% between 2002 and 2015: from \$208 billion \$509 billion, with a strong tendency for at least the contemporary art institutions to cluster in imperial metropolises. Vast yet concentrated, what are the social dynamics of the arts industries today? What novel labour-capital relations are being generated; how far beyond the arts do these relations extend? Do sections of the arts industries constitute a distinct mode of production (pace David Beech) or, at least, involve a distinct labour-capital relationship than found in non-art industries? As bricks, beds, and closed galleries circulate as high-value commodities, what industrial prospects for the labourers involved? And, whilst the arts industries are growing, geographically concentrated, and (as is argued) uniquely composed, is there reason to see labour in general in post-industrial regions as increasingly artistic as non-productive, immaterial, and performative? What new duresses does labours supposed new artfulness imply?; what new oppositions has it provoked? Our first paper

will analyse recent theorisations of labours relationship with capital within the art industries, with the focus on art industry wage-labourers; our second will inquire into a worker-student groups workplace activism which asked of a gallery's opening, Who Keeps the Cube White? and art institutions' apparent power to aestheticize opposition. Our third paper inquires into the labour regime of a multinational caf chain, and the managerial use of dramaturgical methods from art being reiterated in a commercial service context. Our fourth and final paper explores the potential of social reproduction, both as a social process and theoretical tendency, as a basis for cross-work force organising in the arts industries, as against the systematic divisioning of manual and intellectual labour.

1. Unexceptional Art Workers? Joe Hayns This paper will distinguish three recent Marxist conceptions of the political economy of artistic production Ben Davis artist-as-petit-bourgeois; David Beech's artist-as-non-capitalist; and Marina Vishmidt's sense of arts high-capitalisation and instrumentalization as implying a qualitative shift in arts critical capacity. The paper will proceed with the latter conception, using it to criticise the former two. If arts post-modernist trajectory is towards complete heteronomy ever-increasing imbrication with capital at the concrete and symbolic levels with a concomitant diminishing of the professional artist-as-critic (i.e., the cultural moment of arts autonomy; art as redemptive in its negation), does this imply an increase of art workers' industrial potential? If the art factory is no longer a remark on the distinctions between artistic and non-artistic production, but rather a systematic feature of contemporary art production itself, are the wage-workers of such factories themselves factory workers? And if so, what are the implications for Davis and Beech's theorisations, in which art workers qua workers are absent?

2. Picketing the Private View Roberto Mozzachiodi This paper will inquire into a demonstration at the opening of Goldsmiths Centre for Contemporary Arts (GCCA) in September 2018 by the Goldsmiths Justice for Cleaners (J4C) campaign, as one of several anti-outsourcing campaigns across London campuses. This intervention departed in its political motivations, tactics, and trajectory from stock forms of activism that have developed within the art industry itself. Discussions about the limits and opportunities of certain direct actions taken up by activist groups within and against art institutions have been a serial feature of the critical art press the single-issue boycott, the open letter, shut-downs, no-platforming, and performative interventions have all made headlines in recent years (see Lizzie Homersham, Dave Beech and more recently Tom Snow in *Art Monthly*; and O.K. Fox in *Hyperallergic*). This paper will, first, identify the peculiarities of J4Cs utilising the disruption of a high-profile art event as a means of developing an industrial dispute. Second, it will detail the politics of how the workers campaign was represented by certain arts institutions (the press and the gallery itself). This case study will then be used to inquire into the prospects of a more combative trade unionism within the arts industry, asking is opposition within the arts congenitally either discursive or single-issue?

3. Jaz Blackwell-Pal The System of Service This paper examines the management of emotional labour at a multinational coffee chain, considering what the work of professional actors, and the management of theatrical labour, can offer to such analysis. In her seminal work *The Managed Heart*, sociologist Arlie Russell Hochschild defines emotional labour as work which involves the management of feeling to create a publicly observable facial and

bodily display. Hochschild draws heavily from the Russian actor and director Constantin Stanislavsky in her analysis, using his (still hegemonic) system for actor training to illustrate emotional labour. This comparison between emotional labour and actors work persists in much of the writing on such labour today. Yet, in this theorising, the actor is cast as free from exploitation and alienation: the Romantic artist, as distinct from productive worker. This paper considers the historical ascendancy of Stanislavskian realism and the forms of emotional management direction that have developed with it. It will examine the ways this tradition are re-iterated in the recruitment and management of employees in the contemporary service sector, using the example of the multinational coffee chain, where workers are disciplined or even fired on the basis of authentic, genuine performance.

4. Marina Vishmidt *Between Speculation and Social Reproduction: The Art Worker and Their Problems* Many of the most visible, and successful, workers movements in the post-crash, austerity era in have been around social reproduction, such as the cleaners campaigns at universities and other public and private sector employers in the UK, or around housing in Spain. These have also been notable for their transversal nature, addressing the sexism, racialisation and migrant status that authorise the forms of legal and ad hoc violence used to enforce a stratified labour market. Can social reproduction's bid to serve as both a unitary theory and strategic outlook for struggles that traverse labour and identity today be situated in the art field, given the power of class and individualisation that anchor the field's material conditions? Promising is how such an outlook can lead to co-ordination between 'content-providing' and 'institution-reproducing' cultural workers, which seems to offer a way to politicise the heteronomy of the field from the standpoint of labour concretely as well as thematically. This projects a re-composition of divisions between 'intellectual' and 'manual' labour within institutions as well as the kind of identification between the 'free' creative professional and the employee projected in the 1960s by the Art Workers Coalition. The open question then is what goes beyond a recognition that labour is going on - uniquely charged in the 'non-' or 'anti-' labour positioning of the artist - to build the powers that can point towards the re-composition from below of the polarities between workers, as well as between 'workers' and 'artists'? In other words, how to organise as workers in the field of art from the perspective of the abolition of work - and art?

## **Spaces of Hope: Urban Struggles for the Environmental Commons in Pozna**

**Mateusz Nowacki (Adam Mickiewicz University in Pozna)**

The speech focuses on the recognition of theoretical shifts in research on the renegotiation of the relationship between "first" and "second" nature on the example of the concept of environmental cultural marxism, and in particular on the concept of livelihood proposed by Raymond Williams in his texts. In the paper I will show that Williams's livelihood can be an interesting term to describe the ongoing struggles for environmental commons in urban spaces. For Williams, social reality is a movement of dialectical intertwining of culture and nature in living experiences and practices that combine the intersubjective perspective of

human contacts with that of humans and nature. On the example of the struggle undertaken by the Pozna social garden called Kolektyw Kpielisko, I will show how the empowerment in a realistic attitude and the adoption of a policy of environmental demarginalisation can be an inspiration for a spatially and ecologically just urban policy.

## **Capitalism, Ecological Crisis and Ideology in Postwar South Korea**

**Max Balhorn (Chung-Ang University in Seoul, South Korea)**

This paper examines evolving modes of capitalist accumulation in South Korea, their accompanying forms of environmental pollution and degradation, and the ideologies advanced by the ruling elite to shift blame for the ecological crisis from South Korean capital to society at large beginning in the 1960s. It takes as its foundation research conducted by South Korean citizen-scientists in the 1970s as a way to publicly address pollution, and demonstrates how this research was derailed by the dominant discourse, leaving a lasting mark on South Korean society and environmental politics to this day. After the Korean War, the new South Korea government quickly introduced aggressive agricultural methods and pollution-intensive industries imported from abroad in an effort to accelerate capital accumulation, while turning the commons into a dumping ground for industrial waste. My paper begins by showing how pollution from heavy chemical industries destroyed coastal ecosystems and depleted crop yields, leading to largescale displacement of farmers, fishermen, and rural populations. Meanwhile, Park Chung-hees export-dependent growth policies concentrated dispossessed countryside populations in overcrowded, smog-choked cities. The South Korean state promised rapid industrialization would guarantee higher living standards, yet people found their hometowns polluted and the cities unbearably crowded. These contradictions led to a rising awareness of the unequally distributed environmental harms caused by rapid economic development. Developers and government officials knew of the fatal effects of heavy chemical industries imported from advanced capitalist nations, yet continued to prioritize the private accumulation of capital assets over pollution mitigation and environmental preservation. In the 1970s, a modern anti-capitalist environmental discourse emerged against this backdrop. Beyond uprisings by farmers and locals, leftist academics at Ewha Womens University and Yonsei University produced some of the first environmental justice writing linking declining environmental health to the “tyrannical attitude of large corporations” and the “criminal act” of importing pollution-intensive industries from abroad. In response, the South Korean government advanced its own neo-Malthusian explanation of South Korea’s environmental problems heavily influenced by family planning initiatives promulgated by Western institutions. Family planning schemes were directly funded by developmental aid organizations amidst a climate of alarm concerning what was perceived as a disastrous population rise in the Third World. In the 1960s, leading South Korean public health figures traveled to Europe before establishing some of the first family planning institutions South Korea. State propaganda reproduced in films, booklets, and television PSAs explained the cause of pollution to be the population itself. Whereas local activists and intellectuals framed environmental pollution as a result of inordinate power over the landscape held by one dominant group, state propaganda framed the environment

as a function of the natural law of population invalidating citizens claims and redirecting blame to the habits and patterns of individuals themselves rather than policies prioritizing capital accumulation over social welfare. Elites saw environmental pollution as an externality that could be ignored in the race to maximize profits. When the state did address environmental problems, it framed them through the language of absolute limits and carrying capacity. My paper sketches out the history of the exploitative relation between growth and the environment forged by South Korea's development strategies. I then introduce a cultural history of the environment on the peninsula in order to demonstrate how neo-Malthusian framings in 1970s South Korea stripped human relations of their sociopolitical component and reduced environmental discourse to a function of population control and family planning. Finally, I argue that understanding the founding debates of Korean economic growth policy and environmentalism are crucial to finding solutions to the obstacles preventing today's South Korean Left from articulating a vision beyond the country's carbon-intensive economy.

## **Marx, Legal Positivism, and Sovereignty**

**Matthew Dimick (University at Buffalo School of Law)**

This paper uses Marx to engage with and critique legal positivism on the question of What is Law? It pays particular attention to H.L.A. Hart's The Concept of Law (which proposes that law be understood as the unity of primary and secondary rules) and Scott Shaprio's more recent Legality (which proposes that law be understood as a form of social planning). Engagement with Hart in particular allows for a critical discussion of the concept of sovereignty. First, I pay attention to the areas of overlap between Marx and legal positivism. These include separating law from morality and understanding law as an institution that is constructed and rooted in social relations and practice. Critique of sovereignty. Second, the paper discusses areas of potential reconstruction. Somewhat surprisingly, both Hart and Shaprio's concepts of law may be better rendered, not as concepts of law, but as concepts of the state. I show here how Marxists can transform and redeploy these concepts, along with Hohfeld's concepts of jural correlatives and opposites, to more fully specify Marx's famously tentative writings on the state (e.g., in Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right, The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte, and Critique of the Gotha Programme). Third, I address areas of more fundamental disagreement. There is a substantial ideological component of legal positivism that is resonant with Marx's ideological critique of political economy in the German Ideology (law/ideology as universalization of ruling class interests) the Grundrisse (law as eternal and ahistorical) and the third volume of Capital (law as an obscured form of appearance of relations of domination which are nevertheless adequate for capitalists and agents of the state). I employ both Marx's and Hegel's dialectical methods to demonstrate why coercion is necessary for any adequate understanding of specifically capitalist (or bourgeois) law, one that is historical and simultaneously corresponds with and is necessary for capitalist relations of production. Relying on all of the above, the paper will conclude with some remarks on sovereignty. I argue that sovereignty is a concept too much dependent on the



social relation of rulers and ruled, and therefore a relation which communists must seek to abolish.

## **Aestheticization of politics and Passive revolution in the age of mechanical reproduction**

**Clara Figueiredo (University of So Paulo)**

Between 1930 and 1932, A. Gramsci (1891-1937) developed the concept of passive revolution to criticize conservative modernization practices. Between 1935 and 1936, W. Benjamin (1892-1940) wrote the essay *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* about the aestheticization of politics. In the same period (1932-1937), in Italy, Mussolini used cinema, photography and photomontage in support of fascist political-economic for his domination project. In other words, in the 30, photography and photomontage (and practically the entire cultural and artistic spheres) became, during Fascism, mechanisms of passive revolution thought the aestheticization of politics. At the beginning of the 20th century, there was an intensification of class struggles around Europe characterized in Italy by the Red Week (1914) and the Red Biennial (1919-1920). Consequently, Italian bourgeoisie developed new forms of subaltern classes containment and, at the same time, carry out a conservative modernization of the productive apparatus. According to Gramsci, the fascist “passive revolution” (1932, Q.8, 236) would respond to it. As a kind of “passive revolution”, the fascist regime would create mechanism of molecular incorporation of the masses. In the age of technical reproducibility, relationships between cinema and masses could promote the mercantile, spectacle, and cult dimensions of stardom and personality (of the boss). In this scenario, the “organizing function” and the political praxis of art were metamorphosed into a new form of enlarged state. Indeed, in fascist Italy, the cultural devices (mega-expositions, biennials, etc.) and the new technical apparatus (photography and cinema) were operated in order to promote a narcissistic satisfaction and liturgical mobilization of the masses. As Benjamin observes, fascism sees its salvation in giving these masses not their right, but instead the chance to express themselves. Thus, the fascist “aestheticization of politics” would consist precisely in the use of the spheres of art in the containment and molecular assimilation of the masses in a passive revolution in order to maintain the hegemonic systems and forces of military coercion in the service of the ruling classes, as Gramsci analyzed. The present paper, departing from a visual analysis of the *Exhibition of Fascist Revolution* (Rome, 1932-1934), aims to develop a theoretical hypothesis about possible combination of the passive revolution Gramsci's notion and Benjamin's aestheticization of politics concept to analyze the artistic sphere of Italian fascism.

## Race, Class, and Automation in Light of the Logic of Capital

Peter Leslie Hudis (Oakton Community College)

It has long been recognized that capital contains an inexorable internal logic that of replacing the relative proportion of living labor to dead labor (machines, automated devices, and now artificial intelligence) in the social reproduction process. Much less theorized, however, is the impact of this on issues of race and racism. This paper will explore, by discussing ongoing debates in critical race theory (especially as provoked by the recent publication of 700 pages of previously unavailable or unknown writings of Frantz Fanon, contained in *Alienation and Freedom*), the ways in which the logic of capital impacts issues of identity and social consciousness by victims of racism. I will argue that as the logic of capital displaces more workers from the process of production and reproduction, capitalism's contractual form of appearance—the free exchange of labor power for wages—is progressively undermined. No longer can workers obtain the pretense of juridical recognition from the personifications of capital, since they are displaced from having a direct connection to them. This does not suggest that wage labor itself will become redundant with AI and Automation; instead, it means that as capital assumes ever-more abstract forms of domination it becomes increasingly more fraught to attain recognition on a juridical or contractual level. This has important ramifications for both class politics and identity politics, since the options of achieving recognition on a juridical level recedes it is only to be expected that it will be sought in other arenas such as race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, etc.

## The Long Conservative Crisis: understanding the roots of the Tory collapse

Duncan Thomas (Independent)

At the time of writing, the crisis of the Conservative Party is already one of historic proportions, with their death spiral showing no signs of abating. While internecine cleavages over Europe and the management of Brexit are the most proximate triggers of this collapse, only sharpened by the catastrophic leadership of Theresa May, the potentially terminal troubles of what was not so long ago routinely thought of as “the natural party of government” has long roots. The party membership is swiftly declining, and increasingly decrepit. Party finance now comes more from the dead than the (still, just about) living. David Cameron's pre-referendum parliamentary majority was not only gambled away spectacularly ahead of schedule, but was the first won by the party for nearly twenty years. Beyond simply the travails of a political party, however, the Tory collapse points to a much more fundamental problem: the difficulty for capitalism in its late neoliberal phase to find competent political representatives able to navigate the present crisis, stabilise accumulation, and maintain hegemony. While analysis of political parties in this period often focuses on the collapse of the social-democratic left, the effects of neoliberal transformation on capital's preferred state managers is perhaps less understood, yet more indicative of the systemic current impasse and the morbid symptoms we see arising from

it. This paper will place the long decline of the Conservatives, from Thatcher through to May and her as-yet-unknown successor, in the context of what Peter Mair termed “the void”. It will argue that the very success of Thatcherism and neoliberalisation more broadly led to a number of longer-term problems for the party, and that these are indicative of a broader crisis of representative democracy and state management. In parallel, it will analyse the increasing salience of petit-bourgeois nationalism and anti-migrant xenophobia among the Tory base as reactions to a diminished political sphere and state sovereignty, which in the form of Brexit have sharpened the party’s crisis by setting it on a political trajectory fundamentally at odds with the desires of the great majority of British capital. By examining the long-term factors behind the decline of the Conservative Party in this manner, I hope to illustrate the historic depths of the current crisis for the British ruling class. While developments over the next few months are as yet unknown, this historical analysis will also provide a basis for understanding the likely future shape of the British political right, whether that find expression in the Conservative Party or elsewhere.

## **The Disintegration of Democracy and the Rise of Authoritarian Neoliberalism in Brazil**

**Alfredo Saad Filho (SOAS University of London)**

This paper examines the disintegration of Brazilian democracy and the rise of authoritarian neoliberalism (AN) in the country. The study draws upon a review of the achievements and limitations of the federal administrations of the Workers Party (PT), and the forces leading to the overthrow of President Dilma Rousseff in 2016. Subsequently, the paper examines the economic drivers and the social composition of the right-wing forces massing against the PT, and their relationship with allegation of corruption and corruption scandals. Finally, a review of the political process leading to the election of President Jair Bolsonaro underpins the conclusion that Brazilian democracy is in rapid decline. This paper is for the panel “The Rise of the Far Right and the Crisis of Democracy in Brazil”, organised by R. Varela, A. Saad Filho and J. Grespan

## **Expanding the Lens of Social Reproduction Theory**

**Aaron Jaffe (The Juilliard School), Sue Ferguson (Wilfrid Laurier University)  
Ashley Bohrer (University of Notre Dame) Alan Sears (Ryerson University)**

1. Work/Play and Resistance: A Social Reproduction Feminism Perspective, Sue Ferguson, Wilfrid Laurier University The dominant socialist feminism tradition anointed by Engels and Bebel (and developed in the 1970s as dual systems theory) attributes women’s oppression to the gender division of labour itself. That is, the fact that women are relegated to undervalued, often difficult work that is performed outside the realm of capitalist production is identified as the socio-material basis of their oppression. The concept of labour, in this perspective, is understood as a discrete set of tasks that are variably and unfairly valued. Social reproduction feminism treats

labour as something more than that. It holds that women's oppression rests on not gendered labour per se, but on the essential-but-contradictory interaction between paid and unpaid labour (including differently valued forms of care work). This theory is grounded in an expansive and more elemental understanding of labour. It invokes the understanding that Marx describes in the *Economic Manuscripts* of labour as practical human activity. As a result, social reproduction feminism invites us to think more critically about that which is often taken for granted (in society and in Marxist theory): that there is a relatively clear division between the concepts of work and play. And in so doing, it prompts crucial questions for socialists about what it might take to create a society in which work is an expression of freedom, not oppression.

2. 2. Social Reproduction in and from the South, Ashley Bohrer, University of Notre Dame  
Social reproduction theory has, in recent years, made great strides toward incorporating anti-racist and anti-colonial critique into its tradition. Numerous contemporary pieces of social reproduction theory center the status of migrant women of color as the anchors of contemporary social reproduction in the North (e.g. Bhattacharya 2017; Farris 2017), responding to critiques of earlier iterations that had centered exclusively on white, married, heterosexual working class couples. However, much contemporary social reproduction theory is still focused on how capitalism is reproduced in the Global North. This paper looks beyond the role of migrant women of color, calling for deeper theoretical and empirical work on social reproduction in and from the Global South. I look specifically at global wage remittances as a case study to show how looking at the South can helpfully alter our understandings of social reproduction theory. Moreover, I argue that in order to fully incorporate the anti-racist and anti-colonial principles that much SRT enunciates, it must look beyond the North.
3. 3. Labor Powers for Capital or Radical Potentials Beyond it: The Critical Moment of SRT, Aaron Jaffe, The Juilliard School  
This paper argues that Social Reproduction Theory (SRT) is not only an analytic, but a critical social theory. In addition to providing an analytic framework to appreciate the reproduction and central role of labor powers, Social Reproduction Theory (SRT) also has the resources to condemn capitalist social organizations. Since powers for activity can be enjoined and developed in many different ways, SRT has the conceptual resources to criticize relations that form such powers in ways that harm rather than promote human flourishing. SRT invites us to see how activity of reproducing labor-powers in capitalist societies is formed by, and itself forms labor-powers limited in gendered, racialized and other needlessly constraining ways. In this way, SRT shows how capital's self-valorization has at its foundation a narrowing of the field of potentials, and instead values freer activities of life-making. On the basis of Marx's expansive notion of labor-powers as historically developing sets of brains, nerves, and muscles, we develop a wealth of needs and strategies for need-satisfying activity that can be valued over and against their constraint in the self-valorization of capital. In short, SRT's normative commitment to the diverse potentialities of making and actualizing labor-powers permits it to pass judgment on social relations through which capital rather than labor is empowered.

4. 4. Dispossession and the Social Reproduction of Sexualities, Alan Sears, Ryerson University  
Sexuality in the modern sense has been constructed historically from above and below as members of the working class struggled to socially reproduce themselves in conditions of dispossession. Capitalist dispossession creates a particular configuration of freedom and unfreedom marked by working class ownership of their own bodies yet also by their freedom from ownership or control over the key productive resources required to make lives. Further, the freedom of members of the working class is always relative to the unfreedom of those labouring under conditions of enslavement, imprisonment, irregular status, conscription, colonialism or systematic dehumanization. From below, people constructed sexualities in the limited yet real spaces for creative life-making opened up by this uniquely capitalist configuration of freedom and unfreedom, particularly in the cracks of private life. People engaged in bold life experiments, forging new forms of collectivity and survival strategies despite the traumas created by the violence of dehumanization and dispossession; the organization of work and life around gendered, racialized and sexualized divisions of labour; and the lack of dependable access to the necessities of life such as food and housing. From above, employers and state policy-makers forged new tools of regulation to subordinate and render productive this intemperate and unruly labouring population. Social policy, designed to regulate social reproduction by creating new mechanisms of bureaucratic control, played a crucial role in the development of sexual and gender normativities grounded in temperance and productivity.

## Theories of State and Ideology: Yugoslavian Punk in the Eighties

**Sezin Boynik (Free-lance researcher, Rab-Rab Press)**

Punk in the eighties caused some of the most interesting debates about ideology and the state in Yugoslavia. In Slovenia, *Problemi*, a prominent theoretical journal, changed its name in 1982 to *Punk Problemi* and published three of its issues dedicated to this movement. Edited by Mladen Dolar, the journal included contributions by Rastko Monik, Slavoj iek and others, and it was only one example of several alternative platforms where punk was seen as cultural expression amplifying both the misgivings of dissidents' understanding of civil society and as well the simplified conceptualisation of the state supported by Eurocommunist theoreticians. These theoretical interpretations of punk effect in Yugoslavia, written under the influence of Louis Althusser, will be the focus of my presentation. By discussing lesser-known texts about punk written by these theoreticians, I will show in which way the debates around "withering away of the state" in Yugoslavian self-management socialism contributed to a better understanding of contradictions posed by the punk movement. Furthermore, my aim is to show that this theoretical interest was not without friction. I will demonstrate this by comparing Rastko Monik's and Slavoj iek's writings on punk, which will help me to delineate different theoretical trends dedicated in studying the contradictions of the state under the conditions of existing socialism.

## Queer Social Reproduction: Directing Unitary Theory Toward Gay Communism

Jules Joanne Gleeson (University of Vienna), Kate Doyle Griffiths (CUNY Anthropology, PSC, FFU, Red Bloom) Joni Cohen (Invert Magazine, Goldsmiths) Max Fox (Pinko Magazine) Ashley Bohrer ()

This is a panel arranged by 'Leftovers Live'. While our presence at HM Conferences is primarily focused at encouraging those who would otherwise most likely not attend to contribute, this panel will showcase the state of the art in queer marxist scholarship, and practical thinking. Founding members of Pinko and Invert Magazines, the Red Bloom Communist Collective, and Leftovers discussion group will present their latest research and speculation on materialist views of gender, and gay struggle. Panel Abstract: What role will queer struggles play in overturning the capitalist mode of production? How have queers survived the particular oppressions we face in class societies defined by exploitation? Can Marxism better help us understand the developmental traumas and tangled subjectivities which make up queer life? Why have so many queers been drawn to today's anti-capitalist movements, and how can still more be encouraged to join? How can understandings of gender normativity and modes of production become truly conjoined? In recent years, queer marxist approaches have blossomed as major published works dealing with topics from history (P. Drucker, 2014) to theoretical strategy (H. Lewis, 2016) to gestational labour (S. Lewis 2019), and the launch of dedicated publications including Pinko and Invert have coincided with the growth of meme culture. The internet's visual culture has eroded any clarity between the niche and the universal, low culture and high theory, pedagogy and comedy. Today more tools than ever are available for explanations of gendered oppression, and in the context of resurgent global nationalism (which has skillfully used homo- and transphobia as leverage in advancing the agenda of Capital's right wing) this work has never been more pressing. Across the same period, socialist feminism has been revitalised by a revived interest in social reproduction. An increasing number of Marxist theorists have used both to explain changes continuing to take place in our era of capitalism, and strategise effective responses led by worker action. A sizable and flourishing body of research is addressing how workplaces are integrated with households, and how reproductive labour generates both workforces suitable for capitalist exploitation, and potential sites of resistance to Capital. Led by Marxist Feminists, this theoretical trend has reapplied Marxist frameworks to gain an explanatory grasp of societies as they exist across time. And especially the 'crises of reproduction that seem to define our current era. More recently a trend of 'Queer Social Reproduction Theory' has been posited (Griffiths 2018), as scholars have sought to demonstrate 'the failure of family values to solve the intensification of racial capitalism and the resulting radicalization of the demands emerging from these sectors of society as potentially universal transitional demands.' Queer Social Reproduction wants not only to include queer experiences of life-making, but also direct us towards recognising (and provoking) the revolutionary potential of breaking points in heterosexuality's continuous self-fabrication. Through centering the difficulties which capitalism experiences ensuring a normatively ordered, docile workforce exists across time, Queer Social Reproduction hopes to illuminate potential points of solidarity for all



anti-capitalists. Queers face both particular developmental struggles to remain part of the workforce, and have persistently found ourselves landed with poorly understood roles even within the broader reality of proletarian life. This session will approach questions of social reproduction, reproductive labour, and accompanying how their accompanying demands play out as stifling and ever-imperfect imperatives towards normativity. Our aim will be introducing the existing state of queer thinking to a wider audience, and hosting a discussion on prospects for a truly unitary theory of capitalism and gendered oppression.

## **Left Perspectives on Climate Policy in Germany: A feminist reading**

**Judith Daniel (Die LINKE. Bundestagsfraktion)**

The climate crisis is gendered. Globally, women are facing different as well as more drastic consequences of the climate crisis than men do. Statistically, they are far more likely to be directly influenced by natural disasters, resource scarcity and the violence resulting from it. At the same time, women in Western Europe have a different impact on climate change than European men do. The Die LINKE. parliamentary group inside the German Bundestag is going to publish a comprehensive action plan on climate justice and climate policy (in general) in November 2019. Covering the industrial complex, housing, energy infrastructure and mobility, this paper will present the action plan from a Marxist-feminist perspective. Combining materialist feminism and climate policy the paper argues for the simple things that are hard to do: Drastic work hour reduction, state planning of key sectors of the economy and a care revolution.

## **Starting from the Yellow Vests' Front : militant analysis, autonomous organization, popular self-defense**

**Pem Plateforme d'enquetes militantes (Universit Paris 0)**

The Yellow Vests movement has turned the situation around. Whether we consider the social or geographical composition of this uprising, its structure and struggles or its ideological perspective, we are facing a political phenomenon which is as powerful as it is uncommon. Activists and media, government and police, parties and trade unions - everyone was caught off guard by his incursion and by the liberation force it expressed. In this panel, which brings together three political collectives taking their actions in Paris and its suburbs - the Militant Inquiry Platform, the Anti-Fascist Action Paris Banlieue and ACTA - we want to review actions which chronicled YVs sequence, as much as they signified several stages in it, from November 2018 to July 2019, in order to highlight theoretical and political issues related to this fight. A first intervention, by MIP, will focus on YVs subjectification process, showing its inherent structure (popular assemblies, use of NICTs) and strategy (blockages, demonstrations, occupations), reflect the uncommon nature of its social, spatial and political composition. A second intervention, by AFAPb, will focus on the necessary anti-fascist perspective, showing the necessity to build a transversal front, able to hold the lead of extreme right-wing organized groups in the street without

lending side to a state-republican recovery, that produces the material and symbolic conditions from which the xenophobic and nationalist reaction draws its resources. And finally, ACTAs intervention will review the immanent evolutions of YVs sequence and will take stock of several stages of the movement and the self-organization structure that have been its driving force, trying to draw a first assessment: how to ensure that the movement is able to reproduce itself in the medium-long term and face state repression, while continuing to pose a threat to the powers in place? PEM: Counter-powers against 5th Republic AFAPb : Holding street, confronting state: antifascism within the Yellow Vests movement ACTA: Organizing Autonomy after the Yellow Vests

## **Sexual politics in microphase time: Reimagining queer liberation beyond inclusion and/or evasion**

**Alexander Stoffel (Queen Mary University of London)**

The prospect of climate breakdown, the intensification of neoliberalisms ravenous ways, and the advent of global fascism have ushered in an apocalyptic temporality that threatens to undo liberal notions of incrementalism, linearity, and progress. This has opened up new avenues for socialist politics and utopian thinking. Recent years have seen a flourishing of radical thought in anti-racist, Marxist, and feminist scholarship. Queer theory and practice, however, appear somewhat stuck in the 2000s with remarkably little to say about the radical anti-capitalist, environmental struggles of today and the questions that preoccupy their actors. Contemporary queer politics in the West can be understood in terms of two opposed (and insufficiently radical) models of resistance. On the one hand, there is the struggle for inclusion and representation, of which the most notable demand is the legal recognition of same-sex marriage. On the other hand, there are queer activists who aim to sustain lifestyles (such as polyamory) that are not sanctioned by dominant cultural norms. The former has been exposed by queer critics as an assimilationist project that has entrenched historically oppressive and violent institutions. The latter model has left queer people in despair about the incapacity of deviant sexual practices to bring down all of civilization. Neither is equipped to confront the unprecedented crises facing humanity today. Sexual politics is at an impasse, caught in a dichotomous framing as either for inclusion or for evasion. I want to suggest that these seemingly opposed models of resistance are actually structured by a single analytic i.e., the conceptualization of queer oppression as primarily a matter of exclusion which I trace back to Foucault's work in *The History of Sexuality* on the ways that certain populations, including queers, are not actively killed by sovereign power but left to die through their exclusion from the realm of productive power and politics. I argue that queers are actually fundamental to the reproduction of the social order and governing norms, and are therefore always already central to the workings of power and politics, even if this centrality is rendered invisible. I conclude by exploring how moving beyond an analytic of exclusion might allow for reinvigorated and reimagined forms of queer resistance that are antagonistic, internationalist, and liberatory.

## **Global land use change and the international circulation of rents. Disentangling the green-rentier state.**

**Mario Hernandez Trejo (University of Manchester)**

This paper looks at the geographical component of capitalist land rent in the earth-system. In doing so, it brings together two different (and distant) approaches. Firstly, environmental scientists analyses of the relationship between trade and land use change on a global scale. They have shown how the growing production and demand for agricultural commodities often entail both the intensification of land use in regions under capitalist exploitation and the abandonment or conservation of others. This process, known as land sparing, expresses at least one contradiction of the capitalist space economy, namely the continuing separation of land and labour for capital accumulation and the link of humans with distant areas of production and/or conservation. Secondly, the Marxist political economists account of the dynamics of the circulation of land rent shaped by the international division of labour. These authors have shown how countries that produce and export raw materials recover a portion of land rent through mechanisms such as taxation and the regulation of prices. These state-led mechanisms facilitate the transfer of a mass of surplus value produced in industrialised regions to national territories producing raw materials. By looking at examples such as the trade of corn between the US and Mexico, and the simultaneous expansion of conservation set-aside programs, this paper argues that a key component of environmental depletion such as land use change relies on the dynamics of the green-rentier state. Looking at global land use change in relation with the international circulation of rents opens alternatives to mainstream approaches to environmental conservation and trade, and offers new insights to well-known issues in Marxist political economy such as property regimes and the capitalist state.

## **Using Critical Psychology to Understand Authoritarian Populism's Popular Appeal**

**Till Manderbach (University of Klagenfurt, Master Programme Psychology),  
Daniel Schnur (University of Klagenfurt, Master Programme Psychology)**

The alarming rise of far-right populist movements has provoked countless attempts to understand their newfound popularity, many of which seek to explain it as a product of poor education or economic frustration. These oversimplified explanations omit one crucial fact: that any individual who chooses to support a right-wing or fascist necessarily has their own, specific reasons for doing so. In order to better understand the individual motivations behind the growth of the new right, we propose an investigation into right-wing voter reasoning patterns rooted in the tradition of the Berlin critical psychology school (Klaus Holzkamp and others). While statistics can offer hints as to the political tendencies found in different social milieus, how they are interpreted depends largely on what theoretical foundations one draws on. Two currently fashionable tendencies are the so-called culture war thesis, often counterposed to a class war thesis or rather the popular dichotomisation

of identity versus class politics. However, we believe a fruitful understanding can only emerge by inquiring into the contradictory demands subjects face in different societal meaning structures and how they create their subjective agency within them. Our approach avoids structural determinism of the subject by societal structure or psychological diagnosis (e.g. the authoritarian personality) as well as voluntarist emphasis of the free will. We first show how authoritarian populism presents a precise restriction of action and at the same time presents itself as the only fitting solution. Secondly, we outline how empirical research can learn from this critical-psychological perspective. Furthermore, we are going to demonstrate this by some results of a series of interviews and a participant observation conducted by one of the speakers in a foodbank of a deprived city-district in eastern Germany. The results indicate that limited in range but far from being determined by their social situation the participants' interpretations are quite different from each other, expressing contradictory "mixtures" of solidarity and forms of scapegoating. Given the experience of being abandoned by "the big ones above" for decades, authoritarian populism was appealing to some as an expression of the "people's will" without necessarily expecting concrete improvements of their own social situation from it. Other participants were strongly opposed to it, some of them expressing their awareness about their own vulnerability as "outsiders".

## **The Case for a Radical Green New Deal**

**Daniel Aldana Cohen (University of Pennsylvania)**

[JOINT SUBMISSION WITH ALYSSA BATTISTONI] On both sides of the Atlantic, the energy in climate politics is coming from movements on the left demanding some version of a Green New Deal. It is no coincidence that the left has seized the political terrain with a proposal at the scale that the climate crisis demands. To effect the rapid and wide-sweeping transformation that climate science tells us is necessary, we will need to take on capitalism and its entire social and ecological order. In a new, collectively authored book for Verso, Kate Aronoff, Alyssa Battistoni, Daniel Aldana Cohen, and Thea Riofrancos lay out the core arguments for such a program, and sketch how it could reshape the United States and global resource supply chains through the 2020s. One simple argument structures the book: An effective Green New Deal is also a radical Green New Deal. The book focuses on a handful of key climate battlegrounds. We call for winding down fossil extraction and private utilities, putting each under democratic, public control. We tackle labor, a longtime sticking point for environmental action, examining proposals to guarantee a job to every adult who wants one while arguing for a broader transformation of work. We connect clean energy to the broader built environment, especially housing, transit, and recreation; we argue for a housing guarantee and overall lower energy use, with dramatically expanded options for leisure. And we show how a radical Green New Deal in the United States can weave relations of solidarity across the world starting with the communities at the frontlines of the lithium extraction that's needed for rechargeable batteries and the renewable energy transition. In this panel, Alyssa Battistoni and Daniel Aldana Cohen will present the core ideas proposed in our book, with special attention to the US context, labor, and the built environment. Ash Sarkar from Novara, and Clare Hymer

from Labour for a GND, will respond with critique and feedback, and their perspectives on how a radical Green New Deal could play out in a UK context. Panelists: Alyssa Battistoni [alybatt@gmail.com] Daniel Aldana Cohen [aldanacohen@gmail.com] Ash Sarkar Clare Hymer

## **Unlocking the Earth Bank of Codes: A Critique of the Neoliberal Bioeconomy**

**Amedeo Policante (University of Warwick)**

In January 2018, the Earth Bank of Codes was officially presented at the World Economic Forum as a revolutionary project aimed at sequencing the genomes of all eukaryotic life on Earth and encoding them in a blockchain bank of codes. In this way, the project promises to revise and reinvigorate our understanding of biology, while enabling conservation and maximizing returns. In other words, the Earth Bank of Codes has been presented at once as a scientific steward (supporting genomic research), an economic enterprise (generating and distributing profits), a political mediator (preventing conflicts) and a conservation strategy a direct response to the problem that the earth's biological assets [...] are under serious threat (WE Forum 2018: 5). In this paper, we consider the Earth Bank of Codes as part of an emerging neoliberal conservation paradigm that: a) presents the ecological crisis as both an economic conundrum and a financial opportunity; b) promises to 'unlock' the value of nature's biological assets, thereby pushing market actors away from the destructive extraction of resource commodities and towards the supposedly immaterial extraction of knowledge; c) constitutes a bioeconomic strategy, aimed at securing both life and capital through the preservation of biodiversity. By focusing on the links between life sciences and political economy, we explore the Earth Bank of Codes as part of an emergent green accumulation paradigm that aims at ensuring the conditions for the expanded reproduction of life as capital.

## **Anti-Accumulation: Literature and the Destruction of Value**

**Mark Steven (University of Exeter)**

The three papers in this panel all ask questions about the disjunctive relationships between literary value and value-production under capitalism. Each paper in this panel is drawn to literature written in response to capitalist value-production as manifest in resource extraction, large-scale industry, the making and unmaking of classes, and the creation of disposable populations that are both racialized and gendered. Moreover, each paper explores the ways literature and literary value attempt to reassert themselves, or lend themselves to anti-capitalist conflict, in moments when value-production comes up against its limits and contradictions. Specifically, the papers are interested in moments when literature mediates the destruction of value, in the form of oil spills, terrorism, and non-commodities. Working against the false opposition between culture and economy, this panel sets out to provide, by way of its case studies, a concrete account of what literary

analysis might offer the critique of political economy. Blow Outs and Oil Spills: World Literature, Capitalist Environment-Making & Negative-ValueDr Treasa De Loughryt.de-loughry@exeter.ac.ukComparing and contrasting the literature, poetry and art of oil spills in Cornwall (1967), Santa Barbara (1969), Deepwater/ Gulf of Mexico (2010), and the Niger Delta (1960s - present), this paper examines how oil spills are mediated in these sites as a toxic residue that exceeds profit-making, and/or as an opportunity for sabotage. Oils presentation as pollutant or the subject of siphoning, is a kind of negative value, exceeding capitalist profit making, and even contributing to future environmental limits to accumulation. But how oil spills are understood as threat or opportunity depends upon the combined and uneven dynamics of capitalist environment-making, or a world-systems approach to energy and waste that attends to the exportation of hazardous industries, and the despoliation of peripheries and semi-peripheries. For example, while oil spills are an environmental hazard or matter out of place in some oil spills (England, California), in the Gulf of Mexico it is a lucrative resource requiring securitisation, and in the Niger Delta a cause and consequence of fuel scarcity and slow violence. Taking a materialist world-literary and ecological approach that deploys the work of the Warwick Research Collective, Stephanie Le Menager, Jason W. Moore and others, this paper examines the combat poetry and toxic sublime of Niger Delta Oil poetry, the naturalistic realism of Californian and English photographers, and the cold pastoral of Gulf of Mexico works, by artists and poets such as Jane Bown, Charles Causley, Rebecca Dunham, Ogaga Ifowodo, Ernst Logar, and Tanure Ojaide.

Bringing the War Home: Terrorism and Literature in the Capitalist World-SystemDr Mark Stevenm.a.steven@exeter.ac.ukIn 1970, after the killing of Fred Hampton, the Weather Underground a radical splinter faction of the SDS issued a Declaration of a State of War against the United States. Weve known that our job is to lead white kids into armed revolution, they claimed. Tens of thousands have learned that protest and marches dont do it. Revolutionary violence is the only way. Beginning with the Weather Underground, this paper is about the way militant groups from the first world, in Europe and the United States, employed kinds of direct action developed in the global peripheries and semi-peripheries as a form of anti-capitalist protest and resistance. Looking at the exploits of three other groups during the 1970s and 80s the Symbionese Liberation Army (United States), the Red Army Faction (Germany), and the Red Brigades (Italy) this paper is interested in the relationship between terrorism, understood as a violent spectacle, and the quasi-literary media dispatches written by those branded as terrorists, by writers like Patty Hearst, UlrikeMeinhof, and Nanni Balestrini. The papers argument is that, via the written dispatch, militant groups have sought to bridge a divide between what Antonio Gramsci would have called war of manoeuvre and war of position, combining a direct clash between revolutionaries and the state with an attempt via culture to gain influence and win power. The paper ends with reference to contemporary literatures rewriting of the events of the 1970s and 80s.

Death by Moonshine: Alcohol in the World-SystemDr Kate Montaguek.montague@exeter.ac.ukRemuneration via the necessary resources for subsistence and without recourse to the money commodity is a standard operating procedure throughout capitalist industry; and, within this model, alcohol has often fulfilled the role of that labor-nourishing resource. From 16th century stonemasons given 14 pints of beer a day for calories and strength to the institutionalization of a rum ration in the British Navy, this paper thinks about alcohol in the world-system. It suggests that by tracing the local extraction, production, circulation, and consumption of illicit moonshine



across specific regions and commodity frontiers we are able to distill something of the contradictions within capitalism. From vodka in Mikhail Bulgakov's *The Master and Margarita*, through whisky in Faulkner's *Sanctuary*, to poteen in Finnegans *Wake*, moonshine figures the spectrality of capital but also a kind of value recalcitrant to conversion into profit. By drawing a comparative focus between Russia, the United States, and Ireland via this literary trope, I want to think through the ways alcohol, and the social relations it engenders, simultaneously resists exchange whilst nevertheless internalizing the logic of capitalist subsumption.

## **Acting bodies, acting flesh - Reflections on Tiqqun's anarchism, Spillers' flesh and discontinuous embodied action**

**Gwendolen Pare (University of California, Irvine)**

This ongoing project engages Spillers' work on the flesh (as well as developments of it in Hartman, Musser, Sharpe and Weheliye) to interrogate a topology of community in publications of Tiqqun, *The Invisible Committee* and *El Consejo Nocturno*, present in images of thought such as the network, the weave/textile and the flesh. In the latter topology, the flesh is vulnerable to a critique of formlessness by, among other people Catherine Malabou and Benjamin Noys, as a gestural analogy or complicity with network capitalism and flexible accumulation. Spillers' work by contrast remedies this important shortcoming and, in providing a more complex topology of the flesh, can also account for an at the same time more historical and more diversely resistant action of the flesh. Her semiosis of procedure, which makes the marked flesh legible, also informs a more interesting concept of action than thus far found in Tiqqun et al. Enfleshment offers some Afropessimist thinkers the promise of a different relation. This paper reflects on that promise by asking for the concept of action necessitated by it.

## **From carbon-negative oil to climate restoration: The fight for the design of carbon removal**

**Holly Jean Buck (University of California Los Angeles)**

Is it possible to restore the climate and reverse climate change? As the immediacy of the climate crisis becomes clear, new languages of hope are emerging, from regeneration to repair. Central to these are climate engineering technologies and practices that can remove carbon from the atmosphere, from natural climate solutions like afforestation to industrial carbon capture infrastructures. If these practices and technologies were collectively owned and carefully designed, and powered by renewable energy, it could indeed be possible to lower greenhouse gas concentrations and reverse some climate change impacts. What seems more likely, however, is that a coalition of industries and NGOs mobilizes and compromises to deploy carbon removal in ways favorable to existing power interests. In particular, coupling bioenergy with CCS or direct air capture technologies with enhanced

oil recovery injecting captured carbon dioxide underground to produce oil that is lower-carbon or theoretically carbon-negative will allow fossil fuel companies the ability to reassure investors and continued legitimacy. Changing the dominant visions of carbon removal from carbon-negative oil and boutique offset projects towards practices and infrastructures informed by social justice and ones that can make a significant difference in the climate will require strategic engagement from all kinds of groups. In this talk, Ill lay out a few pathways and leverage points for that strategic engagement.

## **Root and branch: the new base of US socialism**

**Julia Damphouse (Bard College Berlin)**

As part of a larger body of research into the effects and shortcomings of socialist political education, this study aims to assess the political consciousness level of socialists in the United States who are active in the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA). For historians and researchers of political education, understanding the degree of theoretical competency of rank-and-file members of organisations is difficult in the absence of semi-objective documentary material, this study aims to provide a measured account of the political consciousness of the new generation of socialists driving its current moment of resurgence. Research is conducted on a large sample of several dozen members engaged in short open-ended conversations, beginning with the questions: what is socialism? and: how does it relate to marxism? The interview process includes a survey for the voluntary collection of corresponding biographical information, allowing results to be controlled for variables such as level of formal education and geographical region, and remain easily repeatable for expanded future and comparative study. The format allows for forms of quantitative (comparison of metrics like how often key figures, ideas, or concepts were mentioned eg. Marx, collective ownership, Medicare for All, Bernie Sanders) and qualitative (how confident was the respondent, how do the answers of one regions members compare to others) evaluation. This aims to remedy the imbalance of information from journalistic accounts of DSA. Reports available from members of the organisation risk influenced by internal-factional bias or starry-eyed reporting, and most journalistic accounts focus heavily on young members of coastal and metropolitan sections of the organisation, and are less interested in factors affecting internal variation like geographical region, time active in the organisation, union affiliation, and other political-educational influences. Findings offer outsiders a more objective account of the theoretical competency and level of socialist consciousness among members of the USs largest socialist organisation.

## **Politicizing the rupture: EU, Nation-States, and strategy for the Left**

**Catarina Principe (Jacobin; CES (Centre for Social Studies), Coimbra, Portugal)**

The aftermath of European austerity has opened several debates on the European Union attempts at unity. One of the central debates around the relation with the EU has been the role of nation-states in European capitalism. Both the mainstream discourse as well as

some theories of globalization have argued that the constitution of a transnational economic bloc has done away with the importance of the national level and that the nation-states role in the organization of the economy is today very reduced or insignificant, not to say unwanted. However, others have challenged this view by proposing that nation-states still play an important role in the organization of capital, even though we must recognize the changes arising from transnational capital and its relation with national financial elites. My analysis follows these challenging voices, starting from the critic that the reduction of the nation-states role denies the double level of the foundation of the EU as such. Understanding today's dynamics of the EU with the intent of finding viable strategies and solutions for the crisis and conflicts within it forces us to think constantly at two levels: the national and the supranational. The creation and enlargement of the EU was a tool to establish a transnational capitalist bloc capable of competing in the world market. However, this bloc was created by nation-states in economic competition with one another. Thus, it is not sufficient to talk about the transnationalization of capital but necessary to understand the role that national capitals play in the structuring of the EU as it is today. The process of European integration created core-periphery dynamics where the core countries produce and export cheap goods through the devaluation of the labor value to periphery markets with economies based on importation and non-tradable goods. In this sense, the process of European integration for the periphery has meant the dismantlement of their productive sectors of the economy, getting in exchange easy access to credit in order to compensate for the loss of value production. Following the same dynamic, the introduction of a common currency accentuated these inequalities. The devaluation of the German Mark in comparison to other national currencies upon the introduction of the Euro allowed Germany to solidify its core position within the EU and accentuated the dependency of the peripheral economies by the creation of a central bank and the impossibility of devaluation as a means to respond to economic crisis by nation-states. Following this analyses, my presentation aims to understand how the processes of European integration, namely for a southern European peripheral country like Portugal, have created forms of state and economies that are structurally dependent on the EU and thereby highly volatile to economical and political shifts at the center. This high level of dependency was clearly shown (and it still is) from 2008 on, and on the very reduced instruments that southern European countries had to avoid the so-called adjustment programs, which are simultaneously political processes to restructure the state itself. I am proposing that the forms of states of countries coming out of post-authoritarian regimes were developed in such a manner to be intrinsically dependent on a European core-periphery dynamic, because their process of democratization and state-making happen concurrently with the process of European integration. Understanding how processes of European integration did not bypass nation-states, but were and are mainly about their reorganisation: how exactly this reorganisation occurs and can be found in the economic policies, structures of the state and law. For example: the specialisation in production - an overwhelming weight of the tertiary sector in the GDP (an effective process of deindustrialization, that created shifts in the capital groups in the country), the privatisation and financialization of the states provisions and the central national companies (energy, transportation, mail, etc) and liberalized labor law and markets (ending collective bargaining). However, processes of Europeanization have not been done without contradictions - particularly within the ruling classes. And a position of

subalternity for the European periphery needed, nonetheless, the support of the middle and lower classes. These dynamics have created an unfinished process of integration and could be identified as marked by a form of 'contradictory consciousness' concerning the hegemonic understanding of what it means to be a member of the European Union. Dealing with these contradictions - as well as reclaiming the idea of sovereignty as an emancipatory strategy - cannot be done without politicizing the rupture: a process of collective growth and understanding of boundaries of the EU if we are to implement measures that allow for the end of austerity and a regain of democratic control over the state itself, the economy, and possibilities of profound transformations.

## **Destroying our blue planet: back to politics**

**George Poulados (None)**

Looking back at the ecological disasters on Three Mile Island, Bhopal, Chernobyl, and Fukushima (just to name a few), we observed that they were presented as accidents by the governments in the countries they occurred. Currently, as ecological accidents seem to be happening more often, people all over the world tend to understand that we run the risk of experiencing an unprecedented global ecological catastrophe that will alter completely the beautiful blue planet we live on. The forces that are responsible for this unimaginable disaster are the ones that tend to dismiss any warnings about the future of our planet as green hyperboles, maintaining the idea that nothing can stop progress. This idea is nothing more than the reflection of the domination of nature and the hegemony imposed by the ruling classes upon those who produce wealth daily. The emergence of the Greens in the 80s was perceived as a significant political and social alternative to the depressing Cold War era. However, the illusions about capitalism (and parliamentarism) promoted by the Greens and many Left parties together with the failure of the social movements to appeal to and mobilize more citizens have led to an anaemic resistance to neoliberalism and its destructive consequences. This does not mean the failure of the projects of ecology (eco-socialism, social ecology, alternatives, direct democracy) but rather a call to those seeking social change to clarify the successes achieved and the failures suffered as a necessary step towards reharmonizing human communities with the natural world while at the same time celebrating diversity, creativity and freedom.

## **Sustainability Under Capitalism: Limitless Pure Accumulation or Escape?**

**Sura Azzam (Economics Department, SOAS)**

In the face of the inevitable approaching ecological crisis, the question of sustainability has found place not only within environmental sciences but also permeated through a wide array of disciplines and politics as desperate attempts to restore the ecological balance, or at least slow down its deterioration. At this critical time, if the possibility of the reversal of the environmental damage is accepted, the most important consideration thereafter

becomes whether achieving environmental sustainability outside, or better yet beyond, the scope of capitalism is possible. This ecological emergency could have potentially been the necessary rupture that would have allowed for our escape from the grip of capitalism, a line of flight. However, considering the current political state of the world and dominant forms of environmental activism (from radical leftist to liberal corporate), the possibility is questionable. If an escape fails, we should then turn to considering, initially, the possibility, and consequently, the implications of attaining sustainability within capitalism. Will succeeding at realizing environmental sustainability within capitalism bring forth sustainable capitalism? What would a capitalism of limitless pure accumulation unbound by resources entail? This paper will examine these lines of possibility and explore the implications of arriving at ecological sustainability under the clutch of capitalism. It will draw upon resources from varying strands of the emerging post-humanist tradition in conjunction with a multitude of disciplines, from economics, development, ecological studies and philosophy.

## **Real Abstraction: Between Act and Form**

**Iyad Raya (Lebanese American University)**

In this work, I revisit the discussions on real abstractions as present in the works of Alfred Sohn-Rethel, Louis Althusser, Moishe Postone, Helmut Reichelt, Michael Heinrich and Slavoj Žižek. In particular I focus on the notion of abstract-labor which is a point of contention between these theorists. These Marxist thinkers differ in their understandings of real abstractions. They are understood as practical acts by some, and as mental acts by others. What makes things more difficult is that, besides being acts, real abstractions are also conceived as forms. As forms, real abstractions are quasi-universals; although generated in practices, they nonetheless have a certain autonomy vis-a-vis individual acts. I argue that real abstractions encompass both (unconscious) mental acts and (unconscious) practical acts. The former are necessary in making sense of Capital's quasi-conceptual form; the latter are necessary to understand Capital as a historical dynamic. Thus, the twofold character of real abstractions as acts and forms is to be inscribed in terms of two kinds of unconscious acts: mental and practical. The task turns into the articulation of the relation between these different acts.

## **When Basic Income Units Fight Back: Worker-led Strategies In Resisting Precarious Academic Work at York University, Canada**

**Gizem K. Akmak (York University, Department of Sociology)**

While serving as institutions of social mobility, higher learning and potential sites for social transformation, universities are becoming hubs of neoliberal ideology with market-driven learning, increased managerial corporatization, and the casualization of academic labour. They are increasingly operating like businesses, while engaging in top-down governance practices in order to shut down opposition. They are increasingly run by boards that are

filled with CEOs instead of educators, with the goal of profit-making in mind rather than the pursuit of a democratic vision of public education. This paper attempts to situate the neoliberal university as a site of political contestation through an analysis of the 2018 strike of CUPE 3903, the union that represents teaching assistants research assistants, contract faculty and part time librarians at York University, Canada. Predominantly composed of graduate student workers, CUPE 3903 has attempted to grapple with issues union busting, increased precarization of graduate student workers, the university's increased reliance on underpaid contract academics, as well as equity and accessibility in the workplace through their 143-day long strike. The strike ended up becoming the longest post-secondary education sector strike in Canada before the union was forced back to work by the Ontario government. Members of CUPE 3903 are part of a large mass of precarious academic workers all over the world whose working conditions are transformed by the larger processes of commercialization and further commodification of social reproduction. In that sense, while attempting to maintain an aura of moral superiority by co-opting languages of equity and democracy, the neoliberal university functions like any other industry. The struggles of precarious academic work carry significant parallels to other workers that need emphasizing for establishing solidarity between workers across sectors.

## **Capitalist Accumulation, the Global South, and Pre/Non-Capitalist Social Forms**

**Morteza Samanpour (The Center for Research In Modern European Philosophy (CRMEP), Kingston University)**

The non-Eurocentric historical and theoretical works on the origins capitalism (e.g., Anievas and Niancolu, Banaji, Blaut, Frank, Gerstenberger, Linebaugh) have transformed our understanding of the nature and dynamics of capitalism during the past thirty years. In particular, they demonstrate how colonialism, as an integral part of capitalist accumulation, is constituted by the superimposition of capitalist social relation upon pre-capitalist forms of exploitation such as slavery and serfdom. Similarly, though from a different perspective, the debates between Marxism and postcolonial theory (Chibber, Lazarus, Harootunian) suggest that colonial practices left intact, reproduced, and even intensified pre-capitalist social forms. Moreover, the materialist critiques of postcolonial difference have pointed out that the social life in the global south, as a result of experiencing modernity via (semi-)colonialism, is determined by the social actuality of pre-/non-capitalist social relations and their coexistence/interaction with capitalist social relations. Yet, these literatures and debates do not offer any systematic theoretical account of the relationship between capitalist accumulation and the persistence of pre/non-capitalist social relations in the global south, especially when this relationship is examined with respect to new forms of imperialism at the current conjuncture. By relying on these debates and literatures, this paper deals with this relationship and asks whether capitalism, in a radically paradoxical and contradictory manner, requires pre-capitalist social relations? I would argue that capitalism is an integrated - though not, of course, a unified or even - social totality in which the essence of its constituent elements, particular structures and developments, including



the pre-capitalist social forms in the global south, cannot be fully understood except through reference to the system as a whole and its global regime of accumulation. Based on this argument, the paper raises the following questions: Are pre-capitalist social relations structurally constitutive for the system or the latter only makes benefit of it? How do pre-capitalist relations facilitate the accumulation of capital? To what extent, if any, neo-colonial or neo-imperial power relations are oriented towards the reproduction of pre-capitalist relations in the peripheries? How are we to understand the coexistence and interaction of pre-capitalist and capitalist social relations? To adequately address these questions, the paper draws on three different and yet interrelated theoretical resources: first, contemporary theories of imperialism (Harvey, Smith, Wood); second, Marx's notion of formal subsumption; third, the temporal readings of Marx's Critique of Political Economy which approach the coexistence of pre-capitalist and capitalist temporal registers through the notion of historical time.

## **A new practice of politics: between collective self-rule, autonomy and the law**

**Svenja Bromberg (Goldsmiths, University of London)**

In this paper I will outline what I call following Balibar "a new practice of politics", which I see as an answer to Marx's demand of founding a non-bourgeois politics beyond state and civil society. Taking cues from different parts of Marx's work, Castoriadis, Lefort, Abensour and Tosel, I will link this new practice of politics to three key elements: collective self-rule (grounded in the process of self- or auto-emancipation), autonomy and giving the law to oneself, collectively. But, importantly, these concepts are never purely political concepts, they are conditioned by the overall constitution and reproduction of society based on non-capitalist principles (e.g. social labour, the social individual). On this basis we are able to arrive at radically different ideas of citizenship and freedom, but their meanings - and whether they can be meaningful at all - are predicated on being preceded by an emancipatory rupture.

## **Central didacticism, peripheral experimentalism: echoes of the Great Recession in Portuguese cinema**

**Jos Borges Reis (Goldsmiths)**

Since 2008, at different rhythms and temporalities, the Great Recession has marked a worldwide inflection in economics, politics, and culture. In this paper, we look for its echoes in Portuguese cinema. Like most national cinematographies outside Hollywood, Portuguese cinema is mostly an unprofitable venture that always relied on State support to subsist, its history closely mirroring the history of State cultural policies. After the transition to democracy through revolutionary upheaval in the 1970s, it attained a growing recognition in the cinephile circuit of the main European film festivals through its auteur

sector. From the 1980s, a small number of directors above all Manoel de Oliveira were celebrated in France and beyond as purveyors of national cinematography with a coherent line of resistance to Hollywood, resisting industrial normalisation with artisanal craft, affirming the values of auteur autonomy against the mainstream with few resources, but also few commercial constraints and an artistically inventive cinematic outlook. These directors focused intensively in the 1980s on the idea of the Portugal as an overarching concept for a mostly negative, satirical outlook. Later generations in the 1990-2000s turned to a more distant, generic, internationalised outlook fixated on social marginality. The post-2012 Troika years in Portugal, besides a period of radical cuts in funding to cinema production, heralded a new phase where the idea of crisis moved from an imagination of the nation to an imagination of capitalism. Films like *Arabian Knights* (Miguel Gomes, 2015), *So Jorge* (Marco Martins, 2016), or *Fabrica de Nada* (Pedro Pinho, 2017) signal a rise in Portuguese cinema of capitalist crisis as a subject in itself, with an outlook where the dialectic of local/concrete vs. universal/abstract frames of reference moves towards the latter pole, and a spirit of experimentation that is more daring than the didacticism of Hollywood takes on the Great Recession.

## Thinking generations and class composition together

**Keir Milburn (University of Leicester)**

Over the last few years age has emerged as a key dividing line in political opinion and voting intention. Across the US, UK and much of Western Europe young people are more likely to vote Left and hold Left-wing views, while older generations are more likely to vote Right and hold conservative social views. The scale of this political generation gap is historically unprecedented and is, I argue, different in nature to that of the 1960s and 70s. It is not primarily based on differing cultural attitudes but on an economic gap in life chances. That in turn is not primarily caused by demographic changes but is a side effect of a neoliberal settlement in which conditions of social reproduction and work have worsened over time and so affected later age cohorts more severely. These trends have been massively accelerated by the crisis of 2008 and the macroeconomic policy choices that followed it. In this sense, we could say that age is a modality through which class is currently lived. Such a formulation leaves us with two problems. Firstly, what conception of class can best illuminate this modality. And secondly, why has this changing class composition produced such a profound and near simultaneous political effect across many different countries. To address the first problem, I examine the inception of class composition analysis in the Operaist movement of the early 1960s to show how its emergence was provoked by a dynamic of generational political miscommunication leaving it unique suited to our purposes. To address the second, I return to Mannheims (1952) classic conception of political generations, in which generations do not appear sequentially but emerge in relation to moments of rapid change. In order to link what Kosolleck (2004) would call spaces of experience to changing horizons of expectation I read Mannheim through the theory of Events found in contemporary critical theory, in which they mark ruptures in the existing sense of political possibility. Taken together this allows me to construct a compositional analysis of political generations that links generational

divergence in material interests to the generational dynamics of differing perceptions of the future in which those interests will be enacted

## **Digital Commons and the political: A marxist feminist analysis**

**Natalia-Rozalia Avlona (National Technical University Athens, Department of Humanities, Social Sciences and Law)**

During the last three decades, we have witnessed the emergence of burgeoning literature and activist action around the digital commons, as an information and knowledge resources that are collectively created and owned among a community.(Fuster, 2016). The events which inflamed this discourse can be traced in the 1990s. The first one was the publication of Elinor Ostroms book Governing the commons, the second one the invention of the World Wide Web, and the third once the rise of the Free and Open Source Software (FOSS), the Free Culture, and the Access to Knowledge movements (A2K), under the umbrella of the digital commons movements. Nowadays, the discourse around the digital commons, despite of being framed within the broader discussion of the political potentialities of the commons (Dardot & Laval 2014) does include a contradiction and a deficiency. This contradiction is situated in the heart of their communities and institutions and the deficiency is related to their literature. Particularly, there is a documented lack of inclusivity and gender balance in these communities as well as a stereotypical invisibility of the womens labour in the production and reproduction of the digital commons. At the same time, there is no feminist analysis on the digital commons, despite of the emblematic marxist feminist work of Silvia Federici on the commons, and the development of the feminist theories in STS. Aim of this paper is to illuminate this contradiction and to elaborate a marxist feminist analysis in order to address this lack, within the discourse of the digital commons.

## **The close link between anti-Muslim attitudes and climate denial**

**Astrid Hauge Rambl (University of Oslo)**

There is no obvious link between protesting Muslim immigration and denying climate change. However, both quantitative and qualitative research suggests that the two often go hand in hand. In this paper I use discourse analysis as presented by Glynos and Howarth (2007) to explain why the two political positions fit together. Based on in-depth interviews with anti-Muslim activists in Norway and the UK, I show how a logic of anti-establishment make them in opposition to what they view as politically correct opinions, such as believing in man made climate change. However, this opposition is not directed at all elite opinions. The anti-Muslim activists promote more progressive values such as gay rights and gender equality, which they see as contrasting to the illiberal Muslims. The anti-establishment logic is hence only operative when it is not interrupting the sharp frontier between the indigenous people and Muslims.

## **Mind the Gap of Bled of es-Siba: Capitalism, Diplomacy, and the (Un)Veiling of the First Moroccan Crisis 1904 - 1906**

**Meriam Mabrouk (Birkbeck, University of London)**

This article suggests a novel approach, centering contested social-property relations, to analyse the formation and transformation of the colonial question in Morocco. In analyzing the role of Morocco in the First Moroccan Crisis (1904-1906), the preceding and succeeding alliances are reduced to an effort to generalize about World War I, where Morocco is referred to as the political barometer of European diplomacy, whilst the agency of its political and social actors is entombed. Beyond this flawed account of the crisis, Neorealist accounts of the crisis explicitly recognize it as a pivotal event of world-historical scale, and yet provide transhistorical generalisations about the alliances, and fail to recognize the primacy of an essential moment in the international, and the ways in which it changed capitalist social relations. This debate remains trapped at a level where the specific socio-political and geo-economic contexts in which these diplomatic relations emerge are externalized, and the specific actors behind them, overlooked. Intervening in this debate, this article provides a counter-narrative to existing accounts of the First Moroccan Crisis. It argues that the Crisis was a critical juncture in the development and subsequent shaping of the international system, often overlooked in IR accounts of major hegemonic wars, falling between the cracks of classic imperialism and the new neoliberal Imperialism. Drawing on the Political Marxist tradition, I propose that the First Moroccan Crisis is a system portraying the intersections between informal empire-building through trade-led diplomacy, the institutionalisation of strategic and emotional interests over the extra-European periphery, and the re-concretization of the social relations of sovereignty in modern international relations. By exploring the dynamics between capitalism, diplomacy, and sovereign territoriality in history, the article aims to showcase the value of an analytical framework for contextualising the uneven restructuring of international political space under the nature of global capital.

## **Alt-Sovereignty**

**Zeina Abu-Meita (Independent Legal Researcher)**

Sovereignty is inextricably tied to issues of law, currency, identity, territorial assets, systems of government, reciprocity, and power. Blockchain technology comes with smart contracts, cryptocurrency, digital identity, asset registry, and voting - the first five issues - already built in. A set of blockchains coded to mutually respect each other can provide the sixth, reciprocity. This sets the stage, not for a new Westphalian-style treaty, but for a system whereby proto-states and virtual-states can establish their real and/or virtual existence, demarcating their real and/or virtual territories, and interoperate systematically with each other, in parallel with or independently of their recognition in the old-style Westphalian system. Thus virtual sovereignty or alt-sovereignty has the potential to shift sovereignty from the ground to the cloud, doing to Westphalian sovereignty what web-based business has done to bricks and mortar business - not to render them obsolete, but

to shift power away from them - the seventh issue - becoming the platform on which the lions-share of international interaction is conducted. And as with web based business, this new system is able to start within the old system, but without the permission of or recognition by it, requiring only enough participation to gain momentum. This paper will draw a parallel between the past history of the development of the worldwide web, and a potential path for the development of alt-sovereignty, highlighting legal, monetary, and human rights issues.

## Strategic thinking and Internacionalism for the 99%

Josep Maria Antentas (Centre d'Estudis Sociològics sobre la Vida Quotidiana i el Treball (QUIT), Institut d'Estudis del Treball (IET), Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB).)

Political strategy as Daniel Bensad recalled can be understood in a restricted sense, when only referring to political struggles limited to the state, or in a wider sense, when referring to the international political struggle of popular movements. Thinking strategically in the latter sense is a fundamental feature of the struggle against global capitalism in order to define what we might call and internationalism of the subaltern or and internationalism for the 99% (using the well known Occupy slogan that has also been extended to many specific strategic debates, i.e. in the Feminist movement as Fraser, Bhattacharya and Arruzza do). The internationalism for the 99% must be distinguished from two opposing strategic perspectives. The first, the liberal center-left cosmopolitanism debtor to the Kantian tradition, and the radical cosmopolitanism that, in the name of a denationalized working class, advocates for a space of struggle that is geographically indeterminate, considers the State liquidated and consequently any political claim that revolves around it to be irrelevant. Cosmopolitanism, as a concept, is not the problem - It is the content of its meaning in the liberal and certain radical traditions. In reality, cosmopolitanism and internationalism are not opposed concepts. In the times of Marx and Engels, for example, both terms did not have very different precise meanings and in no case were considered as contradictory for Marx. In fact, there are several authors, i.e. Harvey or Sousa Santos, who stand for a cosmopolitanism of the subaltern similar to what I have called the internationalism of the subaltern or for the 99%. Second, the internationalism for the 99% perspective must be distinguished from the policy of national sovereignty based on reclaiming the State. It constitutes at best a national-based strategy of international solidarity that prioritizes the national/State arena and gives a subsidiary role to the other scales thus pushing for a nationalized Left (in three possible variants usually mixed-up: national neokeynesianism, postcommunist nostalgia of socialism in one country, and national liberation logic). In its worst versions, as several recent debates in many European countries have shown, it can lead to not clearly oppose the xenophobic far right sovereignism in the name of a narrow economicist class corporatism understood under reductionist national criteria. The internationalism for 99% must be understood as the joint and solidarity activity of the exploited and oppressed, as their organic and strategic alliance, in which the national is a feature but not the basis for strategic grouping. At the

same time it has an internal inner-border dimension that requires to think about any social formation in a plural and open way through a dialectic of universality and difference that supposes not confusing unity with homogeneity or difference with fragmentation. The internationalism for the 99% rests upon a strategic geography based on the dialectical articulation between different scalar and spatial levels. It does not oppose the local, national or international but seeks to combine them through what Bensad called a “sliding scale of spaces” thus articulating the logic of the weakest link with simultaneous international coordination of struggles. In that sense we can synthesize it as an internationalism of active strategic anticipation and interinfluence and not an internationalism of expectant and inert passivity.

## **The Concept of Primitive Socialist Accumulation in Preobrazhensky**

**Rebecca de Oliveira Freitas (Universidade Federal Fluminense)**

This paper aims to present the concept of Primitive Socialist Accumulation as formulated by Evgeny Preobrazhensky. The Russian revolutionary formulated the concept throughout the 1920s in several writings, especially in his most renowned work, *The New Economics*. By relating different texts written by the author and documents of the oppositionist groups he was a part of at the time, we sustain that his theory cannot be reduced to a defence of the exploitation of the peasantry or a faster industrialization tempo. Rather, the author elaborates an interesting dialectical and contradictory process, in which the Law of Primitive Socialist Accumulation should replace the Law of Value as a mediation for social relations, during the transitional period. This would happen both through the appropriation of material wealth produced by the private sector, but also through the transformation of social and property relations. This analysis is conducted based on an original approach of Marx's categories, especially of the ones formulated in *The Capital*, as Preobrazhensky assesses the validity of applying those categories to the transitional context. Lastly, when approaching the relation to the peasantry, the largest part of the private sector at the time, Preobrazhensky defends a non-violent and voluntary transition towards collective production - which is an even more interesting remark considering the events that followed with the forced collectivization implemented under Stalin.

## **The theory of social reproduction and the notion of “(re) production of social relations of production”: approximations between contemporary Marxist feminism and Henri Lefebvre**

**Carolina Freitas (Universidade de So Paulo)**

The present article intends to find approximations between the approach of contemporary feminism, called ‘social reproduction theory’, promoted by authors such as Lise Vogel, Tithi Batthacharya, Nancy Fraser and Cinzia Arruzza, and the contribution of the philosopher Henri Lefebvre in a text written in 1973, entitled ‘The survival of capitalism: the



reproduction of social relations of production'. The texts for this comparison focus on how the question of reproduction is imposed beyond the notion for which the term is normally used, only as a synonym for the maintenance of the means of production (especially the labor force). The two reflections are similarly distant from structuralist marxism: they understand capitalism as an open totality, based on the continuous flow between production and reproduction, and to deepen this theme, the notion of "social need" also appears in both interpretations. It will be discussed based on the emphasis of reproductive work on neoliberalism by the feminist authors, and on the production of space by Lefebvre.

## **The political economy of the capitalist crisis and public health in Brazil: coup and underfunding**

**Aquilas Mendes (School of Public Health at University of Sao Paulo and Post-Graduate Program in Political Economy at PUC-SP)**

The paper aims to decipher the meanings of the Brazilian public health crisis, through its inadequate financing, anchored in the crisis of contemporary capitalism, conceiving the organic relationship between the State and Capital, intertwining economic, political and social crises. Therefore, the article is organized in three parts. The first shows the contemporary capitalist crisis, presenting its three explanatory tendencies, highlighting the tendency of the fall in the rate of profit, the centrality of fictitious capital in economic and social relations and the role of the State, with permanent austerity settings, as it is an integral part of capitalist relations of production, being derived from the dynamics of capital. The second part discusses the movements of the logic of the capitalist state in Latin America, with a special focus on the State in Brazil, presenting the unfolding of the recent coup of 2016. The third part discusses the trajectory of SUS underfunding as a result of the rebuffs of the capitalism crisis, becoming a process of lack of investment.

## **State, coup and political regime: from Dilma to Bolsonaro and public health in Brazil**

**Leonardo Carnut (Federal University of So Paulo (UNIFESP))**

This article defends the thesis that the political regime is central in the conformation of the State to rearrange the new pattern of accumulation, and in a historical way, to gradually shield democracy by offering scenarios of regimes of restricted legitimacy. When they establish themselves, in certain conjuncture situations, it can lead to a coup. Thus, it is demonstrated that the coup d'état of April of 2016 on the Roussefs Government means the height of the shield of the democracy to the interests of the popular classes. Comparing this analysis with the perception of the public health sector on the conjuncture, we identify paradigmatic divergences that public health researches were made, even under the coup. These analyses continue betting on the institutionality of politics with a few contribution to

understand the scenarios that are to come specially what it was done by Bolsonaro in his first months.

## **Sovereignty, primitive accumulation, social reproduction : Re-reading Hobbes**

**Francois-Xavier Hutteau ()**

The problem of sovereignty as theorized by Thomas Hobbes emerged with the primitive accumulation of capital, this paper aims to show how the coordinates of sovereignty shaped the political experience of capitalist modernity. I will argue that the theory of state as developed in the works of Thomas Hobbes - especially in Leviathan - may be helpful to understand the contradictions within the contemporary state apparatuses: how authoritarian forms of capitalist power use the sovereignty pact as a transcendental condition of the wage relation as well as a control of the social contradictions generated by capitalist societies. I will then try to show how the developments of class conflict in France i.e. les gilets jaunes are rooted in this experience of capitalist modernity as they raise the question of both social reproduction and state power.

## **Batshit jobs: destroying the conditions of life in order to make a living**

**Bue Rbner Hansen (Independent researcher / postdoc Aarhus University)**

This paper coins the term “batshit work” to refer to the labour that participates in the structural madness of a mode of production that undermines the very conditions of planetary life as we know it. Aiming to bring a tactical, strategic and socio-psychological interest in labour into the discussion of fossil capital and the capitalocene, the paper seeks to connect discussions of Just Transition and a Green New Deal, which tend to presume that workers interests can only be aligned with the green transition through class deals and state policy, with the question of workers’ subjectivity and leverage. In order to do so it asks two questions: 1) How might we understand batshit work in its social, political and technical (re)composition during times of climate change and environmental disaster? and 2) How might we think about the creation of “ecological interests” among workers to fight within and against their work?

## **The Militarisation of Caring Labour**

**Becka Hudson (Birkbeck University, Law School, Doctoral Student)**

After a decade of austerity, the British state finds itself in crisis. Calls for public remedies to intensifying social insecurity are now routinely met with strategies of criminalisation and surveillance. This occurs both within traditionally penal institutions, as well as outside of them: supplanting crucial welfare services that many rely on, indeed increasingly depend

on, to survive. As an ascendant far-right pushes more people into already overcrowded prisons, detention centres and police cells, the social-democratic left promises us such sites will receive more officers, and more money. Building on Gilmours concept of the prison-fix (2007) and Wacquants (2010) understanding of prisonfare, this paper argues that expanding penal discipline has been a central, yet under-theorised, component of the British states reorganisation in the past ten years. It is proposed that any route forward must directly confront this strategy as a principal technique in producing, racialising and managing swathes of the UK population.

## **Irelands Radical Tradition? The IRA and Left Politics in Modern Ireland**

**DANIEL FINN (NLR)**

The two Irish states enjoy a reputation for conservative hegemony without parallel in Western Europe. In the Republic of Ireland, no left-wing party has ever come first in an election or led a government, while in Northern Ireland, class politics and identity have been overshadowed by a long-running ethno-national conflict. Social democracy has been a weaker force than in any neighbouring country, and the tiny Irish communist movement always remained completely marginal. However, successive attempts have been made to blend the politics of radical republicanism, represented by the IRA and its political wing, Sinn Fin, with the militant left. The most successful projects to the left of social democracy in Ireland have all derived from this hoped-for synthesis. These left-republican projects have had to confront questions at the heart of Marxist political theory especially in the global South concerning the relationship between class and nation, socialism and national independence, armed struggle and electoral politics. This paper will critically evaluate the left-republican heritage, with a particular focus on its most recent iteration, Sinn Fin under the leadership of Gerry Adams.

## **At the Intersection: Migrant Domestic Workers in Lebanon**

**Yara M Damaj (The University of Pennsylvania)**

This paper looks at race, class, and the feminization of migration through the lens of Migrant Domestic Workers (MDWs) in Lebanon. In the 1960s and 1970s, domestic work was done by poor Lebanese girls and women who would move to the big cities from rural areas.[1] They were usually under age (aged 10 and up) and their employment arrangement as well as their salaries were handled by their parents. In the late 1970s, a wave of modernization hit Lebanon and Lebanese women in rural areas sought schooling and education as a means to emancipate themselves from the stigma that came to be associated with domestic work. In the 1990s (after the Lebanese Civil War 1975-1990), globalization as well as the increased feminization of international labor facilitated the influx of MDWs to Lebanon from two main countries: Sri Lanka and the Philippines.[2] Migrant workers initially arrived in Lebanon through semi-legal and illegal channels. Since then, it has become a norm in Lebanese households of all socio-economic

classes to hire live-in MDWs to cook, clean, take care of children, and nurse the elderly. The economic structure of Lebanon depends on the cheap domestic labor that these MDWs complete. On the one hand, this structure has facilitated Lebanese women's entry into the labor force. On the other hand, it provided Lebanese society with a homecare structure that was previously nonexistent. MDWs are often not informed or misled about the type of work they will conduct, their conditions of work, their salaries and their freedom of movement. MDWs are excluded from the Lebanese labor law.[3] They form an unprotected category of laborers. Because of this, they don't have freedom of association and are not allowed to unionize. The only rights that MDWs have are written in a standard unified contract that they have to sign. The contract not only favors the employer and not the MDW but there is also no way to enforce it. For example, there is no structure that can ensure that MDWs get paid for their work. This makes them subject to all forms of abuse and exploitation. As a result, MDWs suffer high rates of suicide, murder and sexual violation. What has come to be known as the kafala system is a system set in place in the Middle East to subjugate and surveil migrant labor.[4] The kafala system requires that all unskilled workers have a sponsor who is held responsible for them. This power dynamic which makes MDWs dependent on their sponsors also allows many avenues for their exploitation. Workers almost never file complaints or sue their employers either because they have no access to means of communication, because the system will not permit them to do so or because no one will believe them (in most cases employers fabricate a counter-narrative that makes the MDW look bad). Additionally, MDWs become illegal if they leave their employers' house without their consent. This makes them subject to imprisonment or deportation. This paper examines the intersectional aspect of the subjection of MDWs by exploring the systemic and symbolic (discursive and ideological) violence that these women suffer from. I ask: What are the interlocking systems of oppression that MDWs find themselves in? How can an intersectional analysis of the labor conditions of MDWs inform us about the tropes and narratives that dominate neoliberal discourses in the Global South today? I want to suggest that looking at these conditions from an intersectional lens deepens our understanding of the interlocking systems of oppression that subjugate these women. In doing so, I want to propose that these conditions are at the same time a reflection and a reproduction of neoliberal capitalism.[1] Ray Jureidini, A History of Domestic Service in Lebanon, *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies* 5, no. 3 (Fall 2009): 741-101. [2] Ray Jureidini and Nayla Moukarbel, Women Migrant Domestic Workers in Lebanon, *Journal of Ethics and Migration Studies* 30, no. 4 (January 1, 2002): 581-607. [3] *ibid.* [4] Jureidini and Moukarbel, Women Migrant Domestic Workers in Lebanon.

## **Australia: extractivism on steroids, coal wars, the climate justice movement and prospects for a Green New Deal**

### **Hall Greenland ()**

Australia is the world's major exporter of coal - and soon of gas. Its 28 years of uninterrupted growth and prosperity have been built on the mining boom and exports to China. The climate justice movement has concentrated on stopping new mines and gas fields by a combination of traditional campaigning, legal challenges and direct action.

Despite some notable successes the movement has just experienced a setback with a pro-coal federal government returned to office in the May elections. A major factor in that victory was fear of job losses in mining zones due to threatened constraints on new coal mines. Those fears were fanned by a coal baron who spent twice as much on election advertising as the major parties combined. The Greens and elements in the labour movement and Labor party are now more seriously contemplating the detail and prospects for a just transition - or Green New Deal - to meet those fears. Hall Greenland was one of the founders of the Greens in Australia and has been active in environmental, grassroots democracy and solidarity campaigning for more than five decades. He is a writer and currently deputy convenor of the Greens in Australia's most populous state, New South Wales.

## **Changes in employment structures across European regions: Its not technology but balance of power between labour and capital**

**Marta Fana (Jacobin Italia)**

The debate on employment structures and their determinants has always been a key topic in social sciences even if it has been characterised by waves of high and low interest from different fields, from economics to economic sociology. Although structural changes are slow historical processes, changes occurred in the last two decades renewed such an interest among scholars as well as policy makers. The richness of the actual debate and evidence spurs from the heterogeneity of approaches, both from a theoretical and an empirical standpoint. Shifts in employment between sectors could be seen both as a demand driven outcome more services than goods are demanded on the market- but also as the outcome of the division of labour across regions (following also the expansion of the global value chains). Still, final demand and its composition are shaped by societal class structure and the way socio-economic institutions shape them. The argument brings more than one insight on how and why changes in employment structures occur. According to Esping-Andersen (1990) welfare regimes should be seen as the main mechanism for changes in a specific sector like inter-personal services. If political institutions privilege the private sector and allow for the possibility of a decline in occupations, especially in the low tail of the distribution, the economy will end up with an increase in low-paid jobs. If these jobs are kept within the public sphere, the increase in employment should be concentrated in the middle of the distribution. Following Esping-Andersen, Oesch (2015) by use of the job approach studies changes in the occupational structure in Britain, Denmark and Germany between 1990-1991 and 2007-2008. Results confirm Esping-Andersen's intuitions since in Britain employment expanded only in the lowest quintile, while in Denmark it expanded in the second quintile offsetting the decrease in the first and third ones. Finally, in Germany no employment changes occurred in the sector. As for our data, we do not look into welfare regimes, but use elderly share in population as demand for personal services. Esping-Andersen's argument still applies: because of the privatisation of personal services from NHS to private contractors and independent workers. In fact, if jobs ranking between public and private personal services differ in terms of terciles, we can see a shift in occupational structure towards the lowest one. If this does not occur, the shift intervenes within the

same tercile. Something similar could happen due to reclassification when an occupation is moved across the Isco classification changing its position in the job ranking. These types of shifts produce changes in the employment structures that can be more conspicuous than the actual ones. The work by Oesch (2015) also discusses the role of labour market institutions in driving structural employment change as well as shifts in labour supply education, gender and nationality. The way institutions shape labour supply impacting on employment structure is also discussed in Wright and Dwyer (2003) according to whom the increase in low-paid jobs characterised by immigrant workers is an outcome of the reduction in real minimum wages occurred in the US between the 1960s and the 1990s. Among institutional factors, standard and nonstandard employment arrangements play a role and will be accounted for in our analysis. Oesch-Menez (2011) challenging the SBTC approach as unique and main driver of changes in employment structures claim for the importance in differences in wage setting institutions across countries; however they do not claim for a definite answer. In our analysis we will try to contribute to this question using changes in wage bargaining mechanisms as well as in minimum wages over time. Yet, institutional settings are historical and complex outcomes of the interplay and balance between capital, the state and labour Poulantzas (1964). In this sense, as pointed by Nolan and Slater (2010) one should not discard the historical and political turning points in shaping employment patterns together with industrial restructuring including therefore shifts in ownership and policy objectives. Nolan and Slater (2010) building on these arguments analyse British employment patterns across occupations and sectors, using longitudinal data from 1951-2001. The main research question investigates how and to which extent differences in regional employment structures are explained by socio-economic factors while our main contribution to the literature strongly claims for the pivotal role of institutions as a mechanism to shape the direction of the balance of force between capital and labour. In order to do that at the empirical level we follow the jobs approach developed by Wright and Dwyer (2003) where jobs are defined as low, mid and well-paid according to their position in the wage ranking therefore an employment structure can be characterised by different share of these three types of jobs. This is the first time such an approach is used to study regional inequalities at the European level, analysing both within and between country heterogeneity and its determinants. In particular, our results show that as labour supply is concerned, changes in the share of female population do not affect the employment structure, while the more skilled the population the lower the increase in the share of bad jobs and the higher the absolute change in good jobs in a statistically significant way. A higher presence of foreigners overtime does not affect bad jobs as the literature predicts, while it decreases significantly the share of mid-paid jobs. This effect could be in line with the literature in that migrants tend to have a polarising effect toward the lower tail of the wage distribution being used by capitalists as reserve army. However, other factors seem to explain most regional disparities: institutional ones. The actual level of involuntary part-time increased low-paid jobs and this is coherent with our interpretation of the balance of power between employers and workers: the higher firms power, the higher the possibility to compete on labour costs while specialising in labour intensive sectors which mainly characterise jobs in the lowest tercile. As for the wage setting system, our results show that the more centralised the system the lower the increase in good jobs while the opposite occurs for middle jobs, allowing to claim that centralised bargaining power tends to reduce wage inequality. Finally, also innovation



strategies as structural determinants play a role in our setting. In particular, the higher the share of process innovators in the region, the higher the change in bad jobs and the lower the one characterising the second and third tercile. This is not surprising as innovations in work organisation adopt technologies produced abroad and then use them to extract more productivity from the work-force according to the classical analysis by Braverman (1972).

## **Agrarian Class Struggle, Sovereign Power and State Formation in South Asia: Evidence from northwestern Pakistan**

**Noaman G. Ali (Lahore University of Management Sciences)**

The study of the state in South Asia has shifted from top-down analyses that focus on its class bases (Alavi, 1972; Jalal, 1995; Chibber, 2003) toward the margins of the state, where sovereignty is often fragmented between the state and social actors who exercise extra-legal violence (Das and Poole, 2004; Hansen and Stepputat, 2005). However, in locating the origin of sovereignty in extra-legal violence and communitarian exclusions, these studies have evacuated class from the theoretical consideration of power. My paper extends and challenges such studies by arguing that extra-legal violence is generative not only of practices of sovereignty and community, but also of mutually constitutive class practices. Indeed, I argue that practices of sovereignty have to be located in particular, albeit changing, political economic systems (modes of production). To do so I trace the history of Marxist theorizations of fragmented sovereignties, particularly focusing on Mao Zedong, Frantz Fanon, and Amílcar Cabral, and contrasting their approaches to the concepts of dual power posited by Lenin and others. I return to the South Asian context by examining how struggles over land shaped the institutions of power in the marginal North-West Frontier Province of Pakistan. I argue that colonial and post-colonial capital accumulation produced and reproduced class differences in articulation with communitarian (tribal) differences. Landed elites of one tribe exercised informal sovereignty over tenants and wage-labourers of other tribes, while also dominating the formal state. Yet, tenants and labourers organized militant peasant movements under the leadership of Marxist-Leninists that undermined the sovereign power of landed elites, and also compelled the state to intervene on the peasants' behalf. I argue that the balance of power between contending classes shaped the institutionalization of power inside and outside of the state, producing and reproducing its margins. My study demonstrates how extra-legal violence involves economic practices that constitute sovereignty and community in articulation with class, and that sovereignty can thus not be understood adequately outside of its location in the changing dynamics of modes of production. However, genuinely emancipatory strategy must also pay close attention to the ways in which power is institutionalized outside of the formal apparatuses of the state.

## The 2008 moment and the political economy of globalisation

Claude Serfati (CEMOTEV (University of Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines) and IRES (Institut de recherches économiques et sociales))

For over one century, the world space has been shaped by the interactions between the dynamics of capital and the international system of states. This hypothesis is at the core of marxist theories of imperialism<sup>1</sup>, but it was already present in Marx's writings. Just to cite an instance of the role of this interaction, Marx stressed that the framework of the present-day national state, for instance, the German Empire, is itself, in its turn, economically within the framework of the world market, politically within the framework of the system of states<sup>2</sup>. The modalities of the interaction between the dynamics of capital and the international system of states changed over time. The hypothesis made in this paper is that a new configuration of their relations took place at the end of the last decade. It was produced by seismic changes in the economic evolution evidenced since the 2008 crisis in the (social and environmental) unsustainability of capitalist trajectory and the geopolitical setting (in particular the end of the ill-named unipolar moment, Russia's assertiveness, China) partly provoked by the ripple effects of the Arab Spring. One of the main features of the 2008 moment is that economic competition and geopolitical conflicts intertwined more closely on the world space not only between long geopolitical rival countries (e.g. USA with China and Russia), but also among Western countries, creating serious tensions within the Transatlantic bloc (in particular between the US and Germany). This situation is a clear departure of what happened after 1989/1991, when globalisation as it is called by mainstream, was based on a PDF (Peace-Democracy-Free markets) -format rhetoric. There is no return of states because they never disappear, only a confirmation that the universalizing tendency of capital, which distinguishes it from all previous stages of production<sup>3</sup> does not proceed on a levelling playing field, as social relations and capital is a quite specific type of social relations are territorially bounded and politically organized along a hierarchy of separate countries. Invocation of national security by governments, despite (or because ?) being a loose notion ill-defined both in international and national regulation, serves to merge protectionist measures and existential threats in most powerful countries. National security, as history widely showed, is also a instrument to fight the enemies within. In Europe, seen as the cradle of democracy, authoritarian trends are at work. In EU official discourses, terrorism and migration are frequently separated only by a comma in the list of threats<sup>4</sup>, providing an inestimable support to far-right parties and illiberal governments (all of them have electorally thrived on this confusion). In France, antidemocratic laws and massive repressive operations against yellow vests demonstrations have been repeatedly condemned by human rights panels in France, the European Union, and UN High Commissioner for Human Rights<sup>5</sup>.<sup>1</sup> Serfati, C. (2018). Guide de lecture: les théories marxistes de l'impérialisme. <http://revueperiode.net/guide-de-lecture-les-theories-marxistes-de-l-imperialisme/><sup>2</sup> Marx, K. (1875). Critique of the Gotha programme. <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1875/gotha/><sup>3</sup> Marx, K. Grundrisse: notebook for the chapter on capital<sup>4</sup> E.g. the interconnected nature of challenges (i.e. ethnic conflict, terrorism, migration, and weak institutions) European Parliament

Briefing, Countering hybrid threats: EU-NATO cooperation  
March 2017, p.2, [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document.html?reference=EPRS\\_BRI\(2017\)5993155](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document.html?reference=EPRS_BRI(2017)5993155) Serfati C. , La dangereuse trajectoire militaro-scuritaire de la France , 21 May 2019, <https://france.attac.org/nos-publications/les-possibles/numero-20-printemps-2019/dossier-lien-entre-l-evolution-des-rapports-internationaux-et-la-democratie/article/la-dangereuse-trajectoire-militaro-securitaire-de-la-france>

## **Ecology, biodiversity and left politics**

**Ted Benton ( )**

To be on a joint panel with John O'Neill's paper (already submitted): There are three broad approaches to an ecological socialism that have been derived from the HM tradition: key concepts are ecological rift, second contradiction of capitalism and environmental justice. The first identifies mechanisms endemic to CMP that drive ecological degradation, the third links the suffering from environmental degradation to the politics of class, race and gender. The second is an attempt to explain the tendency of CMP to degrade its own conditions of existence (which has much in common with ecological rift theory) but at the same time to give an account of the role of the capitalist state in ameliorating that degradation and also of the potential for an alliance between the labour and environmental movements. After briefly reviewing these approaches, I will open a discussion of the various tendencies and countertendencies in popular understandings of ecological issues, our place in nature and imaginings of possible futures in relation to the discourses and practices of instrumental and economic reductionism about nature which predominate in business, the state and mainstream environmentalism. The potential of the recent upsurges in activism (Extinction Rebellion, school strikes, anti-fracking, etc) will be considered.

## **Differentiation and stratification of paid domestic work in Argentina (2003-2015)**

**Facundo Lastra ( )**

This paper aims at analysing the characteristics and evolution of paid domestic work in Argentina during 2003-2015. With this purpose, we analyse the role of domestic work in social reproduction from the perspective of the Feminist Political Economy and the Social Reproduction Theory (Bhattacharya, 2017; Vogel, 2013; Carrasco, 2016). From these views, paid domestic work can be understood as a commodified solution for the contradictions from the increasing participation of women in labour market amid an unequal sexual division of labour between women and men. This results in a dualized organization of social reproduction, where high-income families hire women from low-income families to perform reproductive work (Fraser, 2016). We study the particular features of paid domestic work in Latin-America and its specificities regarding the differentiation of the working conditions (Arriagada, 1997; Valenzuela, 2010). We put forward the Argentinean historical context during the period and we describe the changes that occurred in the

labour market regarding the regulations on paid domesticwork. Against this framework, we analyse the Permanent Survey of Households inorder to identify the evolution of the differentiation and stratification of paid domesticwork in Argentina in terms of working conditions, precarity and incomes. Lastly, wedraw up our conclusions and future lines of research.

## **BOOK LAUNCH: Theory as Critique: Capital as Science and as Social Criticism**

**Paul Mattick ()**

Paul Mattick's Theory as Critique: Essays on Capital is unusual in combining exploration of Marx's work as a critique of bourgeois theory, rather than a contribution to economics, with taking seriously Marx's claim that his methodology is that of the natural sciences. The panel will explore implications of this approach for a variety of subject-matters, from the nature of evidence for Marx's theory to the analysis of class structure. Paul Mattick, Jason E. Smith, further discussants TBC

## **The Politics of Climate Disaster and Climate Jobs in the MENA Region**

**Jonathan Neale ()**

Jonathan Neale and Nancy Lindisfarne The impact of global warming in the Middle East and North Africa is already marked and complex. We begin with three examples of this impact: Darfur since 1969, Afghanistan since 1970, and Syria since 2010. Our examples offer an important comparative perspective on both the tangled relation between climate disaster and political economy and the tenor of scholarly debate. Thus, in the last few years there have been influential attempts by environmental scholars to reduce the causes of civil war in the Sudan and Syria to climate change. Afghanistan, by contrast, is a country where the impact of climate droughts has been important since the famine of 1971-72, though this has been barely noticed by either environmental or political commentators. There are two temptations to be avoided here climate reductionism and political reductionism. We have been following events in all three countries since the 1970s, having done fieldwork in Afghanistan and Syria and historical research on Sudanese pastoralism, and we have seen how these differences matter. There has never been, and never will be, a pure climate change disaster. Capital and empire are always deeply involved. But the balance of causation differs. In Darfur the rains failed because of climate change in 1969 and have never recovered. The ensuing civil wars have been profoundly influenced by a proxy oil war between the US and China, and the meddling of many other powers, large and small. Domestic politics, the military, the Islamist revolt and the war in South Sudan are also critical. But taking all that into account, the driving factor of that tragedy until recently has been a war between poor pastoralists and poor farmers killing each other for disappearing water and grass. In Syria, by contrast, some western scholars and environmentalists have ascribed the civil war since 2011 to the droughts which preceded it and drove two million

peasants into slums on the outskirts of cities. This, we argue, was an important part of the background to what happened. But that also obscures the deep and long hatred of most Syrians for the regime. And it obscures the importance of the wider example of the Arab Spring, and the complex and contradictory interventions of American, Russian and Iranian governments, all determined in different ways to drown the memory of the Arab Spring in blood. In Afghanistan, again, the failures of Afghan communism, the Russian invasion, the American invasion, and Taliban anti-landlord populism are of critical importance. But there has been intermittent drought across Central Asia for almost fifty years, and in Afghanistan, the resulting famine was of critical importance to the fall of the monarchy in the 1970s. Looking forward, it is easy to see that the climate crisis will play a larger role in the revolts, wars and famines in the coming twenty years. The physics and available technologies are material factors. For example, recent work by meteorologists and climate scientists on the unfolding climate crisis in the region points to the particular importance of the fast-developing crisis in urban temperatures, particularly in Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, the Emirates and Saudi Arabia. In these countries, the already degraded electrical grids necessary for life-saving air-conditioning are likely to fail. Also of material importance is the looming economic and political crisis when the price of oil crashes. Because of the marginal pricing in electricity markets, and the costs of developing global car models, this is likely to come a good deal sooner than most people realize. For those same reasons, when it comes, it will not be gradual. There are good Marxist accounts of the ways the people of the region have suffered through generations of the oil curse. It is likely that those same people will be the greatest victims of the demise of oil, unless governments in the region take action quickly. We end with a discussion of the possibility of integrating climate realities and a renewable energy revolution into the politics of progressive movements in the region.

## RACE AND RACISM IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

### Miriyam Aouragh ()

This panel is centered around the notion of Race and its different cogent variations, namely racism, racialisation and its relation to political process, social change and technological mediation in the Maghreb, Machrek and between. We deconstruct the politics of race beyond the usual west-and the rest binary. Institutional and structural racism is a major reality that impedes many areas of social life both domestically and internationally and what is known as the Arab region is an important yet understudied part. Key historical intersections between feudalism, empire, colonialism, and post-colonialism have produced hegemonic value systems such as colourism and practices, such as bleaching, are still shaping ideas about beauty, community, and social hierarchies. The revolutionary mass movements in 2011, Arab Spring, created an important transcendental momentum which in turn triggered debates about race, cultural differences and the place of anti-racism in grassroots local politics. This panel aims to explore the historic and contemporary conditions through which the notion of race is constructed in the Arab region and its diaspora. Particularly of interest to this panel is the notion of a historically constructed racial stratification that both served a colonial project and more recently, subjugates an

increasingly growing migrant labor into a manufactured precarity that becomes hyper-exploitable and political tamed. This panel will try to excavate the many ways by which ideas around race are hegemonized and disseminated through mediation, by highlighting the many media platforms and channels of knowledge production that disseminate these ideas; and by contrasting ensuing processes of othering resisted and dismantled through solidarity networks and voices of anti-racism dissidence. This panel will also problematize the notion of borders, colloquially understood as an anachronistic structure in the era of globalization, participants of this panel will draw examples from Morocco and Lebanon to push against this notion while presenting a more contemporary notion of a porous border that continuously manufactures precarity and security threats in order to whether economic crises and spatially displace said crises onto a growing migrant population.

Miriyam Aouragh University of Westminster We are all Africans (paper for panel RACE AND RACISM IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA) During fieldwork among 20Feb activists 2013-2016 the chant Al Sha'b Yurid Isqat al Fassad [the people demand the downfall of the corrupt/state] was still reverberating in Tangiers. One of the cases that emerged as a challenge among progressive was that of a new kind of racism, not the "usual" domestic one, but violence and stigma against migrants who travel from across Africa to reach the utmost north point connected to Europe: Tangier. But many migrants get 'stuck' in the port city. This has increased their presence both in numbers and visibility and thereby also a cynical opportunity for racist divide and rule. This was a welcome retrieve - a means of deflection - for the makhzan since radical politics was becoming a perpetual nuisance. Discursively, the racism is best described as a process of 'Othering the self': Africans who not long ago were themselves the subject of racist debates as migrants crossing to Europe (herraga) and a key protagonist of the mythical 'illegal were using the same stigmas against new migrants calling them 'Africanos'. The shift has different layers. On one hand, many Moroccans did not see themselves as the migrants anymore and after the uprisings the discourse of Moroccans/Morocco as dreaming of an exit to Europe was replaced by that of a discourse of Morocco revolting for justice and equality, seeking a way to find/create that happiness in Morocco itself. On the other hand, as part of an international political-economy European Union has cajoled the Moroccan government to maintain a violent border control regime in exchange for policy favors and beneficial import deals. This has altered the migratory dynamics and flows, particularly strangulating the exit points of Morocco and seeing more migrants, initially on route via Morocco, deciding to stay. This paper reviews how 1. a new anti-migrant racism fused with anti-blackness that is not only longer-existing but also part of a racialisation of other minority groups such as the imazighen; 2. These new confrontations enabled a trajectory with the equally transformative shifts in grassroots politics post-2011. It is therefore important to not reduce the question of migration and racism to a matter of peripheral workforces from the wealth produced in the global core in classical Marxist sense, but neither as alienated othered without class agency. Morocco could be assessed as a combined-and-uneven (almost pre-modern monarchic system and as organic part of the global configuration capitalist world economy) and this assumes that racism is affected by to hyper-capitalist rationalisation. It is a sanctioned violent extraction but also part of a class-in-the-making. This was particular in the case of a number of interlocutors I encountered during a MayDay march which they attended as fractional street sweepers. This idiosyncrasy creates the



contradictions to both unmask crucial divisions beneath national society antagonistic interests as Rosa Luxemburg described, and move away from viewing migrants as helpless subjects. This paper describes how the potential of solidarity, as part of activist strategies by 20Feb activists at the time, was crucial in countering the anti-migrant narratives. Morocco has seen the emergence of solidarity campaigns and in Tangier the antiracist expression Kuluna Afariqa (we are all Africans) have helped raised new questions about the ways capital flows create the conditions under which colonial manifestations, such as slavery, return. How are these processes shaped by neoliberal capital flows and the subsequent class relations? How are social relations impacted by perceptions of blackness in a highly diverse context and thus now simply reduced to white-black binaries?

Elia El Khazen SOAS, University of London Reserve army of labor, surplus population and currency migration: Syrian refugees and Lebanons migration policies (paper for panel RACE AND RACISM IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA) This paper will argue that Lebanons current border management and migration policies stand at a vantage point in what has been dubbed the refugee crisis. This position allows sections of its ruling class to further commodify and precarize the reserve army of refugees into currencies to respectively improve its leverage in negotiations with countries of the European Union and spatially displace economic crises. Lebanons border management and migration policies is not an exception to what Adam Hanieh calls the three major transformations in border management trends. These trends are characterized in Lebanon by the increased securitization of migration, the growing role of public-private-public partnerships in sustaining and opening markets for operating detention and deportation centres and the extra-territorialization of borders that places countries like Lebanon, Turkey and Jordan at the center of the European Unions (EU) migration policies and the externalization of Fortress Europes border that reaches refugee camps in Lebanon, Turkey and Jordan. This paper will also focus on the complex and fluid inter and intra-dynamics through which notions of race/racism are constructed, maintained and dismantled alongside propped up notions of sectarian nationalism and ethnonationalism within the growing trend of the outsourcing of the global war on terror to peripheral countries like Lebanon.

Mariam Mabrouk Birbeck, University of London I can hear the roar of their silence: Capitalism and Black Resistance in Morocco (paper for panel RACE AND RACISM IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA) This article aims to shed a new light on the racialised nature of capitalist development in Morocco. The historical investigation of Morocco outside the confines of state organisation and former colonial structures is a budding field of scholarly research. In historiographies examining socio-economic change and capitalist (de)-development, capitalism falls between the cracks of comparative studies and what Ellen Meiksins Wood refers to as Eurocentric anti-eurocentrism. On one hand, the former does not engage with International Relations, marginalizes the multi-layered aspects of actor-specific agency, and reduces capital and state formation in Morocco to a power struggle where colonial forces are at the centre of analysis. The latter, on the other hand, provides critiques of Orientalist historiographies whilst simultaneously subsuming the specific trajectory of historical formations under dogmatic, institutionalised conceptions of capitalist development in the region. This not only overlooks the historical, sociological, and international conditions of capitalism. It also skips a large chapter of often overlooked

Moroccan history: slavery and race relations. This article provides an alternative conjectural, theoretically-informed and historically-constructed account of capitalist development in Morocco, an account that rectifies the discursive, historical, and theoretical amnesia of slavery. It argues that the realism-tinted account of Morocco, as a peripheral country that ended up being capitalist as a direct result of colonial intervention and/or the transition to capitalism elsewhere, is based on assumptions overlooking geopolitical accumulation beyond the bounds of anarchical structures, exemplified in arguments presenting the state as having supreme power to change and re-arrange the international system. To solve this puzzle, this paper is anchored in International Historical Sociology and the tradition of dialectical materialism with the aim of providing a Marxist analysis of capitalist social property relations that looks at the specific dynamics of racialized hierarchies of power, and that theorises the dynamics of accumulation of the peripheral capitalist state. This is achieved through an analysis of two intertwined socio-historical processes leading to capitalist development in Moroccan context: firstly, the Ismaili Project and the subsequent Haratins Protest of Fez in 1699 a wave protests against forced conscription of slaves, and the institutionalization of anti-blackness as a political and a military project as an embodiment of geopolitical accumulation operating as a matrix for the production and reproduction of race; secondly, the international context of the Trans-Saharan slave trade, and the role of state sovereignty in forging a political history of the Black Army, oscillating between centrality and marginality, and standing out as a marker of the origins of capitalism in Morocco. This paper, therefore, challenges the picture of inertia and underdevelopment linked to peripheral contexts and does not look at social structures and historical formations as unable to react to old and new geopolitical changes. It centralizes marginal actors and marginal histories whilst evaluating the relevance and efficacy of capital-centric Marxism in accounting for the trajectory and racialised dynamics of the extra-peripheral pre-capitalist and capitalist state.

## Antinomies of Automation

Jason Smith ()

Over the past decade, a veritable storm of books, studies and articles on automation have been published, in the mainstream and academic press, but also on the socialist, and especially British, left (Mason, Srinicek & Williams, Bastani, etc.). No matter their source, these commentators almost universally anticipate a thoroughgoing reshaping of the advanced industrial economies, resulting in a new age of surging labor productivity and wealth creation. Yet this same decade, one of relentless economic crisis, was in the assessment of the Bank of England notable for one reason in particular: From 2007, 10-year average productivity growth was negative for the first time in almost a century. Overall, it was the worst decade since the late 18th century. This collapse of productivity gains is, however, neither new nor attributable to the exceptional circumstances of the decade. Dating from the invention of the Intel 4004 microprocessor in 1970, and the extraordinary gains in ever cheaper and more powerful computing capacity since, labor productivity gains have leveled off dramatically in Europe and the US; for five decades, this figure has hovered below two percent annually, well below post-war levels. Indeed, as

early as 1987, economist Robert Solow observed a paradox besetting the advanced economies: "You can see the computer age everywhere but in the productivity statistics. Confronted with this same dilemma still thirty years out, the recent enthusiasts of automation, be they business school professors or intellectuals close to the Corbin-Led Labour Party, reach for similar explanations: half-century long diffusion lags for the first, Kondratieffs long-wave cycles for the second. Each assumes an eventual dissemination of automated, labor saving devices beyond the already highly-capitalized manufacturing sector, eventually engulfing and transforming the massive service sector (since 2000 the source of 19 of every 20 new jobs). Many mainstream observers worry this explosion in productivity will bring massive job losses; the socialist left anticipates instead an imminent transition away from capitalist social relations, as the proverbial productive forces strain and burst their bourgeois ligatures. These accounts are deeply misguided. It's not that hyped-up AI-centered technologies aren't even remotely close to being able to replace human labor across much of the service sector; it's that automation by definition will not and cannot be applied to this vast, motley array of labor processes, as long as these technologies are subsumed under capitalist social relations. Automation saves labor, making it more efficient, productive, only in the sector it is applied. When a narrow segment of the labor force is made more productive by automation, more and more jobs are reallocated to low-productivity sectors, the effect of which is to cancel productivity gains in the lead sector; the net result, paradoxically, is declining rather than rising productivity across the economy as a whole. Stagnant productivity is the result of the application of automation, rather than a lag in its application; automation in one sector, the rationalization of production, requires that complementary sectors of the economy defined by waste, inefficiency and stagnation. This paper proposes to enumerate and conceptually account for what I call the antinomies of automation. It will be focused on trends within maturing capitalist economies, first and foremost declining productivity gains and the changes in class composition that result from it. In the coming decades, we are likely to see further downward pressure on wages, and declining investment in fixed capital as a whole, as technological change remains restricted to just a few industries. Unlike steam power or the electrical power grid, automation is not a general purpose technology that will equalize across sectors, inducing a convergence among labor processes, skill and wage levels, and firm size. To the contrary here is my second focus we are likely to see more and more fragmentation and dispersion of the class as it becomes less productive. What prospects for building worker power will be available to such a class? What forms of organization and action might emerge among this class that no longer sees itself reflected or confirmed, as it once did, in the material transformation of the productive powers of society? Where, if anywhere, in recent memory have traces of this future form and activity of the class surfaced?

## **A-partisan Collective Action: experiences from the Gilets Jaunes movement in the South-East of France**

**Maia Pal ()**

This paper is based on semi-structured interviews and participatory research on events in France since 17 November 2018 and the Gilets Jaunes movement. Through participation in local organising groups and demonstrations in the South East of France, in the region of Avignon, and in reaction to leftwing commentary very largely emanating from Paris, the paper discusses the original elements of the movement and how it challenges Marxist theory and organising. The movement is particularly helpful to understand new forms of struggle and new political formations of subjectivities amidst a political landscape that increasingly escapes traditional binaries and strategies. The 'apartisan' stance of the movement, the rejection of bourgeois intellectual ideas and technologies, as well as the rejection of trade unions, the confrontation with police violence, the rejection of leadership, the support of the majority of the French population several months into what became a large scale social conflict, and the rising acknowledgement of a new type of poverty and precariousness in France, especially its more rural and small urban provinces, raise important questions and analyses for Marxist theory and organising on social movements and political subjectivities