

HM

2022

10-13 november

abstracts

facing
the
abyss:
an
epoch
of
permanent
war
and
counterrevolution

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facing the abyss: an epoch of war and permanent counterrevolution

The war in Ukraine is a brutal and tragic reminder of the fact that imperial ambitions, inter-imperialist rivalry, and nationalism can easily escalate into open warfare, in ways that risk generalised conflict. The world is again divided, but, on all sides of the new divisions, one can see the same patterns of capitalist exploitation, state oppression, ideological manipulation, radicalisation to the right, militarism and political cynicism.

At the same time, both the impending climate catastrophe and the Covid-19 pandemic have brought to the fore how the very dynamics of capitalist accumulation – despite all the rhetoric regarding a “Green Transition” – endanger the very possibility of survival on the planet.

This is combined with a profound ideological and cultural crisis, exemplified in the neoliberal homogenisation of both centre-right and centre-left, the increased appeal of the far-right, and the strategic crisis of the parties that were presented as “left alternatives.”

Against this descent into the abyss of permanent war and counterrevolution, there has been resistance, including instances of large-scale movements. However, these remain dispersed, fragmented, and still without the kind of articulation that would bring together the anti-war mobilisations, the struggle against climate disaster, the movements against neoliberalism, the messages of hope coming from countries such as Chile, and the fight against racism and patriarchy.

The collective effort to build a global movement that could attempt to articulate an alternative to this situation requires resources that are not only social and political, but also theoretical. We need to understand the state of the world, the changes of class composition, the dynamics and contradictions of accumulation, the forms of imperialist aggression and rivalry, the evolution of state apparatuses, and the changes in the ideological balance of forces.

This means that we urgently need a new wave of Marxist research and debate on all these questions. And we hope that the 2022 London Historical Materialism Conference can contribute to this.

After two years of successful on-line events, this year’s conference returns to the in-person format. We believe that an in-person conference offers a unique and irreplaceable form that brings together comrades, enables discussion, helps the dissemination of new and original research, creates research networks and communities, and builds solidarity.

We would like to remind participants that the Historical Materialism Conference is run essentially by the militant labour of the Historical Materialism Editorial Board and other comrades. We therefore expect that all participants treat the organisers and helpers with comradely respect and raise any problems or issues in a constructive manner.

We also remind you that the HM Conference is a pluralistic and ecumenical space of Marxist debate. Robust disagreements are encouraged as long as they remain within the bounds of comradely discourse, but abusive, hectoring or ranting behaviour will not be tolerated. Speakers and those participating in the general discussion must respect the chairs of each session and not overrun their allotted time as this will encroach on other comrades’ time and the general organisation of the conference.

This year, the Conference is organised under conditions of severe financial stress. If you or your institution can make any donations to alleviate this they would be greatly appreciated. Moreover, without your support by subscribing to the journal (see last page in this packet – forms can be given to the reception staff or sent in by yourselves), we cannot continue to organise such conferences in the future.

Historical Materialism is grateful to The Lipman–Miliband Trust for the generous support they have provided in enabling this year’s Conference to take place.

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historical materialism

nineteenth annual conference

facing the abyss:

an epoch of war and permanent counterrevolution

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thursday

session one

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12:00 – 13:45

room: rb01
marxist feminism

Shruti Nagbhushan: Expanding Our Understanding of Class Using a Relational Approach

Abstract: So far most Marxist class analyses have relied on ‘household’ as a narrowly defined unit to understand and explain class relations. It is only with recent literature on social reproduction theory that some focus has been diverted to the intra-household labour relations, and how this impacts extra-household labour relations. In this regard, the paper looks at the functioning of a hetero-normative family, and marriage from a Marxist political economy lens, especially in a rural, agrarian society that is also burdened by caste relations. Furthermore, labour relations, land relations, and caste relations also often shape intra-household relations. This paper uses empirical evidence from fieldwork in two socially and materially diverse villages in India to provide some insights on such theoretical questions. Furthermore, it asks, how does a ‘household’ function as a unit when there isn’t proper economic resource pooling by the men, if there is no emotional support provided by the husband and instead there is abuse and drunken bullying, shirking of duties? How do the women fight back in such cases, and do the circumstances within their homes affect their negotiating power with employers? These questions further throw up connected themes such as credit relations, women’s political involvement at the village level, among others. There are notable differences in the way Dalit, landless women respond compared to others. Distinctions have been made between older and younger women in order to provide some comparative and analytical insights. This paper provides evidence of differences in agency and decision-making by women in different types of family/households and among women of different age groups, and belonging to different castes. The framework used in this paper is that of ‘conjugated oppression’ – how capitalism, patriarchy, and caste acting together often create an oppression much greater than just the sum of the individual types of oppression. Using a relational approach this study hopes to contribute to an expansion in the understanding of class as appropriate under neoliberal systems of production and reproduction.

Faik Onur Acar (O): Woman and Proletariat From a Lacanian Perspective

Abstract: The general approach to the working class is as if they are the potentiality of the proletariat, who actualizes by gaining their political class consciousness. What if this consciousness is the consciousness that cannot be defined within the system?

According to Lacan, the subject’s attitude has close relations with sexuality. Every subject is sexual and placed within two different, related but not united structures: feminine and masculine. They are different but related configurations of the same contradictory substance in an ontological sense. In other words, they are two different characteristic ways of subjectivity that refer to the relations of the substance to itself. But unlike men, women do not accept the universality of the signifier. In other words, women, in a way, are aware that the signifier in itself is lacking. In this context, the capitalist system is considered the force that forms the ontological base.

From a Lacanian perspective, thinking within the feminine configuration, the proletariat gains another meaning. As Marx underlines, the workers represent a unique position in the capitalist system because they have the ability to sell a different kind of commodity, the labour force. It is the foundation of surplus value, consequently capitalism. On this basis, the proletariat is a point that simultaneously actualizes and limits capitalism. It is the source that the system and the reality cannot define, just like the woman, and proof that the system, the Other, is lacking in itself. From a Lacanian perspective, I argue that the feminine configuration offers new ways to think of the proletariat.

Islam Al Khatib: Against a Feminism Trapped in the Middle: Towards a Politics Of/With the Uncomfortable

Abstract: In the context of the virality of solidarity politics (Woods, 2014), contemporary feminist trends are entangled with various ‘requests’ or ‘pressures’ to ‘speak up/against’ hegemonic forces. However, as feminism has been depoliticized as a materialist praxis (Mohanty, 2013), feminists have found themselves trapped in the middle.

This position of being in the middle is not due to a lack of clarity on which side to take, or due to being ‘grey’/‘neutral’, but rather a complex position that resulted from not doing the uncomfortable work of having a gendered lens that is actually contextualised, or is simply rooted in the local, organic (in the Gramscian sense) feminist counter-hegemonic politics of said context (El Sadda, 2018). As a result, feminists find themselves ‘looking for’ or ‘discovering’ women in struggles rather than ‘encountering’ them, a departure from a century-long historical tradition of transnational solidarity (an example to engage with can be found in Sara Salem’s paper on transnational feminist solidarity, 2018).

This contribution seeks to discuss how the subject of feminist movements transitioned from the all-encompassing sex-reductive “women” via the work of feminist, decolonial scholars (e.g., Anzaldua and Moraga 1983; hooks 1984; Mohanty 1984; Lorde 1984) into the undefined ‘we’ and coalitional politics (Fowlkes, 1997) of the late 1990s (Elomäki,

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2012), and now, unfortunately, back to the individualised, detached narratives of the subject (Mansfield, 2000) and the politics of difference (Gunew and Yeatman 1993).

This contribution, in many ways, is a call for an honest conversation about uncomfortable positions (García-González et al., 2021), as well as the need for movement practices that are not divorced from liberation movements in general, practices that understand gender through the various entanglements of patriarchal and state violence across borders.

It is a form of inquiry into how Western-based feminism(s) have become complicit through silence (Amos and Parmar, 1984) or by attempting to find a way to be in the impossible middle, often manifesting in the ‘act’ of ‘understanding’ all sides through one decontextualized lens, that is often presented as the ‘gender lens’ (Muirrow and Anderson, 2021) and the ways in which this complicity (Kirby, 2018) has harmed movement-building and hindered the pathways to generate materialist solidarity practices. It is a call to re-root feminist movements and visions as an engaged practice with the social, political, and economic transformative modes of action, rather than the other way around, rather than being simply a ‘lens’ of understanding material realities.

It is also important to note that this contribution is loyal and entangled with Arabic-speaking feminist practices, engagements with and understanding of Western-based/focused feminism(s). Taking this into account, I intend in this contribution to critique a set of now ‘established’ practices of ‘conducting’ solidarity which have produced particular forms of harmful/silent/middle-ground complicities.

room: g3
catastrophe, suffering, hope:
frankfurt school perspectives on the ecological crisis

Henrike Kohpeiss: Bourgeois Coldness – Affect and Colonial Subjectivity

Abstract: “Bourgeois Coldness” is an expression which appears in the Dialectics of Enlightenment (Adorno/Horkheimer) to describe the bourgeois indifference towards suffering as a consequence of capitalist ways of life. It also functions as an analytical category to account for the atrocities of Auschwitz and the rise of German fascism. More generally, the concept of coldness, which was used but not strongly developed by Adorno and Horkheimer, opens up reflections about the affective structure of bourgeois life. Expanding the concept, I argue that capitalist alienation and self-interest only makes for one aspect of coldness. The other dimension manifesting in the affective disregard of others is a colonial structure of feeling. European colonialism has not only shaped the world economically but has grounded its forms of exploitation on a system of racial difference, established through and with the Transatlantic slave trade. Bourgeois existence is therefore to be considered as a comfortable location to inhabit under racial capitalism. Coldness in the political present manifests as a continuous dehumanization of racialized others and is disguised by empty proclamations of empathy and solidarity. The public discourse around the Black Mediterranean, which mourns the dead but does not consider them as a direct result of the politics of the European Union, clearly articulates the pattern of bourgeois coldness. Bourgeois subjects, as they were envisioned by Adorno and Horkheimer and as they have conceptualized themselves through enlightenment philosophy, reproduce the bourgeois, colonial social order by intentionally remaining blind to the violence that is its condition of possibility.

Jonathan Roessler: Towards a Materialist Theory of Hope – With Ernst Bloch against Climate Nihilism

Abstract: Climate nihilism – the (false) belief that it would be too late to prevent climate catastrophe, and thus futile to even attempt to stop greenhouse gas emissions – appears increasingly popular in the ideological composition of Western societies. Jonathan Franzen’s 2019 article “What if we stopped pretending” is perhaps its most prominent intellectual representative. Vis-à-vis the cruel truth that is hidden within this otherwise flawed (and morally questionable) position, namely the fact that it might soon actually be too late if not enough people can be mobilised, and if revolutionary changes in the world economy are not undertaken, the climate movement has to find a strategy to counter this disconcerting form of privileged hopelessness. In this paper, I seek to lay the foundations for a materialist theory of hope – the only kind of hope, I will argue, that can appropriately tackle the climate crisis. Building upon the work of Ernst Bloch and his “speculative materialism”, I will outline the specific ontological presuppositions we have to make to properly understand the climate catastrophe and leave room for hope.

I will begin by outlining Bloch’s speculative materialism as well as his theory of affects, including hope. I will specifically engage with Bloch’s idea of hope as an epistemological principle that allows us to see possibilities and how we ought to conceive of these possibilities ontologically. Afterwards, I will delineate Blochean materialism against new materialism, arguing that – unintentionally – these theories feed into the kind of reactionary fatalism that leaves hardly any room for meaningful action against climate breakdown.

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Carl Cassegård: Permanent Catastrophe and the Critical Theory of Nature

Abstract: One of the most intriguing notions developed by Walter Benjamin and Theodor W. Adorno is that of permanent catastrophe. Reconstructing the meaning of this concept from the passages in which it appears in their writings, this paper will firstly demonstrate its centrality for a critical theory of nature, understood as an approach criticizing the reified forms regulating capitalist society's interaction with nature. In this part of the paper I build on my recently published book *Toward a Critical Theory of Nature: Capital, Ecology, and Dialectics* (2021). Secondly, I will probe the fruitfulness of the concept for the Anthropocene, an epoch in which humans are said to wield more power than ever over the rest of nature, but at the same time they feel helpless in the face of forces which they themselves have created. Accepting the notion of permanent catastrophe, I argue, entails two consequences. Firstly, instead of merely warning about future disasters that can still be averted, as in conventional environmental apocalypticism, we must recognize that the catastrophes are already here, especially for the most vulnerable people and species. Secondly, a history seen as permanent catastrophe is not deterministic. That the permanent catastrophe cannot be fit into the idea of an idealistic philosophy of history also means that there is no fatalism to it. It tears away confidence in history and prepares us for the worst, but it is open, precisely because it is materialistic.

Andrzej Frelek: The Necessity of Hope – Adorno on History, Domination of Nature and Catastrophe

Abstract: The image of Theodor Adorno we are usually presented with confronts us with an image of a deeply pessimistic philosopher, one whose writings abandon all hope in the possibility of a radical break with the surrounding reality. In this paper I attempt to argue to the contrary – that in Adorno we find an argumentation for the necessity of rationally retaining hope in critical theory, regardless of whether we are affectively driven by pessimism or optimism. Furthermore, I ascertain that his philosophy is extremely relevant to our own times, marked as they are by a deeply felt crisis of the left that makes us feel resigned. This is an affect that is hard to avoid when we witness the shameful degree of responses to the climate crisis, the resurgence of fascism or the tendency of democracies to verge towards authoritarianism once again. With climate change being my primary focus, I argue that an analysis of Adorno's underappreciated essay on the concept of progress – entitled *Progress* (2005) – provides us with much needed arguments against the contemporary distrust of the category of hope. This stands especially in relation to possibly the gravest catastrophe that humanity has wrought on itself and on extra-human nature.

The essay in question presents us with a critical reading of the categories of catastrophe and history, one which relates those categories to another set of concepts – that of nature and its domination by instrumental reason and capital. Building on Benjamin's Theses on the Concept of History (1968) Adorno argues for the existence of a dialectical entwinement between the concepts of suffering and freedom, where the latter can only be revealed by the conscious experience of unfreedom, and the consciousness of bonds that dominate human and non-human nature, together with the necessity of breaking them. The catastrophe in motion is something that allows for the coming into being of a global subject that has the negation of existing reality as its goal, as it is brought on by the increasingly widespread consciousness of universal suffering. The processual catastrophe has to be seen as a radical break in the continuity of the oppressive present bound to the loop of value production, a break that allows for a glimpse of a different order brought on by the sheer necessity of avoiding the singular finality of the catastrophe becoming fully realized.

Within his essay Adorno warns that it is the extinction of all life that is at stake, with the only way out being this critical consciousness and the necessity of an active global subject that would abolish the domination of nature. In this, the text is extremely relevant to our historical situation. On this basis I strive to argue that critical theory by necessity has to find hope even in a world on fire, because if it abandons it in the face of the climate crisis – of a global catastrophe – it will also have to abandon any forms of praxis that constitute an opposition to the tragic fate that looms ahead. This cannot be allowed.

room: rg01
politics and psychoanalysis:
reading class in the psychoanalytic consulting room

Eve Dickson, Hannah Proctor, Akshi Singh

Abstract: This panel will explore the political dimensions of psychoanalysis by examining how class dynamics and social conditions unfold in clinical writing produced in the context of the British Psychoanalytical Society. Rather than attempting to fit psychoanalytic concepts into Marxist frames or vice versa, this panel intends to approach psychoanalytic clinical material from a historical materialist perspective by taking the case study as its focus. Through close readings of these historical accounts, including works by Marion Milner and DW Winnicott, we consider how

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class dynamics and social relations were enacted, understood, and navigated in the analytic setting in pre- and post-war British psychoanalysis. Seeking to excavate an alternative history from clinical materials that move beyond the typical 'psychoanalytical subject' (i.e., the bourgeois subject), we look to rare clinical examples of analytic work with patients who have historically been marginalised in psychoanalytic narratives, including patients from working class backgrounds, those experiencing material deprivation and those who came into conflict with their analysts for interpreting their symptoms in relation to their particular social circumstances. Reading these cases, sometimes against themselves, we ask: what do these texts reveal about the relationship between the psychic and the social or about how individuals are formed by their material conditions?

room: bglt
international political economy

Nicolás Aguilá: A Credit-Money Approach to the International Currency Hierarchy

Abstract: The international monetary system is characterized by a hierarchy of currencies with the U.S. dollar at the top. However, attempts to explain why national currencies relate in a hierarchical manner remain limited. Drawing on Marx's theory of money and credit, I extend the understanding of domestic credit systems as hierarchically structured promises of payment (including instruments such as commercial bills of exchange, bank deposits, and central bank notes) with different degrees of acceptability to the international realm. While national currencies sit at the apex of their domestic credit systems, they do not function internationally as money, so they have to be converted into world money. Because of this, national currencies should not be conceived as monies but as credit-monies, that is, as promises of payment. Historically, they were promises to pay gold, but with the development of the international credit system, gold was replaced in circulation by quasi-world money. This is a liability of a national central bank which sits at the top of the international currency pyramid. In the current historical period, the U.S. Federal Reserve issues U.S. dollars. The national currencies that do not act as quasi world money can then be conceptualized as promises to pay U.S. dollars. As these central bank credit monies have different capacities to fulfill their promise, they have different degrees of acceptability, giving rise to the international monetary pyramid.

Cecilia Rikap: Rethinking Monopoly Theory. From What is a Monopoly to What is Being Monopolized

Abstract: A common feature of both proponents and critiques of monopoly capital is their definition of a monopoly (and oligopoly) as a market typology. They all study markets to answer whether monopolies (and oligopolies) are a prevalent or generalized phenomenon or whether, although they exist, they remain marginal, thus irrelevant to explain global capitalism. This paper argues that this narrow understanding of monopolies as market forms limits the understanding of this persistent phenomenon within capitalism.

This paper moves beyond monopolies as a market typology and elaborates on what is being monopolized offering an alternative understanding of monopoly capital not as a market phenomenon but as a power relation. While capitalists have monopolized the means of production, these are heterogeneous. As I explain here, some firms have developed greater absorptive capacities to systematically monopolize knowledge and information (intangibles) that are essential for organizing labour and controlling demand. Coupled with institutional, political, and technological changes, larger absorptive capacities resulted in self-reinforcing winners of the innovation race. These winners are firms that hold persistent intellectual monopolies while firms from other and their same industries become subordinate due to their lack of technical autonomy to organize their own production processes. At the system level, this results in a sustained transfer of value from subordinate firms to those holding such intellectual monopolies in the form of an intellectual rent. From this perspective, monopoly power is not an outlier but a structural feature of capitalist production beyond the discussion of market typologies.

Cédric Durand, Hannah Bensussan, Cecilia Rikap: Corporate Planning from Industrial Capitalism to Intellectual Monopoly Capitalism

Abstract: Corporate planning – loosely defined as the deployment of capabilities to organize the labour process, develop the means of production and control the market on both the supply and the demand side throughout various temporalities – is at least as crucial now for corporations as it used to be in the mid-20th century. However, this topic has almost disappeared from research in economics and other social sciences. Following the demise of the Soviet Union, the attention was focused on what appeared at the first sight as an extension in depth and scope of the realm of market exchange. This paper intends to reopen the question of planning from a political economy perspective. It argues that along with the new forms of information and knowledge appropriation, allowed by the spread of digital technologies, corporate planning found new venues and currently occupies an unprecedented

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role in the process of capital circulation and accumulation.

To explore the main contemporary features of corporate planning taking place under what we define as Intellectual Monopoly Capitalism (IMC), this contribution contrasts information and knowledge appropriation characteristics under IMC with those of 20th century Industrial Capitalism (IC). We do so by identifying the main corporate means of information and knowledge appropriation that are mobilized in each stage to inform collective action. Concerning the planning process, the paper compares corporate planning under IC and IMC considering planning's purpose, scope, architecture, temporality, how knowledge is used and the social relations that each form of corporate planning engender. We find that corporate planning in the digital age has powerful and far-reaching implications

room: llt (dlt)
the up-down axis?
thinking the far right thinking itself

What is at stake in the contemporary far-right, and what is its relationship with the contemporary transformations and crises of capitalist accumulation? This panel examines these questions from three different perspectives: gender, culture/race, and temporality. Rather than left versus right, we suggest that the far right frames its critique of the capitalist present in terms of a new political axis: up vs. down. 'Down' refers to a critique from the point of view of the 'concrete': back to the nation state, back to biocultures, back to civilisational blocks, back to 'natural' gender orders. 'Up' refers to a techno-authoritarian tendency seeking to accelerate the development of the forces of production and their 'abstract compulsion', hoping that complete autonomisation from human needs and desire would unleash society from the perils of 'liberal modernity'. We ask why far-right projects seem to tend towards one or the other extreme (either fully up or down), how particular strands of far-right thought have tried to reconcile these oppositions, and how such oppositions are reproduced in left critiques of capitalism today.

Felix del Campo, Naomi Alizah Cohen: 'Take me down to Paradise City': Thinking far-right gender politics along the "UP-DOWN" axis

Abstract: It has become more and more evident over recent years that gender takes a central position in the constellation of contemporary far-right ideologies. Anti-feminist, anti-gay and anti-trans mobilisations often frame their critiques as an antagonism with the abstractions of gender or 'gender ideology', calling for a 'return' to the concrete, biocultural category of sex, dimorphic sexual difference and biologically determined social relations between the sexes. When we look at this issue through the prism of the up-down axis, we can shed more light on what is at stake with the gender politics of the far-right. The 'return to sex' can be seen as a downwards political tendency integral to far-right critiques of capitalism, and the social forms which they seek to affirm. How do they understand matters of gender as relating to the broader as relating to the broader tendencies of civilisation, state, capital? Crucially, what is the role that gender plays within far-right theories of the Exit of capitalist modernity. We take as case studies the Scott Howards neo-Nazi critique of the 'Transgender Industrial Complex', thinkers associated with the Institut für Staatspolitik, and Nina Power's recent anti-feminist, anti-trans and far-right turn.

Miri Davidson: Primitivisms and Decolonialities of the Contemporary Far Right

Abstract: One of the global far right's most successful rhetorical tools today is its adoption of a decolonial imaginary. In France, far-right thinkers like Guillaume Faye cast white Europe as indigenous victim of an 'immigrant colonisation' by Islam and the Global South with the support of liberal elites. In India, the framework of decoloniality has been used by Hindu supremacist writers to market their ideas as a form of radical indigenous critique. What lies behind the malleability of these discourses of decoloniality? In investigating this question, this paper traces a homology between the critique of capitalist modernity (or 'liberal modernity') in certain strands of postwar French anthropology, the French New Right, and the Latin American decolonial theory. This homology rests on what I will call a politics of difference. This politics of difference opposes both liberalism and Marxism as abstract universalisms that erase cultural or ontological difference; it has a one-sided critique of capitalism and imperialism as geared purely towards assimilation and homogenisation, rather than as also producing difference; and it sees the solution to modernity's problems as the affirmation of cultural, ontological, or ethnic identities. In all three cases, this politics of difference revives a primitivist commitment to non-alienated, rooted, and concrete forms of labour and society against the de-rooted, inhuman abstractions of the capitalist present. I consider the conditions under which this form of anti-capitalist critique has emerged, and how we should navigate its mutations in the future.

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Sam Moore: Collapsologies Up, Down, Left and Right

Abstract: The left is not the only group considering how to reformulate its political projects for an apocalyptic era. The far right is also meditating on the end of the world. This paper starts with a critique of their apocalyptic imaginary. What can we learn by critiquing these most conventional and brutal political views? Will such a critique allow us to frame our own approach to the end of the world? Taking a sample of views from across the broad spectrum of the far right, I will critique each view in three broad areas: the agents proposed, the orientation toward a radically foreshortened future, and how risk operates (or is suppressed) in the proposed projects. This critique having been made, I will attempt to outline some potential pitfalls in the construction of a ‘collapse-aware’ emancipatory politics attentive to the fragility of agency, the contingency of orienting values and a global condition of political risk.

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session two

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room: rb01
studies in communism and transition

Andrzej Wojciech Nowak: We Forgot, What We Have Forgotten: Epistemicide of Socialist, Second World Modernity and Lesson for the Future

Abstract: 'The crisis consists precisely in the fact that the old is dying and the new cannot be born; in this interregnum a great variety of morbid symptoms appear' – Antonio Gramsci

The purpose of the text is to take a critical look at socialist, semi-peripheral modernity in order to look at the past to recover resources for the future. This is crucial today during the interregnum. The Eastern European region today is the site of the forging of a new order, new ideological, political, hegemonic configurations. As Boris Groys points out, many Western Marxists were reluctant to thematize the concrete experience of so-called real socialisms in the 1960-70s. After Stalin's death in 1953, and especially after the Prague Spring of 1968, bitterness and disillusionment prevailed; one did not believe in "real socialism" and looked for communist hope in abstract discussions, youth communes, or Maoist China, exotic for Europeans. (Chukhrov 2020) Real socialism as a "transitional stage in the construction of communism" was cognitively neglected. However, as Chukhrov points out in the USSR, and I would add no less so in Poland and other countries of the so-called Eastern Bloc, many spheres were created free from commodification, spheres free from the direct pressure of capital and its libidinal economy. Although when we on the Left today criticize modernity (from postcolonial and feminist perspective) without difficulty, we should not forget that socialist modernity was so vibrant for several decades. On its own scale, it was a socialist and industrial utopia. And the neoliberal transformation of the 1990s wrecked it. As a result, entire areas of knowledge have been annihilated. With the collapse of real socialism, not only knowledge but also the experiences of those living under socialism were erased. This epistemicide caused enormous frustration, primarily because entire generations of people lost their voices. They became mute. Unable to return to the language that socialist modernity used, these people today pick up other languages: nationalist, reactionary religious and even neoliberal. The main reaction, however, seems to be apathy and anomie. Today in Central and Eastern Europe, the old languages have exhausted themselves, the language of post-colonial resistance has long been appropriated in this region by the nationalist right. This one, too, has seized the language pointing to the injustice of the post-1989 transformation. Western Marxist framings are also often problematic. They have not proven adequate for the region.

Hence I propose an archaeological expedition to discover what we have forgotten and the fact that we have forgotten it. This, however, not to wallow in browsing past glory, but to truly realize the Leninist vision of historical materialism – as an ever-living, dynamic task.

Darina Mackova: From (Proletarian) Internationalism to (Peripheral) Co-Optation By the (Global) Empire: Lessons and Reflections From Postsocialist Central and Eastern Europe

Abstract: After physical dismantling of the Berlin Wall, outward unification of (some parts of) Europe and the heyday of (institutionalisation of) the International Human Rights Law, the peoples of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) found themselves in era of normalisation of neoliberal austerities and servitude to foreign and oligarchic capital, in unexpected alliances with the neo-conservative (nationalist, anti-immigrant, gender-oppressive and proto-fascist) structures. And while relatively sufficient attention has been paid to the internal processes of post-1990 transition in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) (such as rise of casino capitalism, privatization, social inequalities etc.), little attention has been paid to the process and implications of the post-socialist Eastern bloc international orientation and identity shift. After having been the official representatives of proletarian internationalism – materialised in support and active co-building of local socialisms (in Cuba, Vietnam, Mongolia), close cooperation with the Arab world (Algeria, Egypt, Syria, Libya, Iraq) and solidarity with the oppressed peoples of South Africa and Palestine (including hosting and exchanging thousands of students, workers and experts), the sudden geopolitical shift and systemic co-optation of countries of CEE by the West-designed (EU) integration, capitalist globalization and violent NATO interventions, seem to have erased and substantially reversed this type of international(ist) orientation. Albeit being at the periphery of academic and other interests, including North-South dialogue and the omnipresent post-colonial quest, the post-socialist critical reflection on (past and actual) materialities and complexities of our lived experience and post-1990 ruptures and alienations in the sphere of the „international“, can certainly contribute to common debate and search for the meaning and content of internationalism today. What were the features and modes of operation of the (state)socialist or (officially) proletarian internationalism – in declaration, and in praxis of socialist international cooperation vis-a-vis present forms and models of transnational interconnections (established/dominant ones as well as those „in the shaping“ / those of the West and the „rest“)? What lessons can be learnt and what legacies may be of relevance – broadening our imagination as „concrete utopias“ – reaching beyond harmful fragmentations and competing hegemonies, towards multilateral, egalitarian and eco-socially just world.

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session two

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Jirí Ružicka: The 'Crisis' of East-European Marxism: Objective Conditions or Actual Practice (The Case of Czechoslovak Marxism)

Abstract: In the second half of the 1950s, Czechoslovak Marxism slowly began to liberate itself from the hitherto dominant Marxism-Leninism, opening up the horizons for a conception of Marxism that would be able to cope critically with the prevailing trends of contemporary philosophy. The problem of the human being and human "essence" was a part of these trends, but for Czechoslovak Marxists it also represented a perspective through which they aimed to liberate themselves from the oppressive shackles of Marxist orthodoxy. The centrality of the humanist theme was so fundamental throughout East-European Marxism that one of the Marxist currents of the time, Marxist humanism, is often identified with the entire intellectual development of post-orthodox Marxism in the Eastern Bloc. But nothing can be further from the truth – alongside the aforementioned Marxist humanism, there was also techno-optimism and dialectical determinism. Although all the currents unanimously affirmed Marx's thesis of the non-existence of an immutable human essence, all of them tried to specify what is characteristic of human beings, especially in relation to purely physical and biological entities, but also what makes it possible to think of the mutability and historical determination of this human "essence". With some simplification, we can say that they all found this in creative human activity – practice ("praxis" in their terms), i.e. the activity of objectification. But while Marxist humanists focused on this activity itself, whose moments and overall form they attempted to elaborate, dialectical determinists focused on the objective conditions of such practice – dialectically grasped laws. At this point, however, Czechoslovak Marxism seems to have become stuck in a circle, from which it could not find a way out. For even Marxist humanists were aware that practice was "not hanging in the air" and needed an explanation of its own conditions. Nevertheless, these "prior" conditions were understood again as practice, but now as fixed, objectified one. In my paper I aim to analyze this circle in which Czechoslovak Marxism moved, and which can be formulated roughly as follows: "The essence of man as a species-being is the creative activity of objectification into the external world. This activity, however, requires objective conditions for its existence, which are again only already objectified, 'fixed' (but not unchangeable) human practice." More specifically, I want to ask how this circle can be broken, or if breaking of it is necessary at all (i.e. whether it is a vicious circle or what might be called a good circle). At the same time, I would like to raise the question whether the "crises" of East-European Marxism (and Marxism more generally) in the 20th century also have their origins precisely in the (in)ability to solve the problem posed above, and whether the classic question of primacy is raised again in this dilemma – primacy no longer understood in the sense of whether being or consciousness (matter or thought) is primordial, but in the sense of whether actual practice or its objective conditions are primordial.

room: g3
the politics of natural resources

Franco Galdini: Vulnerability, Resistance and Crisis in the Age of Climate Change: Capital Accumulation vs Food Production in Uzbekistan

Abstract: This paper argues that the effects of the escalating climate crisis in the states of the former Soviet Union (FSU) are directly linked to their integration into the global economy as raw material exporters. As such, the paper brings into dialogue postsocialist development studies with agrarian and climate change studies. First, it moves beyond the dominant 'transition' paradigm, which generally frames the results of climate change in the FSU as the outcome of an incomplete transition to an ideal-type 'green' capitalism. Second, it shows how the FSU region shares similar dynamics of transformation with other 'resource-rich' countries of the Global South, which translate into gendered dynamics of vulnerability, resistance, and crisis related to food production and social reproduction, as the case of independent Uzbekistan illustrates.

The analysis begins from the accumulation of capital on a world scale evident in the globalisation of large-scale industrial production. For 'resource-rich' countries of the Global South, including most FSU states, integration into the global economy as primary commodity exporters has entailed the mass expulsion of the rural population from the land (primitive accumulation) to put it to use for the production of raw materials for export in line with global solvent demand. As such, the (national) state guaranteed the (global) process of capital accumulation by mediating the constant growth of industrial production, hence of material throughput despite, and often due to, the introduction of 'green' technologies.

This has been the case in Uzbekistan following independence in 1991. As the decollectivisation of agriculture privatised access to the land to put it to use for primary commodity production for export, large peasant populations lost their main source of livelihood resulting in widespread precarisation evident in the rise of informalisation and mass (mostly male) migration. Such transformation had gender-differentiated effects, as 'left

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behind' women swelled informal labour markets as daily and seasonal labourers, while tending to subsistence agriculture in family plots. Since raw material production for export continues depleting resources (e.g. soil fertility, water) vital to food production, women have simultaneously been more vulnerable to climate change and leading everyday resistance to it via worksharing and agroecology for biodiversity conservation. However, the government of Uzbekistan and the donor community are integrating women's survival strategies into mitigation and adaptation policies, while intensifying primary commodity production via 'green' technologies to guarantee capital accumulation. This can potentially undermine subsistence food production and precipitate a reproduction crisis in the country.

Kristin Ciupa: Oil and the Dualization of Venezuela's Labour

Abstract: This paper traces developments in worker organizing in Venezuela since the 1980s, situating them within the country's oil extraction and export economy. While there is an abundance of literature on social movements and governments under Venezuela's pink tide, little has been written on the role of Venezuelan workers in shaping the country's social and political trajectory. This paper explores the historical dualization of Venezuela's labour movement into large corporatist unions recognized by the state and smaller Marxist unions, and its effect on class struggle. This division, which has been in place since the mid-twentieth century, was further institutionalized in the neoliberal period, alongside reforms that increased precarious and informal labour. During the pink tide era, there was a renewal of the left represented by class coalitions between formal and informal labour, the urban poor, peasants and indigenous people. Yet, while new government-endorsed workers' unions were created during this period, the division between large moderate unions and small radical unions at odds with the government remained.

This paper analyzes the ongoing dualization of Venezuela's labour movement focusing on two themes. First, it explores how labour and the conditions for worker organizing within and outside of the oil sector are tied to the extractive form of accumulation that prevails in Venezuela. Given the oil-dependent character of Venezuela's economy, state subsidies to other sectors – made possible by oil rents – mean that the availability and nature of work, and the experience of the working class across various formal and informal sectors, is largely tied to extractive accumulation. Second, it explores the relationship between the state, oil and workers to analyze how the Venezuelan state form affects the possibilities for worker organizing and union advocacy. It analyzes the limitations of aligning with a state that not only regulates extraction, investment and labour conditions; but also profits from oil and is an extractive employer.

Omid Mehrgan: In the Nature of Capital: The Antinomy of (Iranian) Labour Movement in a Heated World

Abstract: Despite the unbroken state hostility, the trade unions in transportation, industrial agriculture, education have been fighting to resist rampant corrupt privatization in Iran. But the reality of climate change in the country has generated a new historical conflict for workers' movement. A prominent example in the recent few years is the struggle of the Haft Tapeh Sugar Cane Workers' Union to seize the company from the fists of private owners who used it for any purposes other than producing sugar cane. They won the battle. Nevertheless, one question remains open: What does such a productivity mean in Khuzestan Province where precisely companies like Haft Tapeh, and many other projects developed before and after 1979 Revolution, have aggressively brought about the current ecological crisis, contributing to the catastrophically changing climate which other forces in Iran are fighting on another front? This paper takes up the Iranian predicament of labour movement versus its burgeoning environmental struggles in order to pose a broader problematic faced by socialist forces in the heat of the Anthropocene: If capitalism has become nature, what will socialism be? To articulate the question, I will problematise the methodological shift that Marx performed in the epoch-making transition from the *Grundrisse* to the *Capital* project – a move from analyzing the history, the becoming, of capitalism out of the money form, the land rent, wage labour, to analyzing the structure, the being of capital. The ensuing 'organic form', this strange creature, showed Marx, once fully in place produces those conditions of its possibility as the product of its own act; it behaves like nature itself. A 'natural' capitalism, I will discuss in this paper, confronts us with the political task of re-defining class struggle itself in order to understand not only the contemporary nature but the very idea of a different (human/post-human) agency that has a double task: winning the class struggle while averting environmental collapse.

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room: rg01
marxism, law and the state

Carl Wilén: The Haitian Revolution and the Concept of the Legal Form

In recent decades, academic and public readerships in the anglophone sphere have been flooded by a wave of accounts on the Haitian Revolution (1791-1804). One of the most influential interpretations in the ongoing ‘Haitian Turn’ highlights that while the major revolutions at the time all mobilised universalist categories against old-regime privilege, only the Haitian Revolution achieved the long-term abolition of slavery. Consequently, if we are interested in the history and origins of democracy and universal human rights, we need to attend to the Haitian Revolution in particular, which more fully realised universalist ideals. However, an increasing number of what the present paper designate as ‘sceptical responses’ to the ‘universality paradigm’ in the Haitian Turn instead focus on authoritarianism, inequality and elite interests, and emphasise that contemporary human rights differ radically from rights in the late eighteenth century. By reconstructing the legal thought of Evgeny Pashukanis for the purpose of advancing the debates about the Haitian Revolution, the paper demonstrates that the controversy has been caught on the spectrum between formalism and instrumentalism. To supersede the conceptual limits of the Haitian Turn, the paper argues that a qualified version of Pashukanis’s concept of the legal form allows for the theorisation of how the abolition of slavery in the Haitian Revolution adjusted the pre-revolutionary imbalance between the dominance of the commodity form and the unevenness of the legal form, and that the revolutionary results therefore appertain more to the age of the legal form in capitalism than to the age of self-evident inequality.

Lara Montesinos Coleman: Counter-Legality in Social Movement Strategy: Law, Capital and Immanent Critique

What do we make of law-based struggle as a means of opposing violences rooted in capitalism and building social movements for alternative political economies? This paper will build on my book, *Struggles for the Human: Violent Legality and the Politics of Rights* (forthcoming with Duke University Press, 2023), which draws upon more than a decade of ethnographic engagement with peasant, trade union and indigenous struggles in Colombia. The extent to which law and legal categories constitute social relations is often overlooked, despite it being widely acknowledged that the law protects private property and profit more than it does citizens. While arguments about law as a tool of resistance often run along the lines of Audre Lorde’s metaphor that “[t]he Master’s tools will never dismantle the Master’s house”, law might be better thought of as the structure of that house: that which needs to be dismantled and reassembled. Furthermore, the legal categories constitutive of capitalist relations rely upon prior moral economies that regulate admission to the category of the human, as well what it means to suffer injury or be responsible for harm. In this light, I draw upon work with peasant and trade union struggles against the genocidal imposition of capitalist extraction to show how social movements use law and legal argument to articulate “counter-legaliities” that expose and challenge violences concealed by dominant legal narratives. This, I argue, fuels a practice of immanent critique central to social movement praxis and critical pedagogy in the pursuit of alternatives of capitalism.

room: bglt
politics and the middle east

Aidin Torkameh, Arash Torkameh: Internal Colonialism, Farshiist Aryanism, and the Production of Iranian National State Space: A Gramscian-Lefebvrean Perspective

Abstract: Four decades after the “Islamic Revolution” of 1979, the revolution has been relatively able to produce its own space. Despite some lucid differences between the Islamic Republic and the Pahlavis, both regimes have carried out the same project of the production of national state space. Following Lefebvre, such a process is simultaneously physical and conceptual/ideological. We argue that Iran as a national state space has been produced through two intertwined mechanisms of internal colonialism and Farshiist (Farsi and shi’ist) Aryanism. Internal colonialism, as a physical moment of the production of space, is mostly manifested in ethnically-imbued multi-scalar processes of the production of hierarchical relations of centers-peripheries. This moment can be traced back to the violent displacement, sedentarization, and elimination of (mostly but not exclusively) Arab-, Kurdish-, Baluchi-, Turkish-, and Turkmen-speaking populations during Reza Shah’s reign (1921-41). Parallelly, the production of national state space has been implemented through the ideological process of Farshiist Aryanism. Although Shi’ism has been fundamental in both Pahlavi and Islamic Republic eras (in different ways), in this paper, we limit the scope of analysis to language which is a more common feature in Gramsci and Lefebvre. More importantly, the cruel imposition of Farsi/Persian as the national language is exactly where the Pahlavis and the Islamic Republic

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come together. We argue that the production of Iran as a national space is inseparable from what we call the racist process of Farsization of space. Following Gramsci's dialectics of normativity-spontaneity, we argue that national state space is a normative reified, and reifying form that has been imposed in the context of capitalist imperialism and the consequent scalar transformation/multiplication of colonialism. Nation state in this way has dominated other spontaneous forms of political organization of space. As a non-organic normative form, nation state has violently subjugated all the other alternative forms of political organization rooted in the everyday experiences of the inhabitants. Intellectuals of the national state play a crucial role in the inculcation and reinforcement of a national conception of space by promoting racist ideas rooted in the Aryan myth. The introduction and establishment of the Aryan myth in Iran have been achieved mostly through the contributions of linguists/philologists. Currently, the scholars of 'Iranian Studies' and beyond seem to follow the same path by 'scientifically' dehistoricizing and depoliticizing the Farsi language to further develop the violent internally colonial unification of Iran. We argue that a parallel reading of Gramsci's dialectics of 'normativity-spontaneity' and Lefebvre's dialectics of linear and cyclical times/rhythms enables us to problematise the colonial production of national knowledge and can enhance our understanding of the racist logic of the national state. Finally, social space is defined as the non-separable integral totality of different spontaneous rhythms.

Aya Khalil: Joseph Samaha: Social Trajectory of an Arab Leftist Intellectual in Search of National Liberation

A key figure of the Lebanese and Arab press, Joseph Samaha (1949-2007) embodied an organic intellectuality in the Gramscian sense of an Arab left committed to articulate social question and national liberation. Born during the Nakba period, Samaha began his militant trajectory after the 1967 defeat and then he joined the Organization of Communist Action in Lebanon (OCAL). Editor-in-chief of al-Watan, the tribune of the Lebanese National Movement, of the pan-Arab daily al-Safir, co-founder of the magazine al-Yawm al-sabi', and founder of the newspaper al-Akhbar in 2006, J. Samaha is also the author of two pamphlet books. His numerous writings between the 1970s and 2000s form an essential and fascinating compilation to understand the evolution of the political ideas of the Arab left, in the light of the global transformations that took place after 1982, and especially after 1990. Indeed, the Palestinian epic ending with the departure of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) fighters from Beirut in 1982 and the collapse of the Soviet Union concomitant with the beginning of the Gulf War in 1990, opened the way to major political reconfigurations in the Arab East. The first massive US imperialist intervention in the region, the acceleration of the process of normalization with Israel, and the considerable weakening of the lefts on a global scale form the background of an era that J. Samaha analyses by constantly defending the necessary junction between national liberation and socialism.

In this perspective, my presentation will focus on the written productions and the series of social positions occupied by J. Samaha, in the course of the socio-political mutations, insofar as they allow us to understand what at the same time remains permanent in the ideological base of the Arab "national left", and what evolves, is put in crisis, and which can sometimes appear counter-intuitive, from the 1970s to the 2000s.

This presentation is the result of a doctoral research in socio-history on the political ideas of the left in Lebanon, from 1982 to 2011. The methodology is based on a combination of semi-structured interviews, a (non-exhaustive) review of press articles (mainly from al-Safir, al-Yawm al-sabi' and al-Akhbar) and two books by J. Samaha.

Yasmine Kherfi: Anticolonial Worldmaking Between Hope and Political Disenchantment: The Arab Spring and its Afterlives

Abstract: This paper reflects on anticolonial worldmaking in relation to uprisings across the 'Middle East'. It explores contemporary forms of revolutionary desire and anti-state revolts, and ways in which to historicise them within regional traditions of anticolonial struggle. The paper focuses on the Arab Spring and its afterlives and how they relate to contemporary configurations of anticolonial worldmaking. By extension, the paper also explores the dialectic between hope and political disenchantment, which features prominently in our current political moment marked by counter-revolution and defeat.

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race, racism and global capitalism

Eleonora Roldán Mendívil: Liberal Hegemonies and the Political Economy of Gender and 'Race'

Abstract: My paper is situated in a contested sphere between Political Economy, Gender and Racism Studies. Based on a study of Marx' Labour Theory of Value and a close reading of selected Marxist feminist theorists, as well as Marxist thinkers from the Global North and South, I offer an insights into the relationship between exploitation – class – and oppression – gender and 'race'. The intention is to understand the place gender and 'race' take in the production of value and surplus value within our current mode of production. For this I discuss liberalism as the hegemonic ideology of debates around gender and 'race', linking it to the neo-liberalisation of national economies and the more general transnational division of labour (imperialism), as implemented by the IMF, the World Bank and national aid agencies like the German GIZ. I show how Marxists understand liberalism as an economic and discursive mechanism for organising and masking brutal exploitation while offering methodological insights in order to debunk current anti-racism and diversity programs by state agencies and NGO's. My paper stems from the need for an updated methodology to analyse, understand and combat racist and patriarchal social formations, centring working people and their multiple subjectivities as the central force of change. Working people as a class encompass all those who own nothing but their labour power and are thus dependent on selling it to make a living; including housewives, pensioners, non-working students, the unemployed, etc.

The paper engages in a dialectical-historical conversation to present an updated Marxist methodology for the understanding of super-exploitation and specific forms of gendered and racialised divisions of labour. Finally, I extend my focus on the specific use of identity politics within the socialist Left in Europe, with a special focus on Germany and I will show how liberal hegemonies have also permeated this very socialist Left.

Giulia Macario: Shaping the Oppressed: The Necropolitics of Solidarity

Abstract: While solidarity is connected with the notion of empathy with the oppressed, the first step needed is to acknowledge and visualise the oppressed itself. I argue that the logic of necropolitical racism shapes who is considered to be the oppressed, thus eligible for solidarity. I examine the relationship between solidarity and racialisation by comparing the reactions towards two recent events: the invasion of Ukraine and the killing of the American-Palestinian journalist Shireen Abu Aqlah. The war in Ukraine demonstrated how the imperial logic of convenience in international relations still surpasses the needs of the supposed recipient of the political class we have in place: the people. But also that imperial logics and narration of wars are subjected to neoliberal convenience. On the other hand, the ideological machine antagonising Palestinian voices and undermining the authority of the ones speaking with them demonstrates how narrations can be hegemonically sided. In pinpointing how solidarity is also related to racist imaginary constructions, I would like to address three main levels of instrumentalization: first, the media and the related narration of the news; second, the manipulation of legal tools such as the UN investigation; third the economic-diplomatic response namely, sanctions, moral and military support to the Ukrainians vis à vis impunity and connivance of the west neoliberal system to the Palestinians. My main argument is that we live in a world of necropolitical expectations: some people are expected to die without surprise as a result of pervasive asymmetries of power and multi-dimensional racialisation.

Pedro Salgado: Against Sovereignty: Coloniality and the Limits of Modern Politics

Abstract: IR as a discipline is premised upon the idea that a premodern world of empires and colonial domination was gradually replaced through the global spread of modern sovereign nation-states. The present article explores the counterintuitive tension in presenting the modern notion of sovereignty as being itself one of the core legacies of colonialism. Decades of post-/decolonial scholarship and the growth of the literature on state formations have shown fundamental continuities in these 'transitions to modernity', which are often overlooked by the assumption that establishes the discipline and the contemporary discourse on authoritarianism. The radical political change often imposed as a necessary condition to tackle many of our present challenges creates an imperative of thinking not only beyond, but against sovereignty. I present this here through two essential engagements. First, with alternative forms of conceptualising political authority in through decolonial conceptions of subjectivity. Second, by rethinking the notion of geopolitics through the ways in which social practices imply specific territorialities, legal and political institutions, and even legitimise the use of force. While such a rejection of sovereignty is by no means a finished project, it is a necessary component of contemporary political action (and academic reflection) that aims to look for alternative ways of addressing the many crises of the present while abandoning the colonial legacies of our current political forms.

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room: rb01
scandinavian political economy

Esben Bøgh Sørensen, Markus Christian Hansen: Reconsidering Market Dependency: The Danish Case

Abstract: "Denmark cannot lay claim to be considered a commercial country as the term is usually understood" wrote British vice-consul Harry Rainals in a report on Danish agriculture in 1860. This is a noteworthy statement considering that between c.1830 and 1870 – the so-called grain-sale period – Danish farmers became more deeply involved in markets than previously. To Rainals, however, commercial agriculture meant British-style capitalist farming.

In this paper, we explore this difference between increasingly commercialised and capitalist farming respectively in the case of Danish agriculture. We argue that only from the 1960s did specifically capitalist imperatives penetrate and subsume Danish agriculture resulting in a rapid and total transformation of the sector. In less than a lifetime, the more than 200.000 mixed farms scattered throughout the country in the 1950s has been reduced to around 8500 huge full-time specialized industrial farms.

The Danish case demonstrates how market dependency and capitalist imperatives are non-identical. Although Danish peasant farmers became increasingly dependent on the market and exploited a growing (semi) proletarianized labour force throughout the nineteenth and first part of the twentieth centuries, capitalist imperatives were severely constrained by official agricultural policies and rural cooperative associations. To make sense of Danish agricultural development before the 1960s, we need to rethink the concept of market dependency as politically constituted and shaped by specific class formations.

In contrast to recent arguments within Political Marxist historiography to dispense with the concept of market dependency, we argue that it is well worth keeping if we pluralise the meaning of the concept and refrain from associating it with strong rules of reproduction. We suggest that future research of Marxist historiography should be attentive to the many forms of politically constituted and class shaped market dependency and the differential tactics employed by historical agents within these contexts from the early nineteenth century onwards.

Lauri von Pfaler: Viking Geopolitics and the 'Other' Transition in Scandinavia

Abstract: The paper has two aims. First, I provide a social theoretical explanation of Viking geopolitics between the late 8th and 11th centuries. Second, I connect this account to several established Marxist theories of history. More precisely, I engage with long-existing debates within Marxism about historical development and transitions between modes of production or social property relations and tie the historical processes to geopolitical relations and dynamics.

Following Robert Brenner and Benno Teschke, I seek to historicise the social property relations of pre-feudal Scandinavia to show what kinds of hierarchies, political communities and forms of social agency and reproduction existed. I then demonstrate how these were connected to patterns of geopolitical relations. Lastly, my account traces the ways in which these dynamics gave rise to a transition from what Chris Wickham calls a 'peasant mode of production' or tributary society with its specific social hierarchies and territoriality to a social order characterised by feudal social property relations and the emerging of relatively stable feudal kingdoms.

The article reaffirms the primacy of social relations of exploitation and agency over productive forces in explaining social transformations and shows how they both define and are affected by geopolitics. Furthermore, I illustrate the connections between the specific processes of Scandinavian kingdom-formation and the development of feudal appropriation power.

Yngve Heiret: The Uneven and Combined Development of the Norwegian State: The 'Nordic Model' as an Imperial Geohistorical Category

Abstract: March 8 2016, the Brazilian headquarters of the partly state-owned Norwegian chemical company Yara International were occupied by 1200 women from the largest social movement in Latin-America, the Landless Workers Movement (MST), and the Movement of People Affected by Dams (MAB). Contesting the monopolization of Brazilian land by foreign capital, the occupation formed part of the movements' broader struggle for a popular land reform which aims to redistribute land ownership according to social and environmental needs. Two years later, the Chilean offices of the fully state-owned Norwegian renewable energy company Statkraft were occupied by protestors from the indigenous Mapuche community who demanded that the 'imperialist' Norwegian state retire all its operations from Mapuche territory.

The Latin American occupants turn the hegemonic representation of Norway on its head. Advocating a 'closer focus on distinct national models, on capitalisms, rather than capitalism as such', Nordic historiography is pervaded by what John Agnew called the territorial trap, in which the national experience is containerized and isolated from its integration into global capitalism. This sustains a Nordic exceptionalism in which the Nordic model is presented

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as a geographically distinct societal model that continues to be characterized by a specifically democratic variety of capitalism of cooperation, equity and social sustainability. Adopting a historical-geographical materialist framework, this presentation shows that the Norwegian state in recent decades has set in motion a set of spatial fixes to resolve recurring problems of overaccumulation. Limitations created by a restricted resource base and a small domestic market has been solved through a comprehensive process of internationalization of state-owned companies and the creation of large public investment funds that channel the state's surplus revenues from oil production into international finance.

The Norwegian state has externalized a significant share of its productive and extractive activities beyond territorial boundaries, which in turn contributes to the maintenance of a relatively strong system of redistribution within national borders. And as the occupations in Latin America attest to, the persistence of welfare mechanisms within Norwegian borders have to a significant extent come to depend on the aggressive privatization elsewhere. This case indicates the urgency to revisit the methodological principles underpinning concepts such as imperialism, uneven and combined development and dependency, in which national history is studied from the vantage point of the totality of global capitalism.

room: g3
capital, class and climate catastrophe

Anneleen Kenis: Where Will the Anger Come From? Why Future-Oriented Climate Movements are Doomed to Fail

Abstract: In this paper I argue that if the climate movement wants to make any chance to successfully ward off further climate breakdown, it has to shift focus from the future to the past. Taking inspiration from Walter Benjamin's 'Theses on History', I argue that the anger which impassioned political action requires cannot be triggered by pointing at the catastrophe looming on the horizon. While narratives about the threatening apocalypse have the merit of embracing a full conception of time, as they show that the struggle cannot be postponed until tomorrow, such perspectives are limited in their capacity to nourish the outrage which more profound political action requires. Stated simply, the future is never divided. No wrongs have happened in the future yet. The fight for future generations, one's (grand)children or intergenerational justice, inevitably tends towards consensual politics. The genuinely 'political' spirit is therefore missing. Starting from the empirical study of recent Western climate uprisings, like Fridays for Future and Extinction Rebellion, I argue that in order to get the climate movement out of its current deadlock, we need first and foremost to expose the wrongdoings of the past.

Harry Holmes: Capital and Adaptation: English Floods and Adaptive Struggle

Abstract: The November 2019 floods in the north of England saw thousands of homes impacted by floodwaters. Occurring during the 2019 elections, the floods not only saw different community groups emerge, but also attention from all political parties and the media. In the months following, recovery work was further hampered by the pandemic. By reviewing this flood, its causes, course, and aftermath, it becomes possible to draw more general conclusions about how the British state, individuals, and businesses responds to disasters like flooding and disease. Furthermore, this paper argues it provides an insight into the wider ways in which capitalism determines adaptation responses and lessons for how the left should respond to adaptive struggles.

Kai Heron: Capitalist Catastrophism and Eco-Apartheid

Abstract: In 2020 Deutsche Bank published a report entitled "The Age of Disorder." Fronted dramatically by a volley of lightning across a brooding skyline, the report warned that the global economy was on the precipice of a phase shift from neoliberal quasi-stability to an era characterized by dramatic social, economic, and climatic upheavals. What Deutsche Bank's researchers call "the age of disorder", this article calls "capitalist catastrophism." Building on Mark Fisher's theory of capitalist realism and Naomi Klein's concept of disaster capitalism, the article contends that the catastrophic convergence of declining rates of profitability, ecological collapse and COVID-19 is prompting a reconfiguration of capital at a global scale. Capitalist catastrophism has three essential features: 1) The climate crisis is seized upon as an opportunity to reinvigorate ailing imperialist economies; 2) A loosely configured regime of eco-apartheid emerges between Global North and South; 3) Progressive movements find themselves increasingly capable of imagining worlds beyond capitalism but tragically no more capable of realizing them.

Erica Borg: Mutant Ecologies: Manufacturing Capitalogenic Life-Forms and Securing the Reproduction of Capital

Abstract: CRISPR crops, fast-growing salmons, heat-resistant Slick™ cows, Friendly™ Mosquitoes, humanised mice, pigs growing human organs – these are but a few of the dazzling new life-forms that have recently emerged from

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corporate and university laboratories around the world, all promising to lubricate the circuits of capital accumulation in distinct ways. The deliberate induction of genetic mutations is increasingly central to business operations in a number of sectors, from agriculture to pharmaceuticals. This presentation discusses the use of biological technologies as a strategy to suspend capital's crisis of socio-ecological reproduction; as a form of eco-technical class war that changes the fabric of life in the biosphere so that accumulation can continue in the face of its own fatal contradictions.

room: rg01
thinking imperialism and internationalism

Charles Post (O): Explaining Imperialism Today

Abstract: After a decline in interest in imperialism in the 1990s, Marxist analyses of imperialism have seen a renaissance in the past decade. Three recent contributions, by Smith, King and Roberts and Carchedi have attempted to analyze contemporary capitalist imperialism's division of the world between the global North and South in terms of "super-exploitation" (Smith), "monopoly" (King) and "unequal exchange" (Smith and carchedi). This paper assess these theories and proposes an alternative analysis of contemporary imperialism informed by Anwar Shaikh's theory of real capitalist competition applied to the world economy.

Cynthia Yuan Gao: The International Line From the Belly of the Beast: Lessons From the US New Communist Movement

Abstract: The New Communist Movement (NCM) consisted of a constellation of Left organizations in the United States from the 1970s to the 1980s who had turned towards Marxism-Leninism and Marxism-Leninism-Maoism (Elbaum, 2018). Fueled by radicals who had come to politics through the New Left and Third Worldist organizations, the NCM was characterized by both a strong commitment to internationalist principles and a fairly high level of ideological and organizational conflict. This paper examines conflicts within the NCM and between NCM organizations and the wider Left as expressed through debates over international events, suggesting that the history of the US Left cannot be understood without attention to international currents. In particular, I examine debates over the meaning of the Angolan Civil War and the Sino-Vietnamese War. These flashpoints demonstrate the complicated position of Maoism and the People's Republic of China within the NCM, where adherence to Maoist ideology became wedded to fealty to the state and in particular, the Theory of the Three Worlds. I argue however, that Maoism itself has been unfairly maligned as uniquely and intrinsically problematic and conflict producing. In contrast, this paper argues that fractious debates over international lines stemmed from broader contradictions specific to the position of communism in the United States, both the world's most advanced capitalist nation and also a country in which many racial and national minorities sought recognition and revolution. The desire to follow the line of a Third World nation was animated by many in the NCM's belief in the status of Black and other Third World minorities as revolutionary vanguard (Tani & Sera, 2021). Drawing from original oral history research, I also contend that while questions of the international line were debated at great length in position papers and newspapers, the impact of these vehement debates were not always felt in mass work or at the rank-and-file level. Finally, I suggest that studying the NCM's debates over international line within the US Left can provide lessons for today, in which growing tensions over Israel/Palestine, Russia/Ukraine, Latin American pink tide countries, and the status of China loom large over organizational work and ideological discourse.

Pedro Mattos: Super-Exploitation, Structural Dependency and Lenin's Theory of Imperialism

Abstract: This article aims to theoretically work the concept of super-exploitation taking Lenin's theory of imperialism as a theoretical framework. This concept, whose origin goes back to Ruy Mauro Marini and Latin American dependency theorists, refers to the expropriation of part of the "normal" value of labour power, contributing to the formation of superprofits in relation to the usual capitalist exploitation. However, despite its great explanatory power, the concept of super-exploitation is part of a broader theoretical framework marked by economicism and schematism. Thus, we seek to review this concept based on writings of Marx, Engels, and Lenin. In this process we polemicize with the notions of super-exploitation as: i. a compensation mechanism of the value transfers (Marini, R. M.); ii. a merely economic obstacle for capitalist development (Cardoso, F. H.); iii. the third form of surplus value extraction (Smith, J.). In contrast, we will present our interpretation of super-exploitation as a feature of dependent social formations whose origin is related to colonialism and whose maintenance is guaranteed by political subordination towards imperialism.

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room: bglt
marxism and war

Ekaitz Cancela Rodríguez: The Left in the Face of the “War Economy”

Abstract: In barely a year and a half, the discourse of European social democracy has changed radically, reflecting the increased ruthlessness of the capitalist mode of production. Instead of accepting its subaltern position and handing over arms to the war in Ukraine, the left must confront it with updated analytical tools. During the pandemic, the discourse of the entrepreneurial state à la Mazzucato imposed itself as the common sense of the times. Shortly afterward, this was shown for what it really was, or as it was conceived in the United States: a militarised state, where the only source of development (also digital) comes from the militarisation of public life and the displacement of state money towards the defence sector. In Spain, the left had moved in a Keynesian logic, believing that the arrival of European funds could inaugurate a new era of recomposition of the capitalist rate of profit and return growth to the market economy. This was an electioneering –and blind– vision, with little empirical evidence, as evidenced by the current situation: a serious crisis on the horizon, austerity, and cuts, as well as institutional violence. Therefore, this talk will try to analyse how the inter-imperialist struggle is situated in Spain, but also how one of the few progressive governments in Europe – or at least a part of it – is able to find theoretical tools to confront it.

The first part of this lecture analyses in an expanded way the conditions of possibility that guarantee the accumulation of capital: not only exploitation (economic sphere) and colonial plunder (political sphere), but we also situate geopolitics and the military as two important edges in Marxist analysis. This is important at a time when the so-called “war economy” has reduced all this analytical richness to a one-dimensional view of the world. We think this is an expression of the Orwellian discourse of the grand coalition on the left and right of capital to maintain its legitimacy, but it can also be an opportunity to tighten the levers of the left, to put the focus on the ulterior logics of capitalism and to politicise this system.

Again, the Spanish case is curious in this respect. On the one hand, as Friedrich Engels stressed about the delay in the proletarian revolution, there is the ideological power of the patriotic elites, who have alluded to the trap of patriotism and assumed the resulting waves of chauvinism and reactionary nationalism (represented by Vox) as a lesser evil. On the other hand, in the words of Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, one could speak of the “historical falsification” by which the bourgeoisie tries to attribute a “progressive sense of national liberation” in Ukraine to what in reality are wars of “plunder”, waged with the sole aim of increasing the inequalities of capitalism. In this sense, Spain’s, and the EU’s, move away from Russian fossil fuels has increased dependence on the Moroccan and occupied Western Sahara import plan, also driving a new kind of green colonialism. It is also a brand new form of militarism: the Spanish state has not promoted public energy companies, like France, but has strengthened its presence in the public defence company (Indra), placing it as a central vector of national security strategies, and also consolidated intelligence and arms links with countries such as Israel – which is known to have authorised the sale of spy software for the Spanish police force and army to monitor Spanish pro-independence and leftists.

If one understands capitalism correctly, as well as social democracy’s war of positions, then one can observe that social-democrats have no intellectual tools left in the chamber, let alone effective political, economic or geopolitical strategies. Given the centrality of the market economy in the ideology of social democracy, there can be no agenda beyond increasing military spending, namely, they are organically limited to such political outlets. At most, the elites are left with one way out, the traditional alliance between capital and fascism. So, the second part of this talk will reflect on how to avoid it and empower the left? It is urgent to forget the idea that it is possible to save this system, or worse, to civilise it, in order to start an economic, political and geopolitical offensive to get us out of the wars, especially the one that the market has been imposing for centuries: competition, that war of “one against the other”.

Therefore, the second part of the talk will discuss how to confront imperial discourses from different flanks, the very ones that guarantee the conditions of existence of capital. For example, regarding the expropriation of women’s working time and the feminist struggle. In this respect, Clara Zetkin, Alexandra Kollontai, Sylvia Pankhurst and, of course, Rosa Luxemburg were among the first to embark on the path that would show successive generations how the struggle against militarism was essential to the struggle against patriarchy. Even rejection of war became a distinctive part of International Women’s Day, and opposition to war budgets at the outbreak of any new conflict featured prominently on many platforms of the international women’s movement.

Tadas Zaronskis: Authoritarianism in Times of War in Europe

Abstract: In this presentation I will analyze some current trends of authoritarianism through the lens of Theodor W. Adorno’s critical theory.

In face of the Russian aggression in Ukraine, the Left – globally but above all that of the Eastern European countries – is trapped between two intolerable tendencies. On the one hand we have the ‘anti-imperialism’ of idiots – Leila

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Al Shami's term recently repurposed by Ukrainian writer and historian Taras Bilous. It consists in various manners of denying the Ukrainian people their right to self-defense by mobilizing anti-imperialist geopolitical arguments. On the other hand, the liberal consensus of military and political support for Ukraine borders various authoritarian tendencies – militarism, nationalism and patriarchy – which are gaining ground in the public discourse. Meanwhile, the voices of organized Ukrainian workers, demanding support against drastic liberalization of the labour code among other things, are systematically silenced. If the Left is to stand with the Ukrainian workers in their struggle of resistance, how can it nevertheless distinguish itself from the liberal consensus in a meaningful way? I will argue that the answer can be given by analyzing the current situation through the lens of Adorno's critical theory.

I will proceed in two steps. Firstly, I will present Adorno's understanding of the authoritarian tendencies in society. I will draw upon two sources. A. – the concept of spell (der Bann) which designates subject's unconscious submission to the dominant ideology; this concept is operative mostly in the Dialectic of Enlightenment (1947, written together with Horkheimer) and in the Negative Dialectics (1966). B. – Adorno's study on the authoritarian type of personality (The Authoritarian Personality, 1950) conducted in collaboration with psychologists at the University of California. By presenting a socio-philosophical critique of the dominant rationality, Adorno draws a strong continuity between "the antireason of totalitarian capitalism" and "the international threat of fascism" (The Dialectic of Enlightenment). It is thus because of his capacity to demonstrate the authoritarian and deeply regressive tendencies of the liberal discourse that Adorno is relevant to our inquiry.

Secondly, using media analysis I will present some major trends of the public discourse in Lithuania – a post-soviet country highly concerned by the Russo-Ukrainian war because of its geopolitical position. I will use Adorno's theoretical framework to reveal the authoritarian tendencies of the liberal pro-Ukrainian discourse and, by extension, pinpoint some pitfalls which an anti-authoritarian left-wing position on the subject should avoid.

Iida Käyhkö: Counter-Terrorism As Ideological Warfare: Perspectives From the Kurdish Freedom Movement

Abstract: Counter-terrorism practices targeting social movements function as ideological warfare, aimed at creating fear, suspicion and insecurity in every group and individual targeted. As a social movement connected to one of the few remaining armed struggles actively fighting capitalism and NATO imperialism, the Kurdish Freedom Movement is heavily criminalised across the world. Drawing on fieldwork and collaboration with Kurdish diaspora organisations in Europe, this presentation centres the ways in which brutal counter-terrorist policing is experienced by social movements supporting pro-Kurdish politics in the heart of Empire. Perspectives on counter-terrorism as "special warfare" – an extension of imperialist wars fought by Western states, operating on the level of surveillance, repression, intimidation and incarceration – offers a crucial viewpoint into the role of counter-terrorism in propping up states and capital. Further, the Kurdish Freedom Movement's perspectives of society-wide, holistic self-defence practices provide pathways of anti-imperialist resistance relevant to all forms of abolitionist, anti-militarist thinking and organising.

Daniel Egan: The Future of Imperialist War

War has been an essential feature of the entire history of capitalism, going back to the 'primitive accumulation' of capitalism's prehistory beginning in the late fifteenth century. At the same time, however, the forms which war has taken have reflected the national and global balance of forces that characterized a particular historical period. Imperialist war has to date taken on two different forms. The first is associated with the emergence of imperialism beginning in the mid- to late-nineteenth century, a process which required the capitalist states to make use of their overwhelming military strength to dismantle non-capitalist forms of production in peripheral regions and forcibly convert these into capitalist forces of production which would contribute to capital accumulation among the major imperialist powers, as well as to overcome any subsequent resistance to colonial rule that might arise. In these wars, the colonial powers were able to achieve military mastery over colonized peoples relatively easily, but this also intensified competition among the major capitalist states, which in turn led to the inter-imperialist wars of 1914-1945. The second began with the 1917 October Revolution in Russia and the development over the course of the twentieth century, particularly in the period following the Second World War, of a world socialist system. Military power was a means for the advanced capitalist states to undermine forms of state or collective – that is, non-capitalist – property that emerged in the course of socialist revolutions or national liberation movements; at the same time, in the consolidation of this period following the Second World War the inter-imperialist rivalries that had characterized the previous period were subsumed within a shared interest in opposing the world socialist system. The fact that such wars occurred in the context of a world socialist system that, no matter how divided it was over doctrinal matters, could provide support for resistance against such wars and placed limits on how far the advanced capitalist states could go in waging such wars was a highly significant difference between this and the previous historical period. The targets of advanced capitalist military power (e.g., Cuba, Vietnam, Angola, Nicaragua, etc.) could turn to the states

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of actually existing socialism and the international communist movement for support, and while such support could often be problematic, it was sufficient to provide a safe space for the development of non-capitalist social relations. During the ascendant phase of each of these periods the dominant capitalist power wielded both economic and military power, and indeed these were intertwined. Great Britain used its military to impose ‘free trade’ throughout the world, but the fact that the pound was the principal international currency provided the wealth necessary for it to maintain its global empire. The same can be said of the United States in the post-Second World War period.

The collapse of the Soviet Union and the world socialist system made it much easier for the major capitalist powers to reassert themselves globally, the result being U.S.-led invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq and U.S.-led bombing campaigns against the former Yugoslavia and Libya. Greater ease in imposing military power has not, however, led to greater success in imposing the interests of the major capitalist states globally, as the debacles of intervention in Afghanistan Iraq and Libya demonstrate; in other words, there has not been a return to the level of success they experienced in the first historical period of imperialist war. Overwhelming military power is today associated with a global capitalism experiencing major economic, ecological, and social crises. It is in this context that the identification of China as the principal ‘threat’ against which U.S. military power must be directed in the coming years has to be understood. In the present period, China is emerging as the principal economic competitor of the United States, but is still far from being able to match the US in military power. As the US sees its global economic power decline over the next decade or so, it will be more eager to use its military advantages in an attempt to preserve its position as the dominant capitalist power. This makes the present period an especially dangerous one.

room: llt (dlt)
forms of political resistance

Aykut Örküp (O): Flying the Black Flag of the Commons: Pirates’ War Against the World of Enclosures

Abstract: This paper aims to investigate the golden age pirates’ war on the whole world from the perspective of the commons. To this end, the paper first will examine the challenge of the state’s monopoly of violence, of which the ultimate embodiment is war, as can be observed in Captain Bellamy’s declaration that his authority to make war against the world was as much legitimate as any state’s authority to wage war even though he did not have a hundred ships or an army. In addition to the conditions of the late seventeenth century and early eighteenth century that enabled pirates to escape the reach of state and capitalism, oppose the commodification of labour, establish their autonomous, egalitarian, and anti-hierarchical social organization, and wage war against the whole world, that include but are not limited to the mobility of ship, limited state sovereignty on the sea and the level of technology, the paper will analyze how the waging of this war has contributed to the reclaiming and/or preserving the commons by the golden age pirates against the capitalism’s enclosures encroaching on these commons. The commons here does not refer to only a thing held in common but also means a social relation that produces new subjectivities and points out to the act of commoning. In this regard, the paper will finally try to establish the links between capitalism’s historical enclosure movement, neoliberalism’s contemporary enclosures, the commoning movement of golden age pirates, and contemporary commoning movements.

Matthew Fenat (O): Common Sense to Good Sense? Postmemory and Political Citizenship Repositioning of Survivors of the 1965–1966 Anti-Communist Mass Violence in Kupang, East Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia

Abstract: Negotiations on the general narrative of anti-communist violence and mass killings in 1965-1966 in Indonesia have been ongoing in the last 22 years ago to eradicate misunderstandings and anti-communist stigma. This happens because the state is still reluctant to resolve cases judicially and recognize survivors as victims of structural violence, making situations of intimidation and impunity last longer for survivors and their families.

This study highlights how social memory plays an active role in negotiating anti-communist misunderstandings and stigma at two levels, namely family and social community. Social memory was chosen as the entry point based on its transformative role in shaping public awareness because it contains personal and structural experiences of violence. This transformative nature certainly cannot be separated from productive memory reproduction activities. Therefore, the retelling of traumatic experiences to the second and third generations at the family level and the negotiation of truth narratives at the civil society level are important dynamics identified in the following study.

Using life history research methods and combining Gramscian common sense/good sense and postmemory as an analytical framework, with the research area in Kupang, East Nusa Tenggara, this study finds how retelling of past traumatic experiences in the family environment fosters the confidence of the first generation to tell more stories and is willing to negotiate within their respective social communities, as a way of attracting support or confronting common truth claims. For survivors who still have some doubts and choose to remain anonymous, this is part of

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the subject's strategy to avoid incidents in the surrounding social environment. In the second and third generations of survivors, parental openness encourages them to find out more about the origins of the tragedy that befell their parents and to be willing to negotiate with their peers and other generations. This is also true for the second generation of perpetrators who begin with an attitude transition after the parents admit their past mistakes.

With these findings, this study underscores how productive reproduction of social memory helps second and third-generation survivors, including second-generation perpetrators of violence, escape the trauma and prolonged socio-political suffering, even with misconceptions about violence and mass killings received from small. From here, theoretically, social memory provides an alternative for survivors to recover their civic identity. Because it is limited to two levels and outside of formal political streams, the reproduction of social memory is then understood to operate at the grassroots as a way of recovering the citizenship identity of survivors independently of state neglect.

room: r201
empire and the international legal form:
migration, tax and sanctions

In 1925, Evgeny Pashukanis wrote 'modern international law is the legal form of the struggle of the capitalist states among themselves for domination over the rest of the world.' Almost a hundred years later, it is clear that legal form theory marked a critical turning point in theorizing of the various debates on the complex interdependence of the state form and capital. Calling into question both instrumentalist notions of the imperialist state and the totalizing abstract rule of capital as subject, our panel seeks to turn Pashukanis' argument toward the concrete by drawing on the international law on sanctions, migration, and tax to see how capital, sovereignty, property, and empire intersect in the constitution of the legal form.

We re-conceptualize our respective research projects to find how international law reflects imperial ambitions of state and capital. In all projects, boundaries are blurred between imperium and dominium, sovereignty and property. Whereas liberal jurisprudence can only account for the abstract international legal subject, we attempt to grasp how the drive toward valorization shapes these ambitions through law.

Marx and Engels called for progressive taxation in the communist manifesto, while today, it is the OECD who are implementing a global minimum tax. What shifts does this new form of taxation entail for the corporate form, considering OECD states striving to diminish sovereign taxation rights connected to non-OECD taxing powers? What can current developments in corporate income tax law tell us of state form, and vice versa?

However, in a closing world not even capital moves freely. The sanctions against Russia have not been unprecedented in their qualitative mechanics, but well in the sheer scale of its current target and its subsequent political economic effects on the world. How can a Pashukanian international legal subject be theorized in lack of commodity exchange? It is suggested that although imperium and dominium are important abstractions that have been mystified, they explain nothing in a framework blind to capital.

Despite being central to the ordering of the state form, migration has largely been absent from the state debates on state derivation. Through migration law and humanitarianism, we see how the abstract subject of international law co-constitutes the concrete power to control borders and deem humans (un)deserving and actively create a 'new proletariat'. How can we understand the circular motion in which Capital drives these developments, which then reinforces the state?

Hugo Lundberg: Imperium and Dominium in the Legal Form of Sanctions

Abstract: In a closing world not even capital moves freely. The sanctions against Russia have for the most part not been unprecedented in their qualitative mechanics, but well in the sheer scale of its current target and its subsequent political economic effects on the world.

A critical social theory for law worthy of its name needs to be able to account for the abstract violence and coercion intrinsic to the legal form in international law, but also clearly grasp economic power as a concrete form of appearance exemplified by unilateral sanctions. For Evgeny Pashukanis, international law was a system of which the real historical content is the struggle between capitalist states. But in such a system, contemporary economic power cannot be measured only in the form of output quotas, investment or even pure capital accumulation in itself. Rather, control of the flows of capital and their digital infrastructure has become increasingly important as illustrated by the SWIFT ban. Consequently, the question becomes how such regulation through imperial inter-state rivalry assumes legal form.

Prima facie, the lack of commodity exchange is an issue for Pashukanian approaches to unilateral sanctions, because how can the international legal subject be theorized in lack of commodity exchange? Pashukanis'

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critique of international law often returns to Grotius and his natural law theory as a departure point. It is suggested that building on Pashukanis' reading of Grotius, the imperial character of early international and the concepts of Imperium and dominium more broadly, can illustrate how international law expresses an imperial character in the concrete. Against other approaches to imperium and dominium, which indeed are important abstractions that have been mystified, I claim that they can explain nothing in a framework blind to abstract power of capital.

Hedvig Lärka: Neither National nor International: Tax Sovereignty as Social Form

Abstract: In his article *The Structure of International Taxation: A Proposal for Simplification*, Avi-Yonah introduces his contribution with the following sentence: "The current international tax regime is a flawed miracle." A miracle, since sovereign nations have come spontaneously together to uphold through consensus a coherent regime. Flawed, since globalization and digitalization of the global economy has imbalanced the function of this consensus, the basic principles of which date a century. In this paper I argue that this account, as most accounts of tax sovereignty presented in tax academia and by institutions such as the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), naturalizes and separates sovereignty and economy. It is precisely through this separation, I argue, that corporate income tax law (CIT) regimes are shrouded in mystery and miracle. Through this split a hope is sparked that reason, principle or justice might intervene, in the form of tax cooperation, to fix the flaws of a patchwork system. Moreover, the critique of tax cooperation that maintains this split fails to recognize how the central structuring relation of corporate income tax law – the relative mobility of capital – is upheld by the community of states themselves. At the moment of writing, rapid and radical change is ravaging corporate income tax (CIT) regimes worldwide. To understand why and how these ruptures take place, I bring into play a Marxian social form analysis. Through social form, CIT regimes appear as neither miraculous nor flawed, but in line with the alternative legal ontology that the theory provides. Tax competition, moreover, as well as widespread tax evasion, appear through social form as constitutive of tax sovereignty in general and of OECD member state taxing powers in particular.

Karin Åberg: Institutionalized Exploitation? Mapping Areas of Rights of Undocumented Migrants in Europe

Abstract: In this paper, I am engaging in the question of how European societies treat undocumented migrants. In general, undocumented migrants in several European countries have access to basic needs, such as life-saving health care, school education, and maternal care. As such, undocumented migrants are kept alive and assisted in reproduction, but denied social rights granting a higher quality of life as well as political participation in the societies where they live, and workers' rights. Unions are often unwilling to take on their cause, and international legislation aimed at protecting their labour rights is rarely implemented at the national level.

Scholarship of undocumented migrants is characterized by legalistic thinking where each and every improvement is perceived as an extension of a right, and a success for the human rights movement. The political rights and undocumented migrants' capacity to mobilize, in contrast, is at large under-researched. Labour rights are partly researched but mostly inaccessible for undocumented migrants, despite undocumented workers' large contribution to European economies. In the vocabulary of Marxian social form – focus is afforded the content of law rather than the legal form. The theory of legal form centers the abstract legal subject by considering the legal relationship rather than the "lifeless abstractions" of legal norms, as ontology of law. Empirically, the form of the abstract legal subject emerge from class struggle or class domination. In this paper I will acknowledge the form of law regarding undocumented migrants, by which people are allowed to live, work, and reproduce, but not get paid, mobilize or access a higher quality of life.

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the politics of climate struggle i

Andreas Malm: The Future Is the Termination Shock: On the Antinomies and Psychopathologies of Solar Geoengineering

Abstract: Debt is an extremely powerful tool of colonialism and an essential driving force of capitalist extractivism. Yet most of the climate movements in the Global North are shying away from this topic due to its designed complexity, and thus remain ignorant of one of the major pillars of global inequalities. It's time to overcome the fear of finance colonialism and organize globally to cancel the debt of Most Affected People and Areas, which is the Global North's knee on the neck of the Global South and stands in the way of a truly just and self-determined transition. A relatively young and Global South led movement called Debt for Climate proposes a way out of the oppressive debt labyrinth by uniting labour, indigenous rights, and climate justice movements behind a common goal: to turn debt-trap-diplomacy on its head by cancelling the financial debts of the Global South to enable climate action and hold the Global North accountable for its historic climate debt.

William Callison and Tatjana Söding: Make Germany Natural Again: The AfD's (Ordoliberal) Political Ecology and the Spectre of Eco-Socialism

Abstract: This paper examines the basis of German far-right party Alternative für Deutschland (AfD)'s climate politics in ordoliberal political ecology and far-right naturalism. Founded by ordoliberal economists and lawyers, the AfD identifies itself with "the middle of society" while stoking anxieties about ecosocialism. We show how ordoliberalism is central to its strategy of mainstreaming far-right ideas, specifically regarding environmental protection and climate change denialism. Rather than rejecting climate change science, the AfD seeks to reclaim scientific rationality for itself and to place questions of state interventionism and energy markets within an ordoliberal frame. The AfD also draws on a strategy of naturalization prevalent in ordoliberal thought, an economic theory supported across the political landscape in Germany. This reveals how the anti-feminist, anti-migration, science-skeptical, and fossil-protectionist politics of the AfD are not just a piecemeal policy collection; they also have grounding in a "mainstreamed" ordoliberal political ecology. The paper draws connections between the ordoliberal critique of socialism and contemporary anxieties about eco-socialism. We point towards overlaps between ordoliberal and far-right ideology while questioning the way in which both complement the AfD's environmental politics.

Louise Wagner, Esteban Servat, Felix Barbour, Rob Callender: Organizing Against Financial Colonialism: Debt for Climate

Abstract: Debt is an extremely powerful tool of colonialism and an essential driving force of capitalist extractivism. Yet most of the climate movements in the Global North are shying away from this topic due to its designed complexity, and thus remain ignorant of one of the major pillars of global inequalities. It's time to overcome the fear of finance colonialism and organize globally to cancel the debt of Most Affected People and Areas, which is the Global North's knee on the neck of the Global South and stands in the way of a truly just and self-determined transition. A relatively young and Global South led movement called Debt for Climate proposes a way out of the oppressive debt labyrinth by uniting labour, indigenous rights, and climate justice movements behind a common goal: to turn debt-trap-diplomacy on its head by cancelling the financial debts of the Global South to enable climate action and hold the Global North accountable for its historic climate debt.

room: rg01
culture stream: shake the city: art, music, crisis, and real life

As debates sharpen around the division between media and "real life," so do debates around the role of art and aesthetics in making life more livable. It has become increasingly clear that the aestheticization of violence and oppression is a key facet in their maintenance and the growing influence of the far-right. Thus, the question is posed about how the left's relationship to art and human creativity can be strengthened to the end of envisioning communism as an actuality that can be feasibly fought for.

This panel will examine this question from various, overlapping angles. Alexander Billet, whose new book Shake the City: Experiments In Space and Time, Music and Crisis will be released at Historical Materialism, will present on the book's arguments, interrogating how a more thorough understanding of the rhythms of music might converge with Henri Lefebvre's rhythmanalysis in the struggles for an unalienated city.

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Alexander Billet: Shake the City: Experiments In Space and Time, Music and Crisis

Abstract: By now it is so common that to point it out is almost trite: every movement has a soundtrack. Too often, the analysis stops there. The radical left has long contented itself with an arid, utilitarian approach to the arts generally, an outcome of being pushed to the sidelines of history for the better part of two generations. With those days over (however fitfully and unevenly, however dire the stakes continue to be), there is an opening to discard the idea that art is about vague notions like “inspiration” that are ultimately separated from questions of politics or sociology.

This paper – delivered to coincide with the release of the author’s book of the same name at Historical Materialism London, published by 1968 Press – will seek to challenge these rote notions and offer a more supple, dynamic and holistic approach to the arts – music in particular – as they relate to urban protest and rebellion. Pulling from sources like Mark Abel’s monograph **Groove: An Aesthetic of Measured Time** and Henri Lefebvre’s **Rhythmanalysis**, this paper will argue that the rhythm of modern popular music and the rhythms inhered in the design of the authoritarian city have a parallel relationship that waxes and wanes depending on the balance of class forces and the state of struggle. Just as the structures of music are narrowed by record labels and streaming services to better suit algorithms, so can it be employed to enforce subaltern quiescence in the context of the alienated city. Conversely, the redefinition of urban space by insurgent movements frequently also spills over into the redefinition of popular music, including its rhythms and sonic dynamics, often in the context of mass protest itself. The latter signifies an often neglected utopian impulse toward a fundamentally different shape to time and space that deserves to be better understood.

C. Stella Becerril: Worth Living For: Recentering the Right to Beauty as Organizing Principle and Principal Demand

Abstract: Being on the Left means constantly having to dispel old tropes about characterless, flavorless, monochrome, standard-issue everything under communism and insisting that, on the contrary, there will be increased access to beauty and leisure for all under a classless society. As communists and abolitionists, some of our most challenging work is to help expand the collective imagination about what is possible in the future and how we can help those possibilities materialize. However, for as sharp as our analysis is and revolutionary our visions of the future are, we continue to struggle to make our present one that buoys our tired spirits and inspires us to keep organizing and fighting.

A sober and realist approach to our increasingly precarious, violent, and fascistic present should not just be the prerequisite for re-centering the need for militant organizing, community building, and mutual aid, but an opportunity to reclaim our right to leisure, pleasure, and beautiful things. In this paper I will look at the ways in which simply understanding how dire our present reality is without structures to help ordinary people access pleasure, rest, care, and beauty in the face of compounded and worsening capitalist crises only leads to burnout, increased trauma at the collective and individual levels, and eventually to either defeatism or nihilism–neither of which serve our movements or cause. It is not enough and cannot be enough to have a future worth fighting for anymore. If we want to build militant, sustainable, and self-renewing movements that can stand a fighting chance against the powers that be, we must make the present one filled with things and moments worth living for. To make this possible, we must make our right to rest, care, and beauty not just an organizing principle for the future we wish to create, but a principal demand we must actively and intentionally create for ourselves in the present.

Adam Turl: Art and Left Politics: A Poverty of Theory?

Abstract: As the combined and uneven apocalypse unfolds (Evan Calder Williams) we are confronted with a poverty of theory – a poverty born of its overproduction. This is not an argument against theory. It is to argue that – in the face of burgeoning fascism, looming climate catastrophe, and mushrooming epidemics – we have an overgrowth of theory in relationship to practice (in both art and politics).

In this way, theory seems to mimic the phobic discourse of digital networks: abundant discussion and insufficient praxis. The historic separation of Marxism and the class is reinforced by the hyper-mediation of communicative capitalism (Jodi Dean). The poverty of theory – and our over participation in an capitalist digital gesamtkunstwerk – force the question of (partial) de-mediation – a return to the primacy of praxis and “in real life” (IRL) cultural performance and organizing.

This does not entail a wholesale rejection of the digital – as recently called for by the Paris Surrealists. Nor does it imply a rejection of theory. Instead, it calls for theory in proximity to the lived experiences of the class. It calls for digital strategies that are subordinate to IRL practice. In addition to this cultural positioning, however, we add the questions of physical proximity and practical solidarity. We can see this approach in Alexander Billet’s work on music and the city, in the work of Locust Review, and the Born Again Labour Museum.

Referencing these projects – as well as recent organizing efforts in Carbondale, Illinois – this paper will examine questions of partially de-mediated praxis as it relates to artistic and cultural gestures and political organizing.

thursday session four

10 november
18:45 – 20:45

room: bglt
marx's critique of the gotha program in light of the new edition

Today, The Critique of the Gotha Program is being discussed anew, especially as part of debates over the alternative to capitalism. The 2022 PM Press edition offers a new annotated translation of both the Gotha Program and Marx's celebrated critique. This session will examine themes within the work, including the alternative to capitalism, the transitional period, the two phases of communism, and the absence of the state under communism. It will also explore forms of revolutionary organization and their relationship to the working class, to other social classes and groups, and to the nation state.

Kevin Anderson: 'From the Disappearance of the State to the Organizational Forms to Get us There'

Abstract: This paper seeks to clarify Marx's own perspectives, but with an eye to today in the sense that all interpretation is contemporary interpretation. In that light, two themes flowing out of the new edition/translation are (1) the absence of the state under communism but the persistence of state functions. Here the new translation clarifies this issue in new ways. (2) This paper will also explore forms of revolutionary organization that struggle within and against capitalism. What is their relationship to the working class, to other social classes and groups, and to the nation state?

Peter Hudis: 'Time Matters: Challenging Post-Marx Marxism's Property Fetish'

Abstract: A major challenge facing revolutionary theory is re-envisioning socialism as a transformation of alienated human relations, as against presuming that annulling bourgeois property rights (either through social democratic legislation or more revolutionary measures) by itself ensures an exit from capitalism. The new English translation of Marx's Critique of the Gotha Program directly addresses this, by highlighting Marx's distinction between value and wealth, actual labour time and socially necessary labour time, and abolishing value and surplus value versus their "fair" redistribution. By focusing on the all-important time determination that governs capitalist value production, Marx's Critique provides direction for contemporary efforts to articulate a viable conception of socialism that overcomes the tendency of many Marxists after Marx to prioritize property forms and market relations over social relations of production and reproduction.

Esther Leslie: Commentary

room: llt (dlt)
marxist feminism: sexual violence

Jenny Logan: 'Rape As Genocide': The Political Economy of Sexual Violence

Abstract: Addressing the UN Security Council in 2008, former US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice stated that "sexual violence profoundly affects not only the health and safety of women, but also the economic and social stability of their nations". The concept of rape as genocide has been deployed to describe militarized sexual violence during the Rwandan genocide of 1994; and observers of the ongoing conflict in Ukraine have noted the use of rape as a weapon of war. This paper asks what the rhetoric of rape as genocide can add to Marxist feminist understandings of the political economy of sexual violence both globally and domestically. It argues that domestic and international law's dual function of enclosure and propertisation of gendered and racialised bodies makes sexual violence comprehensible solely in terms of property. On an international scale, rapes thus matter to the extent they affect a nation's "economic and social stability." Drawing on insights from critical legal geography and feminist legal theory, I argue that this approach to rape both relies on and reinforces a Lockean idea of property and person that is complicit in the facilitation and reproduction of sexual violence.

Paromita Chakrabarti: Surviving Violence: Women in Communal Conflict in Post 1990 India

Abstract: During war women are target victims, active participants in encouraging and perpetrating violence and/ or activists protesting and organising for mediation, recovery, peace and justice. These multiple roles indicate how war is shaped by gendered divisions of labour at home and in the workplace. Analysis of women's experiences during and post conflict, and the increased militarization of civil society during such times, reveals how class position and access to resources determine their vulnerability and exposure to violence. Although India is not currently engaged in any direct war against another state, there is nevertheless a significant rise in caste and communal violence, pogroms against minorities and attempts by the state to introduce discriminatory laws that threaten to exacerbate

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the already existing divisions and weaken residual democratic structures.

I will examine the contours of post-1990 conflicts in cities such as Mumbai, Delhi and in the state of Gujarat with particular reference to the 1992-3 communal riots in Mumbai; the 2002 Gujarat pogrom; and the 2022 Jahangirpuri riots in Delhi. For India's most vulnerable: poor Dalit, tribal and Muslim women, frequent conflict signified an intensification of structural violence that legitimizes and compounds their subjugation and oppression. The paper will argue that women's economic position in a city, where they live and work, determines their exposure and response to conflict. Poor Muslim women living in slums, ghettos or on the streets have a very different experience of violence and conflict than Muslim women who live in gated communities or those in rural India. The paper will also study the feminization of violence by examining the role of Hindu women who have supported, encouraged and participated in organised attacks on Muslims during communal conflict. Post conflict research shows these women did not progress through engagement in conflict, rather, the gendered hierarchy of vigilante forces, armed groups, and political parties remained intact despite their participation.

The paper problematises the connection between the neo-liberal state, capital accumulation and extraction on the one hand and the rise in violence against minorities on the other. The collusion of state and corporate capital that has resulted in displacement and dispossession of Muslims, Dalits and tribals of India are revealed. I conclude by offering strategies for mitigation and resistance during conflict and measures that must be taken post-conflict for social and economic reconstruction; steps to address displacement; and find ways to undermine communal identity by organising on the basis of class identity, taking inspiration from movements and struggles that have cut across such divisions.

Muhammad Azeem: Labour Law and the Role of Trade Union as a Non- Carceral Feminist Approach for Gender-Based Violence and Harassment at Workplace (Ilo Convention-190): A Socio-Legal Study from Pakistan

Abstract: At workplaces, gender-based violence and harassment (GBVH) is used to control and subjugate women and vulnerable sections of society like transgender and LGBTQIA+ communities, and exacerbates their already happening economic exploitation. In this regard, ILO Convention 190 on GBVH is a historic leap for the global labour and feminist movement. However, taking Pakistan as a case study, this article highlights two main hurdles which might limit the emancipatory potential of C-190. First hurdle is the dominant carceral approach of feminist movement vis-à-vis GBVH, which relies on, and thereby reinforces, patriarchal laws and coercive state apparatuses to the exclusion of solutions based on community. This article suggests that instead of such approaches, labour law may be employed to address GBVH at least at workplace, because labour law is theoretically a departure from civil and criminal law, and trade union provides a communal ethos based on solidarity. However, the absence of effective trade unions is the second hurdle for effective implementation of C-190. This absence has been, in part, caused by the inherent contradiction in the workings of ILO itself since its inception (1919). That is, ILO is always trying to deliver social justice and, at the same time, it also seems to be an agent of capitalist globalization. Due to its paradoxical orientation, labour law, under neoliberal economic globalization, is moving away from hardcore procedures into a mere moral obligation of Global Value Chains (GVCs) in their labour codes, coupled with a slippery rights-based approach by courts and a deliberate neglect of trade unions and their freedom of association and collective bargaining. In this backdrop, this article concludes that while there is a need for the feminist and labour movements to work together in theory and practice to address GBVH at workplace, ILO also needs to weigh more on its historic mission to bring social justice.

**friday
out of the abyss
enough of permanent war
and counterrevolution**

room: jcr

11 november

21:00+

**a night of
revolutionary madness**

Songs of resistance, dissent and tasteless vulgarity presented by Ed Emery [Red Notes] with the SOAS Guerrilla Choir.

You are invited to join us for an evening of song and music-making in the SOAS Bar. Feel free to bring your own songs. See the link below for our SOAS Guerrilla Choir Songbook.

Admission: Free and open to the general public

Link to the SOAS Guerrilla Choir Songbook: <http://www.geocities.ws/soasguerrillachoir/>

Wild about song!

**Ed Emery with the
SOAS Guerrilla Choir**

friday

session five

11 november
09:15 – 11:00

room: rb01
marxism and the war in ukraine

Anders Ekeland: Ukraine and the Marxist Theories of War

Abstract: If theory is to be a guide for action, the far left's responses to the war in Ukraine raises several urgent questions: Is there a Marxist theory or are there Marxist theories of war? What is the historical balance sheet of these theories? In the case of the war in Ukraine: what theoretical heritage was important for the response of different far left parties/currents. The paper argues that most of the far left is still guided by some kind of "Leninist defeatism". Too few seems to have read Hal Draper in his "War and Revolution. Lenin and the Myth of Revolutionary Defeatism" or S. F. Kissin's "War and The Marxists Socialist Theory and Practice in Capitalist Wars, 1848-1918". Despite their enormous value as scholarly analyses of the theory and policies of Lenin, Trotsky, Luxemburg, Kautsky and other Marxists; one question is practically only mentioned en passant: What was the response from the working class in Serbia, in Poland, in Czechoslovakia, Belgium, France?

Let's take Serbia as an example, where all Marxists agree had the right to self-defence. They applaud the fact that the Serbian Social Democrats voted against the war credits. The fact that Serbian army despite shortages of rifles and ammunition repelled three waves of attack "...ranks as one of the great upsets of modern military history". This "upset" shows the stubborn will to defend the "fatherland" by ordinary people. Neither Draper nor Kissin, although very critical of "revolutionary defeatism", discusses the response of the Serbian people. Russia and France gave some military aid. Should French and Russian workers supported that? What about the other countries being invaded, like Belgium or France? Did they have a right to self-defence? Or what if the Polish People started fighting for their national independence? Would they wage a just war? The answer from Lenin, Trotsky and Luxembourg is clearly yes, but – and there is a great BUT. As Rosdolsky writes in 1973 regarding Serbia, quoting Lenin: "The national element in the Austro-Serbian war is ... an entirely secondary consideration and does not affect the general imperialist character of the war."

While it is certainly true that the general character of the war does not change, does that mean that ordinary people should not fight against the Austro-Hungarian invasion? That they should not be given military support? This general problem of what "right to self-defence" actually means was pointed out by Rosdolsky commenting on Trotsky's "The International and the War", which Trotsky wrote in September 2014:

"Yet there is one passage in this text, where Trotsky declares that it is 'France's duty, to protect her territory and independence against the German offensive', although just a few pages further he condemns the French social-patriots', who, when the war began, put on their red trousers and set about liberating Germany' The followers and biographers of Trotsky keep quiet about this passage, as if such vacillations arising from momentary impressions could be held against the memory of the great revolutionary."

But was it wrong that France had a right to self-defence? Was it not the case that voting for the war credits in this case implied voting for making peace with the bourgeoisie? Putting class- and anti-colonial struggles on the backburner. What the French Marxist should have proposed was a vote in favour of proletarian, militia-based war effort, taxing the rich would have been possible? Such proposals were made by among others August Bebel. The reason why Draper, Kissin, Rosdolsky wrote about Marxist in the WWI was clearly that "revolutionary defeatism" in too many cases caused the non-Stalinist far left not take a leading role in the resistance movement in WW2. This was also the concern of Ernest Mandel's 1976 lecture where he uses the success of the Yugoslav communists as the example of the correct strategy. In our opinion it is important to note that Mandel emphasizes that WW2 was not only an imperialist rivalry. On the contrary, Mandel argues "that the Second World War was in reality a combination of five different wars".

To see a much more web of antagonistic interests than a one dimensional "proxy-war" is key to develop anti-war strategies that do win the minds and hearts of ordinary people, because revolutionary defeatism did not do that, "it could not win the masses who did not want a foreign conqueror." as Trotsky wrote just before he was murdered. Lenin explicitly dropped revolutionary defeatism after the February revolution. It was only as a part of the anti-Trotsky campaign accelerating after Lenin's death in 1924 that it became canonised as THE correct strategy. There can be no fundamental contradiction between Marxist anti-war policies and winning the support of the working class. What starts out "against the current" must have the potential to become the current.

Amélia Maciel, Francisco De Assis De Oliveira Santos, Breno Veloso Melo, Guilherme Isidório Da Rocha Abreu:
The Impacts of the War Between Russia and Ukraine on the Brazilian Working Class: Imperialism As a Surplus Value Transfer Mechanism

Abstract: The war between Russia and Ukraine introduced a moment of considerable instability in the global economy. The conflict and the sanctions imposed on Russia by the United States of America and the European

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Union promoted the reduction in the supply of Russian natural gas and oil and made the price of a barrel of oil more expensive. In Brazil, the hyperinflation of fuel prices reflects in the price of products that reach the consumer because Brazilian road transport accounts for about 60% of all goods transported. However, if 80% of the oil consumed domestically is produced in Brazil, how could this conflict directly affect the lives of Brazilians? It is due to the adoption of the international price parity policy adopted in 2016. Therefore, every time the international value of a barrel of oil increases, the price of Brazilian fuel inflates. This has enabled Petrobras to make a net profit three times higher than the world's largest oil companies. The importers, Petrobras, the North American refiners, and the shareholders profit largely from such fluctuations. In contrast, the Brazilian working class is held hostage by this mechanism. Higher price inflation is now eroding the real value of what they earn. Karl Marx explains, in Capital, that the price change will lead to a redistribution of the pre-existing value generated in the production of the commodity. Therefore, the increase in the market price of one sector will lead to more absorption of the values produced by the others. This increase will only be possible through monopolistic capital, as occurs in the fuel sector. Thus, more than the war, imperialism is the cause of the inflation currently suffered by the Brazilian working class. That is, inflation in Brazil comes from the set of policies of economic domination that rich countries exercise over the nations on the periphery of global capitalism. The Marxist theory of economic dependency, proposed by the Brazilian Ruy Mauro Marini, demonstrates how this submission to international dictates occurs. The objective was not to provide social aid, as initially proposed through international financial credit organizations, but to perpetuate the structural capitalist dynamic of exploitation. As in almost all of Latin America, this external influence has been interfering with Brazil's internal problems. It turns worse due to neoliberal government policies with the deepening of the dependency scenario. To solve this dramatic problem, which has increased the number of Brazilians in poverty, are necessary structural reforms contrary to the neoliberal logic, such as those pointed out by the Marxist Theory of Dependence.

room: g3
the politics of climate struggle ii

Lotte Schack: Political Subjectivity and the Climate Struggle

Abstract: Many have argued that one of the major problems with the struggle against catastrophic climate change is the absence of an obvious revolutionary 'climate subject', akin to the proletariat or feminist subject. Considering this discussion, in this paper I draw on Marxist-feminist work on subjectivity in order to examine how Swedish climate activists see themselves as political subjects. In the climate justice movement, the Global North has been regarded as the main perpetrator of climate crisis with the Global South on the receiving end. Activists in the Global North have therefore tended to articulate climate justice as a solidarity issue rather than a matter of defending their own interests. However, recent years' focus on generational justice has created a new subject position in the Global North.

Drawing on interviews and observations, I show how many activists situate themselves as privileged Westerners and hence as complicit in the climate crisis. However, for younger activists the child forms an alternative subject position. This position, with its connotations to innocence and vulnerability, allows activists to frame themselves and be framed as victims of previous generations' CO₂ emissions alongside Global South activists and thus as potential subjects of the climate struggle. Drawing on Edelman's critique of reproductive futurism, I problematise this, arguing that the child is positioned as a non-political actor which limits the radicality of the visions of and demands for the future activists can put forward. I problematise this notion of childhood by drawing on the example of the 1970s Children's Power movement, arguing that the child can be both a politicized and antagonistic subject position, necessary for challenging the current catastrophic system and imagining an alternative future.

Alice Swift: Brokerage and Cross-Movement Learning Across Different Terrains and National Contexts in the European Climate Camp Struggle

Abstract: In recognising the global nature of the climate crisis elements within the climate justice movement reflect this in part with intentional international coordination. This is often the case with the European climate camp movement wherein the dominant German Ende Gelände movement organisation in Germany has had a deliberate strategy of mobilising internationals and mobilising Germans to other climate camps in Europe.

In addition to the intentional internationalism of these groups a strategy based on the intersectional nature of the climate justice concept has led to the deliberate conjoining of struggles on different terrains. For example linking feminist and anti-racist struggles with the climate and ecological struggle.

This active conjoining of climate justice struggles across national borders and differing terrains can be understood

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using Tilly and Tarrow's concept of 'brokerage' (2015) as a movement mechanism consciously enacted by specific movement 'brokers.'

Conjoining the climate justice struggle across national movements and different terrains of struggle has led to intra-movement learning including the clash of ideological beliefs between national struggles and different terrains of struggle. For example it is now a dominant feminist position in the German left that until all oppressed gendered people may exist topless without objectification on a warm day none may. Whereas a burgeoning feminist position in the UK left has taken the opposite stance in attempting to create solidaristic spaces for oppressed genders to feel empowered to be topless without objectification. This caused a clash of leftist cultures at the British Reclaim the Power, Power Beyond Borders climate camp in 2019.

In a similar way active solidaristic work between the anti-racist movement and the environmental and broader left in the UK has led to the discussion around white people wearing dreadlocks as a form of cultural appropriation. This became a live topic at the Power Beyond Borders camp that had actively cultivated solidaristic links with anti-racist and migrant justice based organisations to illustrate in theory and practice that climate justice included racial justice.

As this camp was the first Reclaim the Power camp to actively mobilise internationals this debate around white people with dreadlocks has now transferred into Ende Gelände and the broader radical left in Germany. Up till now this issue has had very little exposure in Germany causing a great deal of contention amongst a section of the white eco-left in Germany that have historically adopted the wearing of dreadlocks as a counter-cultural signifier.

This paper will consider the leftist critique of bourgeois identity politics in the movement mechanism of brokerage to argue that a complete dismissal of cultural signifiers and the ideologies they represent can amount to a very real threat to inter-movement brokerage and cross-terrain movement building in the climate justice struggle. A Marxist approach to recognising the intersections between ecocidal capitalism, racist capitalism and patriarchal capitalism is promoted as a necessary theoretical position for successful intra-movement and cross-terrain building solidaristic climate justice work.

TJ Demos: Climate Aesthetics As Class War

Abstract: As we struggle for a livable world amidst capitalist ruination, the Left faces the ongoing threat of hegemonic liberal climate governance slipping further right into what Andreas Malm and the Zetkin Collective call "fossil fascism." Constituting a resurgent anti-UN Eurosceptic climate denialism merged with xenophobic ethnonationalism, and more particularly Islamophobia, fossil fascism stands to be further fortified by the inter-imperialist wars of Russia and NATO in Ukraine, bringing new cycles of catastrophic reinvestment in energy security and European (specifically German) rearmament. A recent important contribution, which stands to make an important intervention in climate liberalism/fossil fascism, is Matthew Huber's Climate Change as Class War, which recommends the centrality of a class-based analysis of environmental politics and the urgency of working-class organizing as uniquely capable of turning the tide in building a majoritarian opposition dedicated to a politics of life. This speaks to exactly the "transition" that folks like Jodi Dean and Kai Heron identify as requiring concerted social movement strategic analysis and dedication. How can we rethink climate aesthetics and politics on this basis, including in relation to artistic institutions, collective and social movement practice? To build ecosocialism on a warming planet – as the necessary resolve to racial and colonial capitalism – requires organizing: what does that look like today within a thoroughly neoliberal art system, considering recent transformations in ecologies of labour (e.g. the upswing in museum unionizing), as well recent proposals for sustainable ecologies of collectivist art practice coming from the global South, as presented in the recent Documenta 15?

room: bglt
roundtable discussion on marxism and prefigurative politics

Ashley Bohrer, Brecht De Smet, Paul Raekstad, Dan Swain

Abstract: The aim of this roundtable is to bring together researchers from diverse radical traditions who are working at the intersection of Marxism and prefigurative politics to discuss the various ways that these two traditions can inform one another. Prefigurative politics, the belief in and commitment to some identity or accord between the means and ends of political action, forms a kind of common sense in many activist communities and much social movement scholarship. Understood as demanding the deliberate implementation of future social relations in the present, it often appears as an explicit criticism of Marxism, and sometimes of strategic politics in general, and as such is often closely associated with the anarchist and autonomist traditions through ideas of consensus-based decision-making, horizontalism, multiple goals, direct action, and open-ended experimentation. In turn, it has often been rejected by Marxists as idealist, utopian or voluntarist. Yet several of the core motivating ideas of prefigurative

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politics can already be found in the works of Marx and Engels: in the conception of praxis as simultaneous world and self-transformation; in the critique of utopian socialism and the insistence on communism as the real movement that finds its conditions in itself; and in the commitment to proletarian self-emancipation and the suspicion of blueprints determined in advance or handed down from above. These ideas have continued to inspire and influence later Marxists; indeed, the term 'prefigurative' itself originates in council communist critiques of social democracy and state socialism, not Marxism *tout court*.

The proposal emerges from an article by Brecht De Smet and Dan Swain in preparation for a special issue of Historical Materialism on strategy that argues for a distinctive Marxist version of prefiguration, understood in terms of developmental and generative processes in which forms of struggle that appear first as external means become internalised as ends. However, it is hoped the roundtable format will make it possible to explore a range of connected issues, including the relationship between means and ends in Marxism; concrete and abstract utopia and the role of future goals in either inspiring or foreclosing processes of self-emancipation; understandings of revolutionary praxis and transition; conceptions of leadership and pedagogy within social movements and their relationship to the state; and the forms of organisation that permit and encourage prefigurative possibilities. In this way, rather than being an alternative to strategy, sustained attention to prefigurative politics can open up new potentials for strategic debates.

room: llt (dlt)
the law and landlord/employer power
(organised in association with the haldane society of socialist lawyers
and barristers from garden court chambers)

Nick Bano, Anna Minton, David Renton

This panel hosted by Garden Court chambers / the Haldane Society of Socialist Lawyers, will explore how the law is used to underwrite capitalist social relationships, including in employment and housing law

In housing we will start from the decision of the UK Supreme Court in McDonald v McDonald [2017] AC 273, the closest thing to a historical materialist analysis that we have ever seen in a judicial precedent. The court noted the Thatcher government's intention – undisturbed by later governments of any stripe – that "the letting of private property will again become an economic proposition", and to "[make] renting out property a much more attractive alternative for owners". The deregulatory measures they put in place to achieve those aims were highly effective, and have driven up costs to their current intolerable levels.

Both classical and Marxist economic theory hold that the price of housing is derived from its notional rental yield, and the Thatcherite housing law regime was intended to ensure that those yields will constantly rise. How? As Marx (and Smith before him) noted, rents in cities tend to reach a monopoly price if left to their own devices, so governments all over the world tend to intervene to stop that from happening: some form of security of tenure, coupled with rent stabilisation rules, protect tenants from arbitrary demands for higher rents during the lifetime of a tenancy. But the point about England & Wales is that there is virtually no 'lifetime of a tenancy': renters have such little security that landlords are, notionally, able to demand a new rent at any time under threat of eviction. At the same time, the state has traditionally tied housing benefit levels to the market rent, with the effect that the state guarantees that a sufficient proportion of the working class has the means to pay these ever-rising rents. The removal of rent-suppressing tenancy regulation, coupled with the state's underwriting of the national rent bill, allows landlords to realise constant price rises, which accounts for the ballooning 'housing market' which forms one of the key planks of the national economy.

Our discussion of employment law will investigate how the Employment Tribunal system has become the key mechanism for resolving employment law complaints – how it has individualised workers' relationships to their managers, how that process began prior to (but was accentuated by) vanguard neoliberalism, as well as how in 2013 the coalition experimented with Tribunal fees as a strategy to reduce the social price of labour, and the history (going back to the IWW in the US and syndicalism in Britain) of workers' attempts to find collective solutions to their degradation in the workplace, without contracts or law.

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room: r201
marxism, policing, prisons

Paul Gorby, Madhumita Varma: British Imperial Policing: Enforcing Primitive Accumulation At Home and Abroad

Abstract: The institution of the police is linked in contemporary social consciousness with the protection of society from crime. However, taking a critical historical perspective, we can see that the police function to protect wealth and property gained through dispossession and imperialism that have come to constitute the middle and upper classes. This paper considers the development of modern police power with a particular focus on the historical relationship between primitive accumulation and police power in the British context, as well as the imperial continuities thereof in the cases of Ireland and India. Taking this perspective, we can see that, contrary to many popular histories of policing, and taking Marx's claim that primitive accumulation entails the use of "police methods", the beginnings of police power can be found not in its earliest formal institutions, but rather in the armed groups hired by landlords to dispossess peasants of common land and to protect that land from being expropriated by those same dispossessed peasants. The origins of police power, therefore, are to be found in the fabrication of a social order established on a capitalist system of wage-labour. Police power has also been fundamental to the history of British imperialism as a tool used to dispossess Indigenous communities of valuable land and resources, as well as governing colonial territories in a very broad sense. Police forces were used in suppressing independence movements and maintaining private property during periods of economic crisis such as famines. From here such responsibilities, and the racial hierarchies underpinning them, boomeranged back to Britain, where police power steadily took on a more expansive set of concerns. Once again, however, and even to this day, police power has been oriented most heavily around preventing the dispossessed classes from expropriating the means of survival and ensuring that they engage in wage-labour. We can see this in the example of post-colonial policing practices in Britain, in particular the disproportionately racialised deployment of discretionary stop-and-search powers under the Vagrancy Act of 1824 as well as police indifference to illegal evictions. Drawing on the works of Marx, Neocleous, Robinson, and Luxemburg, this paper ultimately argues that police power exists to fabricate and preserve a capitalist, imperialist hierarchical order of race and class.

Andrew Johnson: Theses on the History of Police

My dissertation explores the historical formation and development of police institutions, and how these histories are utilized by, but sometimes challenge, the contemporary police abolition movement. This project is a continuation of an article I published on Michel Foucault and his "secret history of police." In Discipline and Punish, Foucault uses the imagery of the Panopticon to show how police organize and control society through criminalization. However, in Foucault's Collège de France lectures, he reveals that police institutions were conceived as a means of managing and regulating public health, social welfare, and the marketplace, and were not solely tasked with investigating and arresting criminals. As I was preparing final edits of this essay Michael Brown was shot and killed by police in Ferguson, Missouri. The article was published as it was reported that Officer Darren Wilson would not be indicted for the killing. The Black Lives Matter movement revealed the contradictions that formed the basis of my work on Foucault and the history of police. This inspired me to study what the late Cedric Robinson called the Black Radical Tradition. Black radicals have been at the forefront of the contemporary police abolition movement. My dissertation seeks to go beyond Foucault by exploring proto-police institutions in ancient and medieval Europe, non-Western states, and nonstate societies, by examining the early development of American police institutions, and the cooperation of local, state, private, and transnational police organizations across borders. Not only is this history underexplored, but it also challenges many of the preconceptions underpinning debates about criminal justice reform between academics, policy makers, and social movements.

My approach to the study of politics is deliberately historical. My dissertation utilizes anthropological theory, comparative-historical methods, and the study of American political development. This research project is structured by what the French historian Fernand Braudel called the longue durée. The current police abolition movement harkens back to campaigns against slavery and Jim Crow as progenitors. From the vantage point of Jim Crow, W.E.B. Du Bois' described the first abolitionist movement as incomplete. Critical race theorists (such as Angela Y. Davis and Ruth Wilson Gilmore) have insisted upon the need for a renewed abolitionist movement in the post-Civil Rights era. By challenging the assumptions of history through a focus upon the growth and spread of police institutions, my dissertation contributes to what Dylan Rodríguez calls "the long abolitionist project."

Lena Koch: The Prison Fix: Examining Current Prison Expansion in Britain as Accumulation By Repression

Abstract: With the intention of writing for the purpose of resistance, in this paper, I seek to uncover how we are to understand the largest prison-filling and prison-building project of the past 100 years that the British government

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is planning to orchestrate throughout the 2020s. I detail the political, social, and economic processes at play in the current expansion of incarceration infrastructure, arguing that prison expansion comprises an all-purpose ‘fix’, to a complex matrix of interconnected and amalgamating crises of the British capitalist state. I situate my analysis of these processes within Marxist theories of the crisis of surplus, accumulation by dispossession, and relative surplus population, maintaining that these macro-economic processes are mediated by socio-cultural filters, particularly through race. I set up historical context for my analysis, outlining two antecedents: one, the policing of the Black reserve army of labour in 1970s Britain, and two, the privatisation of prisons through Public Finance Initiatives. Correspondingly, I then turn to examine the processes through which the current moment of prison expansion is brought about in two parts: how the state is filling the prisons, and how the state is building the prisons. I argue that the racialisation of crime generates consent for the building of prisons in rural areas that have been economically deprived by austerity for decades. The new prison projects are sited in areas of stagnant local economies, in which these infrastructures of class war can be sold to the communities as relief for state-sanctioned neglect. Incarceration as an inherently racist tool of class control is organised by the state as an all-purpose ‘fix’ for overaccumulating capital, the effects of rural state abandonment, and the need to control the working and wageless classes. The state’s reliance on complacency, fractured communities, and the loss of power to plan and imagine, unveils the nodes at which potent resistance to the infrastructures of violence might most powerfully emerge.

room: b103
marxism and southern asia

Sarah Merchant: Spiritual Ontology and Political Liberation: Muslim Marxist Movements in Late Twentieth Century Pakistan

Abstract: After the partition of South Asia into Hindu-majority India and Muslim-majority Pakistan in 1947, regional leftist political parties in Pakistan emerged as challengers to the Muslim nationalist party. But instead of distancing themselves from the religious discourse used by the ruling party, the leftist movements in Sindh, Punjab, and East Bengal combined articulations from Islamic mysticism and Marxism to ground their political projects in the language of spiritual liberation.

This presentation will explore how organizers on the left sought to do this in the decades following Pakistan’s conception. Through an archival engagement with the political writings and personal papers of G.M. Syed, Maulana Bhashani, Sibghatullah Mizari, and others, this project will trace the use of the ontological notion of *wahdat ul-wajud* (Unity of Being) as a conceptual bridge between spiritual vernacular and political mobilization. *Wahdat ul-wajud*, the view in Sufi metaphysics that all worldly objects are manifestations of a unified divine consciousness, was taken up in the late 1970s by Iranian Marxist Ali Shariati, who blurred the ontological separations between self and other, human and earth, and Creator and creation in service of a materialist analysis. Did organizers on the Pakistani left anticipate this articulation decades earlier in their own attempts to develop a vernacular Marxism that would help mobilize the working and agrarian classes? This project explores the political potential of spiritual articulation and suggests that these late twentieth century movements may offer us a helpful repertoire for leftist organizing in the contemporary moment.

Kanishka Goonewardena: Crisis and Protest in Sri Lanka

Abstract: This presentation attempts to make sense of the economic crisis and political protest in Sri Lanka. In popular media and by the protestors themselves, the on-going Sri Lankan crisis of 2022 was mostly if not exclusively understood in terms of the corruption, ineptitude and other nefarious qualities of the country’s deposed president and his extended family. Without denying their patent deficiencies, here we begin rather with an historical perspective on Sri Lanka’s external debt problem, which manifested itself most immediately in unprecedented power cuts, fuel shortages and inflation, bringing people from all classes into the streets in apparently spontaneous protest. Next, we examine the nature of the protest movement itself, including its multi-class character, social media orchestration, foreign relations and political demands condensed in the ultimately successful but also extremely limited slogan and hashtag #gotagohome (injunction for the president to resign). Finally, we compare the form and content of what Sri Lankans call the aragalaya (the struggle) to classical revolutions such as the French and the Bolshevik, as well as Arab Spring and Occupy movements, to assess the prospects of the present conjuncture in Sri Lanka from a Marxist perspective.

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room: b104
thinking utopia / dystopia

Kanakis Leledakis: Beyond 'Man' and 'History': On the Conceptual Basis of Utopias in Modernity

Abstract: The shift to a secular frame of reference, already well under way in the 17th century (as opposed to the otherworldly/theological one of the middle ages and early Renaissance) run parallel to another conceptual development: Man emerges as the locus of natural rights -especially political freedom- and as the subject of thought and action. By the mid 18th c., man is even more: the foundational element of political community seen as a form of contract between autonomous individuals.

An alternative, emerging at around the same time (Hegel) and developed in the 19th c. (Marx) poses the economy and society as the subject of history and the unfolding of history towards a telos as an ideal. Even then, this 'unfolding' is expressed also on the level of the subject (Hegel) or implies the realization of man as a species-being (Marx).

These two parallel conceptual directions -man as an essence/presence or history as a given trajectory towards a telos- have marked the modern normative framework and provided the conceptual bases for all forms of utopias up to our days, in the form of Liberal or Marxist approaches respectively.

However, in both cases the ideal is taken as axiomatically given, as always implied or present. Either the essence of man is there and has to be discovered, or history has a telos and moves inexorably towards it. In contrast, our task today is to move beyond both approaches. To reject historicism without falling back to an individualist ideal (as the Frankfurt School did), to think of a better -social- world without essentialist assumptions.

The alternative is not evident. It could be argued that to think ideals and utopias no alternative overall, general assumption is to be applied. Transhistorical elements can exist -for example the long-term survival of human society as such and the provision of the material context for the survival of all individuals (real sustainability). Beyond that, the radical historicity -as distinct from historicism- present in Marxism should be espoused: every period allows its own ideals to emerge. One of the powerful ideals of modernity we can retain is the ability and desire to transform society-we could think democracy but also the organization of the economy along these lines.

Natalie Paoli: Fomenting Revolution by First Walking Away: Predictions on the Future of Technology, Global Economies, and Materialism in Cory Doctorow's Walkaway

Abstract: From a Marxist materialist perspective, it is argued that literature's primary function is that of presenting other versions of the self, allowing the reader to draw conclusions on the insights provided by the narrative because it moves between the real and the imagined. Or, to put it more succinctly, it is through narrative construction that a novel engages in the process of meaning-making, and because of this, literature can become a form of counter-hegemonic cultural practice, a way to write against the dominant ideologies. Using this as a starting point, this paper will make a case for Cory Doctorow's dystopian science fiction novel, *Walkaway*, to be read as a warning and a prediction of global ecological catastrophes, refugee crises, out of control wealth disparities and more to come. As with much speculative fiction, the novel reads less like speculation than prediction, offering insight into new forms of state authoritarianism, emerging new tendencies of capitalist accumulation and persisting crisis tendencies tied into the advancement of technologies. In response to these events, groups of people who are on the left of the novel's society, present the concept of 'walkaway', of fighting against imperialism, racism and patriarchy. Described as an 'anti-Atlas Shrugged,' the novel may be read as offering a philosophy of internationalism today which might just offer us the 'resources of hope' needed to live tomorrow.

Agustin Ferrari Braun, Oscar Talbot: We Have Never Been Mechanised: Luddite Temporalities and Capitalist Techno-Imaginaries

Abstract: "We will never lay down our arms till the House of Commons passes an act to put down all the machinery hurtful to the community" – Ned Ludd, 1812

The armies of King Ludd are marching once again. The Covid-19 Pandemic, and the Ukraine War, have decisively broken the hegemony of platform capitalism (Srnicek, 2016) that emerged out of the Global Financial Crisis. Supply chains have been stretched thin, challenging the just-in-time logic of post-Fordist production and distribution. Interest rates are rising while inflation reaches double digits, rendering impossible the free flow of VC money towards platforms that came to characterise capitalism in the previous decade. The political might of the working class has been revalorised by the reality of essential labour in the frontlines of Covid, reiterating the indispensable nature of their activities. A 'Luddite moment' is emerging out of the current crisis; the relationship between labour and production mediated through technology is being questioned in the most forceful manner in decades. The labour movement is recomposing itself through the unionisation of workplaces like Amazon or Gorillas, and the activation

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of traditional unions, like the RMT, as well as grassroots labour organising. Initiatives like Right to Repair, or the Drivers Cooperative, are putting forward new ways of utilising technology. Finally, critical scholars (e.g. Mueller, 2021; Sadowski, 2021), are theorising Neo-Luddism as a politics of refusal. This presentation seeks to clarify the methods of Neo-Luddism, and further articulate it as a critical framework. More specifically, we aim to establish Neo-Luddism as an avenue to challenge the temporality of capitalism.

The neoliberal consensus, and its material reality in the form of financialised capitalism, requires the construction of future horizons that artificially sublimate the tensions in the mode of production, offering an imagined escape to the inherent contradictions arising from this model. These horizons are declined in a dialectical manner. On the one hand, Promethean narratives have developed around a form of solutionism (Morozov, 2013) that positions technology as an apolitical element driving progress beyond ideological constructions. On the other, the exhaustion of current productive resources forces “the extension of the commodity principles along the axis of time” (Lysandrou, 2016, p. 444), cannibalising the future and reducing it to yet another space for economic activity. “The slow cancelation of the future” (Fisher, 2013, p. 8) is not a by-product of a declining cultural order, but rather the direct consequence of temporal colonisation. In the world to come, our problems will be solved by technology, but never in such a revolutionary manner that could disrupt profit.

The revolutionary potential of Neo-Luddism emanates from its capacity to challenge this vision of the future, disrupting the stabilising mechanisms of capital, and instead recentring the discussion around actually existing working conditions as the starting point for any critique of technology. Building on Labour Process Theory (Braverman, 1998; Noble, 2011) and Marx’s own humanist approach to technology (1973; 1998), we argue in favour of hyper-presentism as a method to analyse technology from the left. Radically refusing to indulge in accelerationist (Mackay & Avanessian, 2014) or (neo)substantivist (Vaccari, 2021) fantasies, we analyse machinery as a contingent and highly situated phenomenon, which allows us to introduce ambiguity (Noble, 1995) around reified, capitalist, notions of progress. Once the space for a debate is created, the idea that there is no alternative loses weight, instead requiring the development of arguments regarding potential futures, rather than a mere displacement of tensions into an eventuality. Capitalist techno-imaginaries are shown to be stabilising mechanisms in the present, rather than viable openings in the future, while the highly contingent history of discrete technological objects, from AI to the dishwasher, is brought to light, discarding idealist notions regarding the ontology of technical objects. The solutions to threats such as climate collapse and (post)modern alienation must be derived from what really is, rather than what could possibly be.

room: g51
marxism, state and constitutional politics

Robert Ovetz: We the Elites: Why the US Constitution Serves the Few

Abstract: Written by 55 of the richest white men, and signed by only 39 of them, the US constitution is the sacred text of American nationalism. Popular perceptions of it are mired in idolatry, myth and misinformation – many Americans have opinions on the constitution but have little idea what it says.

This book provides a class analysis that examines the constitution for what it is – a rulebook for elites to protect capitalism from democracy. Social and labour movements have misplaced faith in the constitution as a tool for achieving justice when it actually impedes social change through the many roadblocks and obstructions we call ‘checks and balances’. This stymies urgent progress on issues like labour rights, poverty, public health and climate change, propelling the American people and rest of the world towards destruction.

I examine how the Constitution was designed during a period of intense class conflict by subsistence farmers, slave, and native peoples from below that threatened elite power and the formation of a single integrated capitalist economy. The Constitution was designed to form a powerful national “federal” government empowered with the supremacy power to set up and control the capitalist economy by repaying debts, issuing currency, deploying the military to protect and expand it, and preventing further efforts at economic democracy.

My reading of the constitution shows that the system isn’t broken. Far from it. It works as it was designed to.

Michael Wilkinson: Counter-Revolutionary Constitutionalism in Postwar Europe

Abstract: This paper reflects on the postwar constitutions of France, Italy and Germany – three core initiators of the project of European integration – from the perspective of the long durée of European constitutional history in general and the interwar breakdown of liberal democracy in particular. I suggest that far from ‘revolutionary’ constitutions, as they are sometimes characterised, these postwar European constitutions are better understood as elitist and even counter-revolutionary in their trajectory. The material features of this counter-revolutionary pathway

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are a de-politicisation of state-society relations and abandonment of class politics, which can be accounted for as a form of 'soft authoritarian liberalism'. This, I argue, is consolidated by the project of European integration, as well as the empty signifier of 'Europe' and postmodern reaction, to which much of the left and so-called critical theory remain bound.

room: g51a
iberian marxist studies

Alex Alvarez Taylor: Third Time Lucky? The Reception of Marx's Critique of Political Economy in Spain

Abstract: The social crises of the new millennium led to a partial revival of interest in Marx's critique of capitalism and its interpretation. Notably, this involved recuperating many of the post-war debates and reconstructions of Marx's critique that had taken place in the Federal and Democratic German Republics from the sixties onwards. Recently, while Jan Hoff and Marcello Musto's respective volumes have celebrated this revival, they have also pointed out the need to "deprovincialize" the New German Reading(s) of Marx and to take stock of significant contributions made in the broader global reception, for example by theorists in Japan and the former Yugoslavia. While interest in the Latin American reception (Mexico, Argentina and Brazil) has increased in recent years, still rather little is known about the theoretical reception of Marx and his value theory in Spain. Though it has arguably had to withstand greater historical pressures and constraints than its French or Italian neighbours – forty years of dictatorship, a small and anaemic labour movement – the sheer number of Spanish (and Portuguese) speakers across the globe today means that the ongoing reception of Marx in the Iberian Peninsula may still prove capable of playing a greater role in future debates, particularly if it can turn its historical burdens into theoretical virtues and engage in constructive dialogue with the Americas and Brazil. For in many ways, the Spanish reception of Marx was strangled at birth not once but twice: first, with Franco's fascist victory in the civil war of the thirties; second, with Spain's accelerated integration into a global liberal democratic order that had all but forgotten Marx in the late seventies and early eighties. My talk discusses Spain's comparatively young reception of Marx's critique. Building on key historical moments of the second, it focuses on more recent or "third wave" attempts at establishing a theoretically advanced and non-dogmatic reading of Marx in a country whose intellectual and oppositional energy had – understandably – been devoted to the practical goals of defeating Franco and recovering from a modern legacy of poverty, violence, and counterrevolution.

Cristina Pradillo-Caimari, Andrés Di Masso Tarditti: Seeds For Emancipation in Independence Protests: How Everyday Arguments Construct Or Undermine a Transformative Catalan Nation

Abstract: The role of nationalism in emancipatory processes has been widely discussed in Marxist perspectives. In this presentation, we argue that attending to the concrete ways by which nations are mobilised enables a deep understanding of the emancipatory potential of nationalism as well as the discourses that undermine it. We have analysed the everyday arguments on Catalan independence to focus on the imbrication of nationalism and emancipation.

We conducted 30 open-ended interviews and a focus group with ordinary people living in Catalonia. Drawing on rhetorical psychology we analysed the ideological content and functions that the Catalan nation accomplished. The rhetorical approach attends to the ideological-argumentative assemblages that reproduce or challenge the status quo. Our results shed light on how claiming for the Catalan nation may oppose dispossession dynamics of current capitalism. These type of articulations also challenge the traditional meanings of the nation. On the other hand, we show how there are different discourses that undermine the emancipatory potential of Catalan nationalism. We conclude discussing how these results strengthen our understandings of emancipation in contemporary political world of nations.

Catarina Principe: The Remaking of Portuguese Capitalism: European Integration, Productive Specialisation, and State Transformation

Abstract: This contribution aims at situating the process of European integration as a means for state transformation, since integration is here understood as a geographical extent of state functions as a reaction to the demands of capital accumulation. Taking Portugal as a study case of this form of regional integration, I aim to shed light on the profound shifts that occurred within the state and the national bourgeoisie upon the process of European integration in the country. It is also the objective of this contribution to show how the emergence of new political and economic groups have redesigned the Portuguese productive map and have established an economic profile in line with the European expectations for the country.

Nation states are here understood as "nodes" of the processes of internationalisation, since it is they who are responsible for organising the processes of capital accumulation. States regulate and enable the fundamental

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dynamics of production, distribution, communication and exchange between markets and the banking system, providing the political and legal basis for the whole circuit of capital to function in a certain way. In this sense, the state is a privileged target of the tensions between different interests of the dominant class, which seek to shape it to their own benefit. In Portugal, the tensions in the relation between the state and its ruling class are of particular interest, all the more so because the revolutionary period of 1974-75 saw the nationalisation of a highly significant portion of the country's economic map – a process which began to be profoundly altered from 1976 onwards, driven by the beginning of the accession to the EEC. Following the concentration of a significant part of the productive map in the "Grupo Estado" (State Group) through the process of nationalisations – managed, from 1976 onwards, by the IPE (Institute of State Participations) -, the European integration process served as justification for the rampant privatisation program. This sought to significantly diminish the role of the State in the economy, as well as to open the doors to new economic groups and interests more in tune with core-European interests. The end of the revolutionary process paved the way for a stratum of the Portuguese bourgeoisie which, until then, had had very limited room for maneuver (in 1983, three years before Portugal's official membership began, only one of the eight major economic groups came from the previous regime). This accounts for the first phase of European integration. During the second phase of integration, which happens in line with the overarching neoliberal tendencies, the main players of the former big economic groups were to come back, albeit in sectors different from their previous ones, namely banking, real estate and tourism, allowing for a redesign of both Portuguese capitalism and its bourgeoisie. In this sense, my hypotheses holds that the process of European integration was not exclusively motivated by an attempt to ensure the country's political stability against the 'turbulence' of fascist and socialist regimes; it did not happen in an isolated, almost 'insular' manner; it was not solely concerned with 'openness' or 'liberalisation', nor did it appeal to the capitalist class as a whole; but was rather the product of specific dynamics and tensions within the dominant class that needed political regimes, and therefore *states* with specific capacities and functions, and that found in the new political groups the representation of those very interests – and in European integration the framework to lock-in those same interests.

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room: rb01

book launch: karel kosík and the dialectics of the concrete

Maria Chehonadskih, Joe Grim Feinberg, Georgi Medarov, Tania Orbova, Alexei Penzin

Abstract: Karel Kosík (1926–2003), one of the most remarkable Czech Marxist philosophers of the twentieth century, owes his reputation as a creative thinker largely to his philosophical ‘blockbuster’ *Dialectics of the Concrete*, first published in Czechoslovakia in 1963. This new volume reintroduces Kosík’s philosophy to English-speaking readers, showing that Kosík’s work is important not only as a leading intellectual document of the democratic reform movement that led to the 1968 Prague Spring, but also as an original theoretical contribution with international impact that sheds light on the meaning of labour and praxis, cognition and economic structure, revolution and the crises of modernity. The volume, edited by Joseph Grim Feinberg, Ivan Landa and Jan Mervart, includes papers by Ian Angus, Siyaves Azeri, Vít Bartoš, Jan Černý, Diana Fuentes, Gabriella Fusi, Tomáš Hermann, Tomáš Hříbek, Xiaohan Huang, Peter Hudis, Petr Kužel, Michael Löwy, Anselm K. Min, Tom Rockmore, Francesco Tava, and Xinruo Zhang, as well as the three editors. At this book launch, panelists will discuss the relevance of this revival of Kosík’s legacy in the broader context of Eastern and Western European Marxism, past and present.

room: g3

rifts and emissions: new theoretical departures and empirical applications

Clair Quentin, Ben Butler-Cole: The Ergomochleutic Rift: Growth-Rates of Thermodynamic Depth in Organisms and Commodities in the Capitalocene

Abstract: We argue that the era in which the capitalist mode of production prevails is marked by the development of a tendency towards super-linear growth in the production of thermodynamic depth which is historically specific, rather than being a necessary feature of any biosphere comprising humans. The thermodynamic depth of the biosphere should tend to increase, slowly, with the sum of genetic mutations conserved in extant lineages, but would accordingly plummet during mass extinctions (and would therefore currently be dropping). In the case of the capitalist mode of production, by contrast, thermodynamic depth is shown to possess a tendency towards super-linear growth. Further, that tendency is causally linked to the mass extinction presently going on in connection with the Capitalocene. We exclude the possibility that that tendency is, as it were, ‘native’ to the biosphere by dint of putatively forming part of the extended human phenotype. Taking those conclusions together we argue that there exists a rift between the biosphere and the capitalist mode of production which may be defined by reference to their respective relations with thermodynamic depth. Drawing on our existing work (Quentin and Butler-Cole, “Inviting the vampire in: the relationship between value and thermodynamic depth”, *Science and Society*, 2023 [forthcoming]), we label that rift the ‘ergomochleutic rift’. The notion of ecological rifts is subject to critique on the grounds of embedding an undialectical dualism of ‘society’ versus ‘nature’, the boundaries between which are said to remain largely unspecified in the metabolic rift literature. The boundary between capitalism and nature is here scientifically defined, by reference to their respective relations with thermodynamic depth.

Yorgos Pisinas, Theofanis Papageorgiou: Metabolic Rift: Constructing a Model For Ecological and Economic Analysis

Abstract: Following the initial discussion on the Marxian ‘theory of metabolic rift’ (TMR) introduced by J. B. Foster in the (early) 2000s, there has been an outburst of inquiries into ecological issues and metabolic processes. The TMR has been applied on issues of ecological exchange and imperialism, or to analyse the ecologically disruptive mechanisms of capitalism. During these two decades, Ecological Economics (EE), through the homonym journal, emerged as a paradigm and have been recognised as a heterodox school of economic thought despite their lack of homogeneity. Even though TMR argues that capitalism contradicts the ecological cycles, and EE raise similar concerns based on the principles of thermodynamic, the latter has hardly ever shown an interest in exploring the TMR itself. TMR has mostly been confined within the fields of environmental sociology, geography or political theory and has not been that much appreciated by economics (and political economy). In this research paper, we aim to provide a rigorous economic analysis of metabolic processes, which may establish/demonstrate a link between TMR and EE, based on an integrated analysis on both exchange-value and use-value terms. Thus, we introduce a model that depicts/presents the same mechanisms and raises the issues of agrarian production of the 19th century as that/the one(s) introduced by Liebig, Marx and Foster. Focusing on agriculture, we propose an initial model of metabolic rift that can be expanded dialectically towards a general form, drawing from concrete historical facts of capitalism’s evolution.

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Jesper Prytz: Labour's Bargaining Power and the Reduction of Greenhouse Gas Emissions. An Analysis of Industry-Level Data, 1996–2017

Abstract: Climate change is intensifying at a rapid rate. The level of carbon dioxide emissions has increased significantly since the early 1970s, with these emissions being intimately connected to economic growth. Economic growth leads to higher emissions because growing economies require an ever-increasing share of natural resource use and consumption. This cycle is referred to by sociologists as the treadmill of production. In this perspective, the economic pressures of extracting fossil fuels are outweighing any technological advancements that aim to reduce emissions. This raises questions on whether emissions can be mitigated as the growth paradigm is incompatible with scientifically accepted global warming.

Furthermore, as growth is at the heart of emissions, we must take into account the actors which are part of this economic model. Specifically, strong collective organization of labour through trade unions are expected to reduce emissions, as unions tend to fight for environmental regulations as part of their mission to represent worker interests. Others have stressed the inequalities which lie at the nexus of emissions and its connection to profitability. For instance, a reduction in the relative bargaining power between capital and labour in terms of wages and profits could raise emissions as consumption would then increase for those on the top of the income distribution.

In this paper, I investigate the relationship between labour's bargaining power and emissions. Strong trade unions with influence on the industrial relations system have an impact on wages, which limit capitalist profitability and are therefore expected to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. However, an increase in the total wage share of an economy will result in a higher level of aggregate demand. Therefore, I suggest that only taking into account total emissions on the sectoral level obscures the possible increased consumption which would follow from an increase in aggregate wages. As such, I use an alternative measure of emissions, which factors in the total CO₂ emissions adjusted for trade to produce the sectoral emissions for total domestic final demand. Furthermore, I use treadmill of production and metabolic rift theories in order to conceptualize the relationship between emissions and economic growth, and how labour's bargaining power can impact this relationship. I investigate this by exploiting previously unused data on emissions, wages, and union density on the sector-country level.

room: rg01
marxist feminism: feminist theory

Emma Young: Standpoint Theory, Deference, and Ideology

Abstract: Standpoint theory includes the claim that members of certain oppressed groups have an epistemic privilege with regard to knowledge of the system(s) of oppression that they face. This epistemic privilege, however, must be gained through political struggle and education and is not an automatic achievement for any member of that group. Yet, the acceptance of a framework of standpoint theory now often finds expression in a practical norm of deference. In socially progressive circles, it is becoming increasingly normalized that speakers who talk about oppression *should* have the identity that is generally affected by the type of oppression in question. This form of deference is the ground for the most common critiques of standpoint theory as it demonstrates the underlying essentialization of people with socially marginalized identities as having a form of political consciousness by mere virtue of their social identity. This essentialization neglects one of the central claims of standpoint theory – the achievement thesis – which concerns the premise that critical, political consciousness can only be achieved through political struggle.

In this talk, I argue that the norm of deference does in fact follow from the beginnings of feminist standpoint theory, which can explain why the achievement thesis is so quickly forgotten by its detractors. I will locate the source for this neglect in the absence of a Marxist conception of ideology in Nancy Hartsock's pioneer article about the feminist standpoint. Due to what I consider her more phenomenological approach to ideology, she takes women's experiences under patriarchy to not only form the starting point for feminist consciousness, but as its truth content. Consequently, I will argue that Georg Lukács' standpoint theory does provide a strong basis for upholding the achievement thesis, thereby evading the deference problem. Lukács' dialectical understanding of ideology can better support the difference between workers' (and women's) actual consciousness and the critical consciousness they may develop when they assume the proletarian (or feminist) standpoint.

Chiara Bertone: Rediscovering Materialism in Studies on Family Practices: On the Traces of Feminist Epistemologies

Abstract: The perspective of family practices (Morgan 1996) has been able to assemble tendencies in family studies that, in the UK and beyond, have distanced themselves from essentialist, positivist and categorizing approaches, and moving towards attention to relational connections, the actors' perspectives and the researcher's reflexivity. At the same time, this perspective was seemingly disanchored from Marxist interpretative tools, and has been subjected

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to a watering down of its critical potential in its uses by mainstream family sociology. However, by tracking down the key influence of feminist epistemologies on this approach, in particular of Dorothy Smith's thought, and by exploring how they resonate with other performative perspectives in gender and sexuality studies, we can rediscover a fruitful entwining of the anti-essentialist potential of interactionism and ethnomethodology and a historical materialist ontology. Interrogating the heuristic possibilities that these relations open today, the paper is intended as a contribution to building a meeting ground in the understanding of families and sexuality, between research inspired by practice approaches and the perspectives emerging in the last years from transfeminist and queer movements, that are powerfully drawing on materialist feminism to make sense of the precarization and commodification of everyday life, and to explore forms of desertion from the increasing familiarization of responsibilities for social reproduction. This enquiry stems from a reflection on the Italian context, about the relevance of these perspectives in a context where political conflict, particularly in times of stronger anti-gender reaction, revolves around the definition of family, its functions and boundaries.

Megan Behrent: "A Way of Knowing:" Adrienne Rich's Marxist Feminism in the 21st Century

Abstract: The perspective of family practices (Morgan 1996) has been able to assemble tendencies in family studies that, in the UK and beyond, have distanced themselves from essentialist, positivist and categorizing approaches, and moving towards attention to relational connections, the actors' perspectives and the researcher's reflexivity. At the same time, this perspective was seemingly disanchored from Marxist interpretative tools, and has been subjected to a watering down of its critical potential in its uses by mainstream family sociology. However, by tracking down the key influence of feminist epistemologies on this approach, in particular of Dorothy Smith's thought, and by exploring how they resonate with other performative perspectives in gender and sexuality studies, we can rediscover a fruitful entwining of the anti-essentialist potential of interactionism and ethnomethodology and a historical materialist ontology. Interrogating the heuristic possibilities that these relations open today, the paper is intended as a contribution to building a meeting ground in the understanding of families and sexuality, between research inspired by practice approaches and the perspectives emerging in the last years from transfeminist and queer movements, that are powerfully drawing on materialist feminism to make sense of the precarization and commodification of everyday life, and to explore forms of desertion from the increasing familiarization of responsibilities for social reproduction. This enquiry stems from a reflection on the Italian context, about the relevance of these perspectives in a context where political conflict, particularly in times of stronger anti-gender reaction, revolves around the definition of family, its functions and boundaries.

room: bglt
communist thinkers, communist movements

Alex de Jong: The Curse From Coyoacan; the Break Between Trotsky and Henk Sneevliet

Abstract: For almost two decades, the Dutch revolutionary-socialist Henk Sneevliet was a committed supporter of Leon Trotsky. The persecution of Trotsky and his supporters in the Soviet-Union was an important reason for Sneevliet to break with the Dutch Communist Party and organize his own party. Sneevliet's Revolutionary Socialist Party was one of the larger anti-Stalinist revolutionary organisations in Western Europe and an early supporter of Trotsky's call for a new international. Yet, on the eve of the second World War, Trotsky broke off the relations with Sneevliet in an open letter the latter called 'the curse from Coyoacan'. Despite years of political cooperation, major disagreements had grown between the two in regards to trade-union policies, the creation of the new international and the character of the Soviet-Union. This paper will consider the underlying reasons for their political divergence. In his criticism of Sneevliet's politics, such as his role in the revolutionary syndicalist federation NAS, Trotsky could indeed correctly claim he based himself on established communist principles. However, Sneevliet had little choice. The development of the class struggle in the Netherlands and the organisational expression this forced Sneevliet to choose between the political principles of his mentor, or maintaining contact with a layer of militant workers. Sneevliet chose the latter.

Craig Brandst: Semantic Palaeontology As Ideology Critique: Early Soviet Oriental Studies and the Anti-Caste Movement in India

Abstract: Colonial Indology developed on the basis of Brahmanical ideas and as a result the ideology critique of one involved a critique of the other. The earliest Dalit intellectuals in India challenged the authority of Brahmanism by undermining the validity claims of Sanskrit and the Vedas, and showing how Brahmanical conceptions had been imposed upon, transformed and obscured earlier egalitarian conceptions, the vestiges of which had

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been retained in regional folklore and popular religious practices. At the same time a critique of Indo-European philology developed in the USSR that presented 'Indo-Europeanism' as a justification for colonial domination and the expropriation of the colonised. Central to this was an understanding of language and culture as stratified phenomena, which through 'semantic palaeontology' could be shown to bear traces of successive shifts in meaning associated with shifts in the mode of production, class structure and foreign domination. The study of non-standard dialects and folklore was held to be fundamental in this analysis, and could serve to break the authority of colonial and ruling paradigms. Although widely derided after Stalin attacked the theory in 1950, the idea of semantic palaeontology has recently been subject to renewed interest, not least because of the influence it exerted on later thinkers, with traces discernible in Bakhtin's ideas about carnival, Vygotskii's cultural psychology, Said's Orientalism, and possibly also Gramsci's idea of folklore as the sedimentation of common sense. The paper retrieves some of the most valuable aspects of the theory, relating it to both the critique of imperial culture and the indigenous forms of ideological domination in India. It will be shown that some points of contact between early Soviet Indology and emerging Dalit thinkers can be demonstrated and that this may contribute to overcoming the legacy of Stalinism in failing adequately to deal with the question of caste in India.

room: llt (dlt)
workers' inquiry stream: inquiries into crisis

Bob Jeffery, Peter Thomas, Ben Ledger-Jessop: From Exceptional to Routine Harms and Back Again: Class Composition and the Construction and Contestation of Harm By Hospitality Workers During the Covid Pandemic
Abstract: Efforts to reconceptualise the harms of capitalism as analogous to statist or common-sense definitions of 'crime' have a long history stretching back at least as far as Engels' understanding of 'social murder'. More recently, there has been an attempt to extend such 'zemiological' perspectives to the contemporary landscape of work and employment (Scott, 2018; Lloyd, 2019; Davies, 2019) and this has helped to identify important mechanisms in the perpetuation of work-based harm (business strategy, state regulation, ideology). While these studies have much to recommend them, there are various issues including conceptual imprecision and a tendency to emphasise 'exceptional' over 'routine' work-based harms, and a common weakness in their underappreciation of the role of working-class struggle in contesting the imposition of work. In the case of Lloyd (2019) in particular, this is grounded in a certain form of Marxist-Lacanian idealism, which fuels a fatalistic appraisal as to the possibility of contesting contemporary neoliberal capitalism. In our study of low-paid hospitality workers on precarious contracts in the Sheffield City Region, we advance a different approach, grounded in the autonomist framework of 'class composition' (Cleaver, 1979; Wright, 2002). This allows us to understand the ways in which capitalist strategy, the state, and the (dis)organisation of the working class combine to 1) produce routine harms, 2) explain how such routine harms morphed into the more exceptional under the stimuli of the Covid-19 pandemic, and 3) understand the scope for working-class contestation of those harms.

Ricardo Antunes: Pandemic Capitalism

Abstract: This presentation aims to point out the destructive trends to work set forth and intensified by the antisocial metabolism of the capital system. They have been developing laboratories for experimenting with labour, driven by large corporations and digital platforms, of which the so-called "uberized labour" is an example. The latter tend to expand in the post-pandemic period, further aggravating the precarious conditions of the working class on a global scale, making more visible what I called pandemic or virotic capitalism.

Given the expansion of this phenomenon on a global scale, we present two hypotheses. In the first, we indicate that platform capitalism, driven by the informational-digital universe, has been recovering past forms of labour, from a period we can call "protoform of capitalism", present at the beginning of the Industrial Revolution. In the second hypothesis it is indicated the possibility that we are entering a new era of de-anthropomorphizing of work, since the elimination of large contingents of living labour is exponentially expanded, replaced by dead labour that expands in the new digital factory, under the command of the algorithms, internet of things, artificial intelligence. This has led to an increasing in unemployment and have profound consequences, quantitative and qualitative, in the world of labour.

Roberto Della Santa, Raquel Varela: Workers' Inquiry on Burnout and the Future of Work

Abstract: The world lived between 1970 and 1980, with effects mainly after 1980 – and the "double dip crisis" of 1981-84 – a substantial change in production relations in Europe from the social pact, born after 1945/47, which had a central impact on the mental health of workers by fixing, we will argue in this paper, the centrality of social assistance

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over full employment, competition over cooperation, the return of the family wage with the insecurity of livelihoods as a social standard. Before the fall of the Berlin Wall and the USSR (1989-91), a productive restructuring carried out from 1981-86 had as its axis to introduce the end of full employment in order to regulate the price of labour power. This policy, which takes place in almost all European countries, regardless of the parties that ran the States (with rotation between conservatives and social democrats), and also takes place through the policies designed within the EEC (European Economic Community), based on the following transformations:

- 1) End of full employment with legal changes that encouraged mass dismissals in companies nationalized in World War II and in the following years;
- 2) change in collective labour agreements to allow a contingent of mobile (precarious) workforce;
- 3) early retirement in hundreds of thousands of workers (Banking, insurance, communications, transport, ports, shipbuilding and repair, mines and steelworks).

Stephen Bouquin: Strikes, Conflict and Antagonistic Consciousness in Times of Disaster: The Case of Italy

Abstract: Italy was the first country, after Wuhan in China, where the Sars-Cov-2 virus found to have a large number of contaminations. During the early stage of the pandemic (March 2020), Italy was also confronted to a massive wave of spontaneous strikes, mainly in the industry. This strike movement expressed the refusal of workers to become "butcher's meat" on the altar of profit. Indeed, during the first days of March 2020 the government of Conti decided to close bars, sport activities as much as schools and universities but refrained to keep people out of the workplace, while this was certainly one of the main places of contamination (together with urban transport). From the 9th up to the 16th of March, more than 150 factories were hit by this massive spontaneous strike wave. Finally, on the 17th of March, after being set under pressure by the CGIL with the threat of a general strike, Prime Minister Conti decided to halt all economic activities that could not be carried out by remote working and that were not 'essential'. Workers would receive a benefit around 65% of their normal wage and redundancies were forbidden for the next 18 months.

I carried out in 2021 and 2022 a inquiry among trade union activists, with 35 interviews with mostly shop stewards or activists/organisers member of the CGIL more precisely several left currents), from different cities (Milan, Bergamo, Modena, Bologna, Napoli) and different sectors (health services, logistics, supermarkets, car assembly plants, mechanic manufacturing). A first draft report has been written out and contain sections about how the spontaneous strike wave broke out, the mood of the workers (from fear to anger and revolt), how they dealt as trade union activists with these spontaneous strikes and what kind of debates it provokes inside the union, the criticism towards trade union policies and government health policy, the debates among workers about vaccines and green pass, as well as the threat of fascism and capitalism in times of disaster (and war) and how this should be responded. Our paper will present the main findings of our inquiry and draw some political conclusions regarding strikes, social conflict and the renewal of antagonistic consciousness in the present period.

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palestine/israel and the critique of capitalism

This roundtable explores the ways in which the critique of capitalism, and Marxism in particular, can be brought into conversation with analyses of Palestine/Israel. How, for instance, are class and labour composition related to Israeli domination? How are the partial exclusion of Palestinians from the Israeli labour market and their replacement by migrant workers from abroad related to Israeli strategies of control? Or, How do global concerns, such as the climate crisis, the rise of authoritarianism and the crisis of global capitalism affect what happens in Palestine/Israel? We are also interested in interrogating how Marxist approaches to Palestine/Israel relate to other conceptual frameworks. For example, are Marxist approaches completely compatible with the analysis of Israel/Palestine through the prisms of settler colonialism and apartheid? Or, what do Marxist analyses add to understanding of Palestine/Israel in terms of gender or race? How has the political focus on resolving the "primary contradiction" of colonialism rendered class formation and struggles for social and economic emancipation subordinate, if not indefinitely postponed? Conversely, what can be the political pitfalls of putting class antagonism at the center of our analysis?

Matan Kaminer: Between Elimination and Exploitation: The Settler-Colonial Dialectic in Palestine/Israel

Abstract: The colonization of Palestine has always involved the exploitation of indigenous Palestinians as well as their expropriation, as critical analysts of Zionism recognized early on (Zureik 1976; Rosenfeld 1978; Tamari 1983; Abdo 1991). But more recently, an "eliminationist" paradigm which insists that these two forms of oppression define dichotomously opposed modes of colonization (Wolfe 2006) has become hegemonic in settler-colonial studies in

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general, and Palestine studies in particular. As several others have argued (Bhandar and Ziadah 2016; Englert 2020), this model is inadequate to the empirical reality of Palestine/Israel, where the exploitation of Palestinian and other non-Jewish labour has never stopped (Berda 2018; Samour 2020; Kaminer 2022). From a materialist point of view, moreover, there is no theoretical reason to accept a dichotomy between elimination and exploitation. Expropriation in the form of ongoing primitive accumulation is a precondition for exploitation, and insofar as the accumulation of capital produces surplus populations, exploitation itself is the motive force behind “elimination.” Once the analytical frame is redefined in this way, expropriation and exploitation can be understood as two dialectically linked moments of capitalist colonization, and the methodological nationalism of the eliminationist paradigm can be jettisoned in favor of an understanding of coloniality as a property of the capitalist world-system.

Abed Kanaaneh: Emile Touma's al-Harakat al-Ijtima'iyya fi al-Islam: Looking for “organic” Arab Socialism

Abstract: Emile Touma (1919 – 1985), a communist, a Palestinian citizen of Israel, historian, and Ideologue of the Communist Party of Israel. He is one of the first Arab historians who can be called the Socialist historians who tried to find the roots of the revolutionary process in the Arab countries and the Islamic countries by reinterpreting Islamic history and by using historical materialism to reconnect the socialist movements in the Arab world with the Islamic Tradition (*turath*).

The proposed paper critically examines the intellectual and political history of the Palestinians, the citizens of Israel, in a critical historical moment during the late 1970s. I seek to explore the role played by Emile Touma in the interaction between Islamic heritage and secular and progressive ideas and concepts, especially through his book: *al-Harakat al-Ijtima'iyya fi al-Islam* (The Social movements in Islam).

Through this paper, I will show Touma's intellectual and discursive processes of shaping the Palestinian political discourse. First, I will elicit how the principles of Islamic *turath*, Socialism, and Historical Materialism interacted through his ideas. Second, I will explore the modes through which Touma understood these ideas and practices and how he helped assimilate them into the local culture. Finally, I will answer why he assumed that these ideas/practices were critical to bringing about progress and modernity for the Palestinians inside Israel in particular, as well as for the entire Arab world.

Hebatalla Taha (O): Class, Capital, and Colonialism in Israel/Palestine

Abstract: This paper looks at the role of class analysis in the study of Palestinians of 1948 (also known as Palestinian citizens of Israel). Historically, communist political parties have been prominent among this community, offering them a platform to articulate anti-Zionist alternatives. Despite this history of communist thought, scholarly research focusing on Palestinians of 1948 has routinely overlooked the importance of class formation and class contestation to analyze their political struggle.

This research aims to fill this gap through the following three interventions. First, the paper excavates intellectual debates among Palestinians involved in the communist party, who have grappled with the relationship between national politics under colonial rule and class dynamics, which have often seemed to be in tension. Second, the paper demonstrates that a class-focused analysis is especially pertinent to understanding contemporary dynamics: in the past two decades, Israel has accelerated policies of economic integration and development that have shaped and redefined Palestinian class structures. This research accordingly challenges the perspective that Palestinians are absent from Israeli capitalism, rather suggesting that racialized exclusion has come hand-in-hand with policies ostensibly aimed at inclusion, which have created a new class of Palestinian capitalists. Finally, the paper serves as a reminder that the struggles against colonialism and capitalism are inherently intertwined, and therefore must be studied through their intersections.

Oded Nir: Why Art for Palestine/Israel?

The arts are often implicitly considered secondary, in thinking about the ongoing Israeli oppression of Palestinians. At most, art's contribution to political struggle is often seen simply in terms of echoing or illustrating preexisting political positions. In this paper, I challenge this view by drawing on different Marxist theorizations—by Mao, Jameson, Kathi Weeks, and others—of the necessity of superstructure's efficacy in moments of material transformation. I briefly read two recent Israeli novels, Asaf Gavron's *Hydromania*, and Nisan Shor's *Mandate*. I show how their speculative representation of Israeli society allows readers to perceive it in a way that is absent from existing social theory and public discourse. Drawing on recent writing by Kfir Lustig-Cohen, I argue that in both novels, the emergence of new subjectivities and social phenomena is represented as part of the development of global capitalism, and not as part of national history. In particular, the ongoing Israeli oppression of Palestinians become in these novels a way one lives through, and intervenes in, the contradictions of the capitalist system. This constitutes a radical shift in the way we tend to think about Israeli society and the oppression of Palestinians, a shift

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that must be first speculatively posited rather than empirically-inferred. Staging this shift, I argue, exemplifies art's necessary role in material transformation.

room: b103
marxism and philosophy i

Samuel Vitel: Reclaiming the Space of Reasons: For a Left Logocentrism

Abstract: One of the major evolutions in contemporary critical thought has been a move from diverse forms of the critique of "Reason" (as the sponsor of hypocritical universality, as the disguised guarantor of hierarchical social relations, etc.) to a defense of the norms and ambitions of rational thinking: as Ray Brassier has already claimed, this constitutes a welcome move towards a rehabilitated and renewed "logocentrism" (C. Cox J. Jaskey S. Malik, 2015). The drive of such an evolution is the experience of the multiple theoretical, political and cultural difficulties that an anti-rational stance has led to. After a brief description of this situation, I will examine the (neo)rationalist propositions of Ray Brassier in order to sketch out the form of rationality that is adequate to the perspective of social transformation. Contemporary philosophy is divided between two versions of rationalism, that Richard Rorty famously described as respectively right and left-wing (Brandom, 2004): a naturalist kind, that defines rationality by the sum of methods and results delivered by the natural sciences, and a historicist kind, that sees reason as realizing itself through the practice of giving and asking reasons within social institutions. Ray Brassier himself has migrated from an initial naturalism that he construed as a radical completion of the Enlightenment's critique of ideology or of humanity's self-delusions, namely in its understanding of itself as a non- or supernatural entity (Brassier, 2007), to a more anthropocentric view of reason as an unending historical process of revision of collective normative commitments. He refuses, however, as Rorty or Habermas do, to conflate reason with the liberal ideal of "conversation" ensuring such a process and rendered possible by the institutions of bourgeois modernity. Indeed, such an identification is politically synonymous with forfeiture to the status quo. Brassier thus ambitions to maintain his initial philosophical radicality within the framework of a historical view of reason and render such a view capable of offering an intransigent critique of capitalist society.

Such a project can be construed as an authentic left-wing reclaiming of rationality, with three main objectives that will be shown to equally be those of Marx's philosophical project:

- To recognize the historical and social situatedness of thought and praxis without lapsing into relativism nor embracing the status quo as the scene of accomplished rationality.
- To defend rational norms as necessary components of critical thought, against the diverse forms of anti-rationalism that have permeated contemporary discourse and politics.
- To understand the contradictions of capitalism as marks of its profound irrationality, expressed by the incompatibilities between its implicit norms and explicit practices, thus demanding its rational overhaul.

Iyad Raya: Language in the Production Paradigm

Abstract: Despite early interest in a materialist theory of language (in the works of Vygotsky and Voloshinov), systematic undertakings of linguistic objects in the Marxian tradition are virtually absent. One outlier is György Márkus in his **Language and Production: A Critique of the Paradigms**. However, besides some (uneven) intellectual exchanges with Habermas and a couple of tribute essays, the work seems to have gone into oblivion. Márkus doesn't provide a theory of language **per se**, he instead focuses on a set of **norms**, implicit and explicit, whose **material consequentiality** is understood in terms of their **embodiment** in produced objects. Márkus' wager is that a productivist take on norms at once recognizes the reality of norms and avoids their reification as real **in themselves**: norms are real to the extent that they are materialized in objects and patterned behaviors. In the background of Márkus' undertaking is a rejection of Habermas' separation between the technical and the social, the strategic and the communicative.

In this paper, I build on Márkus' undertaking by focusing on the system of signification that lies at the heart of our normative social existence: language. Relying on a strand of post-Wittgensteinian theorizing about language (namely in the works of Wilfrid Sellars and Robert Brandom), I seek to expand on Márkus' schematic elucidations and, consequently, revisit the dispute with Habermas. Sympathetic to Márkus, I seek to show that Márkus' resistance to the so-called language paradigm is qualified, that his approach better accounts for the **material consequentiality** of language while at once giving us insight into the central role of language (and norms generally) in producing and reproducing the state of reification. The most ambitious aim of this work is to gesture towards how a Lukács-Márkus productivist approach to language may bring some clarity to the highly unstable concept of real abstraction. The claim will be that a theory of real abstraction goes hand in hand with a materialist theory of linguistic practice.

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marxism, body, disability

Arianna Intronà: On Crip Compositionisms: Recognising Disability in Our Midst

Abstract: My paper will introduce the concept of ‘crip compositionisms’ to explore the ways in which recognising disability its rightful place within the working class and class struggles bears the potential to transform the understandings and practices of both. In so doing, it will bring into conversation insights from autonomist Marxism with those emerging from disability studies and politics.

Crip compositionisms pursue the insertion of a disability logic and presence within both what Mario Tronti terms ‘working-class auto-critique’ and anti-capitalist organising. They delineate how this logic and presence inflects the political recomposition of the working class and reconfigures both its strategic horizons and its tactics of struggle. I will explore these reconfigurations first by engaging the strategic visions which crip compositionisms produce by acknowledging the presence and agency of non-normative and ill body-minds within the working class; then, by exploring how crip compositionisms transform the tactics of ‘crip mutually recognitive movements’ and the compositional practices of ‘more-than-social movements’ by embedding within both the recognition of multiple access needs and the materialization that disability brings.

My analysis will unfold within the framework of a ‘crip autonomist Marxism’ that, as a form of ‘crip intersectional Marxism’, intervenes in the debate over the relationship between identity and class politics to make space for an autonomist understanding of the socioeconomic and political phenomenon of disability under capitalism and within class struggles. To introduce this framework, I will start by laying out the relationship between a crip autonomist Marxism and Marxist theories of intersectionality. I will continue by exploring different forms of crip compositionisms in order to trace how strategically and tactically crip compositionisms recognise a variety of subjects and processes of subjectification as operating within the political recomposition of the working class. I will specifically discuss how crip compositionisms operate a form of ‘dismodernist synthesis’ within working-class auto-critique, how they illuminate the possibilities for crip non-productivity to produce its own form of refusal of work, and how they operate as ‘more-than-social compositionisms’ to embed recognition of disability in the midst of class struggles.

Ultimately, my paper will suggest, crip compositionisms possess the power to make a crucial contribution to Marxist theory and anti-capitalist organising by making visible the articulations that obtain, and that must be actively established, between class and disability politics as fundamental for the furthering of class struggle and solidarity.

Pascal Braun: What About the Origins of the Family, Private Property and the State

Abstract: Since the early writings of the utopian socialists and, of course, the writings of Marx and Engels themselves, the question of the connection between women’s oppression and the economic context has been raised. The question has been discussed in the communist movement worldwide – and yet it seems unanswered today. How could it have come to this?

My thesis here is that – tragically – the analysis of the genesis of women’s oppression has largely abandoned a historical materialist approach. This is evident in two areas of feminism. On the one hand, queer feminism, which unfortunately often comes across as deeply idealistic in practice, and on the other hand, so-called radical feminism, which often simply adopts the fact of the binary gender system unquestioningly and builds on it a naturalising concept of woman that is deeply misleading. So what to do? I say: back to Engels! His writing “The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State”, to this day, is one of the few writings on the subject of gender oppression that offers a truly historical-materialist analysis.

It is evident that Engels’ writing is rather old and possibly in need of some renewal. And it is precisely this challenge that I would like to take up here. In doing so, I will focus on two specific areas of Engels’ work that I believe need renewal or supplementation. The first is the question of a dialectical materialist construction of gender. In today’s times, it is very well known that external influences and social being determine the question of gender much more than, for example, the so-called sexual part does. This was already very well researched in the early 2000s and Lisa Haller has written whole books about it. Engels himself, in my opinion, also gives good clues for an analysis here, but without naming it as that. The second aspect to be considered is that of the economic oppression – not particularly elaborated in Engels – of non-males. Here, too, a revision will be urgently needed. Here I will mainly focus on Silvia Federici’s aspects. However, and I think this is fatal nowadays, one should not criticise Engels’ approach in such a way that one completely dismisses it. Many Marxists – especially on the Western left – have done just that. Their critique should not be ignored, but I will deliver a critique of the critique, if I consider it appropriate. The aim of my work is to bring the debate on the oppression of non-men back onto a historical-materialist line. Without such a line, a Marxist left cannot fight for the abolition of all mechanisms of oppression in real terms. And that is exactly what we as a left should do again.

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marxism, state and public provision

Hugo Harari-Kermadec: Crisis and Excellence: How the French Higher Education System Is Polarized and Commodified

Abstract: The French higher education system, as many other in Europe, have been facing major transformations during the last decades. Across the XXth century, its main purpose was to provide higher education in all parts of France, in a context of massification of the student population. The rhetoric of excellence (Musselin, 2017) in training and research has gradually prevailed, embodied in the race for international university rankings (Harari-Kermadec, 2019).

These rankings are mobilized by the public authorities to present as external, global, a trend of competition and commercialization. The number of students in international migration is growing exponentially, and French institutions must do better on this export market. French institutions were not ranked as high as they should, and universities were stuck in a crisis of bachelor completion rate (Bodin & Orange, 2013). These arguments have been used as justification for the development of competitive grants for research and for university mergers, the so called “excellence” policies from 2010 onwards. They were also put forward by the first Macron government to multiply by 16 the registration fees – for foreign students only – with the “Welcome to France” plan in 2019. Nevertheless, French universities remain public institution funded on block grants and the vast majority of students pay no or low tuition fees (a few hundred euros). What dynamics result from this contradiction? We defend that it results in a differentiation dynamic (Rikap & Harari-Kermadec, 2020), with elements of polarization of student populations (between institutions but also within each university) and various stages of commodification of academic labour. We use student enrollment data on the last decade to study the reorganization of the French higher education, historically divided between free, public and open access universities and elite Grandes Ecoles, pioneer in the rise of tuition fees. The “excellence” policies distinguish a few institutions, results of mergers of universities and Grandes Ecoles, much better funded and designed to climb the international rankings. They keep the name “university” but are legally defined by a experimental status (reducing the traditional academic collegiality) and would be better described as very Grandes Ecoles. Their student population present indeed elitist social properties (social origin, parents income, high school achievements). This trend is even more pronounced if we focus on the graduate programs (Blanchard et al., 2020). On the other hand, the majority of universities, situated in medium-sized cities or suburbs (Chareyron et al, in press), assume most of the public service of providing higher education for an increasing number of students from lower classes, with reduced funding.

Commodification is then a differentiated process. On the top of the system, world elite research is directly connected with global corporations, and expensive graduate programs are offered on the global market. On the bottom, for profit institutions offer expensive higher education to medium and lower classes students, taking advantage of the poor learning conditions in the lower tier of public universities. Finally, some very elitist institutions, as Sciences Po and Ecole Polytechnique, have been able to preserve their privileged position as traditional Grandes Ecoles to be exempted from the mergers while rising sharply tuitions fees and foreign student enrollment.

Jasmine Chorley-Schulz: The Next Fight: Ex-Servicemen and Theorising Politicisation

Abstract: Open warfare shocks the consciousness, transforms people and ideas, but class war has a long life on either side of “peace”. Where do the fighters go after the war and which fight comes next?

In numerous countries after WWI, disabled and ex-servicemen organised in huge numbers, mobilising for a variety of political projects. Many people on the left, familiar with the post-WWII legacy of ex-servicemen in influencing the development of the welfare state, will be unfamiliar with the interwar politics of ex-servicemen: fascists organised ex-servicemen in Germany and Britain; communists organised around veterans’ issues in the U.S. South; liberal-nationalist organisations laid new foundations for national myth-making; communist African veterans of WWI considered volunteering to defend Ethiopia from Italian invasion; and experiences in racially hierarchical European armies radicalised a generation of future anti-colonial revolutionaries and trade unionists in the Caribbean. Many more veterans were politicised around non-martial identities – for example, as workers or in racial-civilizational identities – and many more were unengaged in politics altogether.

With an eye to the 21st century, this paper explores some of these socialistic/anti-colonial organisations through a Marxist methodology to explore broader issues of revolutionary subjectivity, political coalition-building, and the capitalist state. I argue that 1) these cases demonstrate the political potential of soldiers; 2) workers can develop political skills in military service that can be transformed for political ends contrary to the state that trained them; 3) this potential power is contingent and politically indeterminate. In urgent need of a new wave of Marxist research to tackle the questions of how war ruptures and forms new coalitions, allegiances, and solidarities, to understand how they influence ‘peacetime’ is as important as how they shape the political forces for the next war. By exploring

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the political lives of WWI ex-servicemen, I hope to show how the stakes could not be higher for contesting for the political subjectivities torn asunder by war.

Michael Bray: States of Excess: Passive Revolution, Dual Power and New Strategic Impasses

Abstract: This paper proposes and works through the hypothesis that 'prolonged dual power', as a strategic concept, and 'passive revolution' as a term of critical analysis, are today inverse descriptions, in different voices, of the same conjunctural conditions. These conditions are defined by a growing 'excess' of states' powers, not in the sense of a neutral 'strength' that might be mobilized towards progressive goals, but as an expression of the (uneven and differential) internalization by nation-states of responsibility for increasingly destructive processes of global capital accumulation. Such internalization reconfigures both the dynamics of national power blocs and the relational hierarchies of integral states, distancing economic and coercive state functions from popular influence, while enabling those apparatuses to 'prop' themselves, in moments of crisis, upon the material and ideological power of transnational networks of centralized capital. While the nation-state remains essential to organizing the conditions of exploitation, including reproducing labour power, global accumulation processes enter into increasing tension with state legitimacy at the national level, even as they grant 'excessive' capacities to coercively manage populations. These conditions determine the weakness of the left amidst increasingly politicized social antagonisms, which find their predominant expression in dual 'populist' forms – largescale but relatively ephemeral popular protests/occupations and electoral campaigns and parties seeking to reassert 'popular sovereignty'. Both forms confront fundamental impasses: the waning impact of popular mobilizations on state functions and the capacity of state apparatuses to stymie, defuse, and supplant would-be alternative models of governance. The oscillation between these dual forms (which, in another key, defines the contradictory, but more successful, mobilizations of right-wing nationalisms) has paralyzed leftist strategy, especially insofar as building autonomous powers and transforming state agencies continue to be viewed as distinct projects. Rather, the transformations in the integral state that 'prolong' any construction of dual power also render passive revolution a prolonged, ongoing condition, one containing popular struggles, yet unable to produce stable new terms of hegemony, and so an inextricable starting point for struggles under novel authoritarian conditions, not their retrospective failure. In closing, I suggest how rising social reproduction struggles might provide one material basis for new strategic forms, expanding (and partially obscuring) traditional forms of class struggle, while organizing resistance around the interconnections between autonomous communal organization (mutual aid, etc.) and interruptions/reorientations of states' continuing, yet deteriorating, role in the 'fundamental economy', oriented by the 'proletarian political economy' of life-making, rather than the accumulation of value.

room: g51a
gramsci between europe and latin america: translation and circulation of political ideas

Translated into different national contexts, Antonio Gramsci's thought became international. It was not just a simple technical operation of passing from one language to another, but a true cultural translation in which the text, read in different contexts, acquired new meanings. The intense circulation of researchers between Europe, the United States, Australia and Latin America contributed to consolidate this recent scenario. In particular, in the last two decades new researchers from outside Italy have assumed Gramsci's thought as an object of study and not just a source of inspiration. The result has enriched the international debate and contributed to bringing other topics to the discussion agenda. A new gap, however, may occur between studies carried out in Italy and in the rest of the world. In addition to the language barrier and the difficulty in finding certain sources, material obstacles can make access to new research instruments difficult. A very large separation between studies carried out in Europe and those carried out in the rest of the world, in particular Latin America, would have notable negative effects, including a re-provincialization of research in Italy. It is with the intention of enriching the dialogue between researchers from Europe and Latin America, famously recognized as having the largest group of Gramsci researchers outside Italy, that this panel joins European and Latin American specialists to think about the productive character and the vicissitudes of the circulation and translation of Gramscian thought in these two worlds. It is from this confrontation, from the act of putting North and South, Europe and Latin America face to face, that one can expect the development of critical thinking, inspired by the ideas of Antonio Gramsci and capable of dealing with this convulsed world that we live in. This confrontation is also a chain of translations in which ideas take on new meanings in new contexts. And translating, in this Gramscian sense, which presupposes a cultural shift – and not just a linguistic one – is also an act crossed by power relations that condition not only what is translated, but also how and for what it occurs.

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Alvaro Bianchi: José Guilherme Merquior and the Brazilian Marxists: Dialogues and Conflicts

Abstract: The article reconstructs the intellectual dialogue of the critic and diplomat José Guilherme Merquior with Brazilian Marxists, some of whom belong to a common intellectual generation and share the same structure of sociability. The exchange of ideas in *Presença* journal and the harsh controversies in the pages of the Brazilian press in the late 1980s and early 1990s are highlighted. It is argued that Merquior's dialogue with Marxism was mainly a critical conversation, not always explicit, with his friends Leandro Konder and Carlos Nelson Coutinho. With them, Merquior had a common intellectual ground, philosophically characterized by the criticism of irrationalism and dogmatism and, politically, by the defense of democracy.

Camila Góes: Gramsci and the Sources of Politics in Francisco de Oliveira's Thought

Abstract: This article intends to investigate the place occupied by Antonio Gramsci in the political thought of Francisco de Oliveira (1933-2019). It starts from the hypothesis that the translation of Gramsci carried out by Oliveira, especially his concept of hegemony, is closely related to the conception that the sociologist builds about politics and democracy, being capable of being captured in the inflection that marks the abandonment of the category that started in the late 1980s and that is completed in his analyzes of the Lula governments (2003-2010). In this sense, , this work asks itself: what would have been the transformations that made Oliveira pass to this radical critical opposition that subsumed at the same time his bet on politics and on the usefulness of Gramsci's thought to think about the contemporary world? What modifications did Oliveira introduce to the concept of hegemony from its translation?

Martín Cortés: Philology of Disconnection: Notes on Gramsci, Between Latin America and Italy

Abstract: This presentation is part of the fluid dialogue that has developed in recent decades between Latin American and Italian Gramsci scholars. In this framework, it aims to point out, however, some obstacles to the development of this dialogue, which emerge a characterization that is usually made about this relationship: the idea according to which the Italian approach to Gramsci is predominantly philological, while the Latin American is more well political. We do not characterize this idea as incorrect (rather, in a general sense, it is true), but rather as insufficient, for at least two reasons: first, because it does not reveal the substantive theoretical contributions of Latin American Gramscism, which range beyond Gramsci's application exercises to political analysis or political activism. We maintain that these contributions, which could be structured around the development of the Gramscian problem of the discontinuity between economy and politics and, with it, the centrality of the figure of the national-popular, not only have theoretical value for Latin America, but also could have productive effects on Italian (and European in general) theoretical-political discussions. Secondly, because the aforementioned characterization tends to block an incipient and important discussion: the relationship between philology and politics. At this point, we maintain, the experience of Latin American readings of Gramsci also contains elements to contribute, above all, in the direction of Gramsci's own suggestions regarding the production of a "living philology" (*filologia vivente*).

Peter D. Thomas

Abstract: To follow.

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room: rb01
marxist theory and critique i

Gareth Dale: Technology Fetishism in Marxist Theory

Abstract: This paper begins – to give context – with brief analysis of decarbonisation programmes. These are heavily geared to speculative technologies such as SAF and CCS. Although proven at small scale, their scaling up takes decades. The complexity of even one such programme is enormous; they cannot be compared to missions of ‘targeted specificity’ such as the moonshot. Yet this is the comparison that US climate envoy John Kerry drew last year. Technologies will spring forth, he promised, to resolve environmental crisis.

This mindset, technology fetishism, is powerfully influential yet has attracted relatively little social-scientific attention.

In the main part of the paper I develop an account of technology fetishism. I proceed via a critical reconstruction of theories of technology fetishism in Marxist thinkers such as Harvey, Hornborg, and Adorno/Horkheimer and Marcuse. It is in the work of Marx and Benjamin, I suggest, that a particularly potent theory of tech fetishism can be found.

Jason Dawsey: Technology, Labour, and Counterrevolution: Günther Anders and the Twentieth Century

Abstract: Although he is best known as a crucial philosophical voice against the threat of nuclear war, Günther Anders (1902-1992) developed a critique of modern technology in his two-volume *Die Antiquiertheit des Menschen* (The Obsolescence of Human Beings) that encompassed far more than the menace posed by nuclear and thermonuclear weapons. He was also a vital theorist of alienated labour, fully engaged with what Harry Braverman aptly characterized as the “degradation of work in the twentieth century.” Between 1955 and 1985 he wrote extensively about Fordism (though he did not use the term), Taylorism, and automation. Just how Anders engaged those phenomena will be the subject of this paper.

This presentation will have three parts. First, I begin with the seminal category of Anders’s critique of technology – the “Promethean gradient” or “Promethean gap” – that an enormous disequilibrium had emerged in the twentieth century between human beings’ capacities to produce and their abilities to grasp, feel, and take responsibility. This concept is the point of departure for Anders’s attempt to devise a philosophical anthropology of technological domination. I then shift to his often neglected commentaries on the assembly line and Taylorism, showing how he conceived of those analyses as overcoming a stunning lack of attention to the labour process in Marxism. Finally, I identify how this exegesis of labour was incorporated into his controversial writings on the Holocaust, where connections between technology and mass annihilation were thematized.

Ultimately, this paper proposes that Anders’s confrontation with these transformations of work formed part of a larger, post-Marxist interpretation of the twentieth century as an era of unrelenting counterrevolution, where the latter was grasped not in terms of the history of capitalism but as technological in essence.

Dominique Routhier: Historicizing “the Digital”: On Cybernetics and Late Capitalism

Abstract: According to theorists of Big Data and the digital, one significant effect of the rise of planetary computation and AI is that data extraction and processing have become “a structural condition of capital itself”. But what does this imply? If we define capital in Marx’s terms as the self-valorization of value, how can we understand the role of data and “the digital” more broadly in the global late capitalist economy? In this paper, I reconsider mid-century cybernetic thought and adjacent Marxist debates to develop a critique of contemporary media theories of digitality. I argue against transhistorical understandings of computation and propose instead a Marxist understanding of “the digital” as a historically specific form of capitalist time-management.

room: g3
internationalism

Roberto Della Santa: Rethinking Internationalism Today: The Case For a “Methodological Internationalism”

Abstract: The objective of this essay is to propose a reconstruction of a particular element of workers’ internationalism of the present and the past, that is to say, “methodological internationalism”, trying, in this sense, to contribute to the difficult challenges posed by internationalism today. It is a “Grundrisse” kind of document that highlights concepts that actually need more development and, in some ways, reads more like a working draft than a completely formed or polished essay. In this way, it is meant to act as a starting point for a more in-depth discussion of the issue. The paper addresses – and summarizes – several topics that I have previously covered in my doctoral thesis while other topics are connected to ongoing research to transpose it for its Portuguese new edition.

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As a working paper it should be taken with a particular reflexive spirit and some caution, more than, let us say, the usual amount among critical historical materialists.

The War in Ukraine is a violent, dramatic fire-alarm for chauvinism, inter-imperialist rivalry, and hegemonic ambitions can swiftly spiral into barbarism and threaten global warfare. In a world once again fractured, where one can observe the classic patterns of economical exploitation, political domination, intellectual manipulation, far-right mystification, crude militarism, and brutal cynicism on all sides of the new divisions it is not an easy endeavor to counterpose capitalist accumulation that jeopardizes the very social metabolism of the fragile nexus of human species and natural environment. For a fact we have to come to terms that not by far the present anti-war mobilizations and campaigns are at the level achieved by the 2003 anti-war global movements, let alone the spirit of the left-wing of the Second International, the Zimmerwald Conference, or the Third International beggings as an axial organization. What is to be done? Where to begin with?

Davide Gallo Lassere: Rethinking Internationalism Today

Abstract: The gravity of the ecological catastrophe and the tragic geopolitical situation have highlighted the necessity to rethink internationalism today. However, in order to correctly frame this urgent issue, it seems important to take a broader spatio-temporal perspective. Since its origins, in fact, the capitalist system has developed on a global scale through the production of differences. Indeed, from the transition on, historical capitalism has put to work a plurality of labour figures and profited from the competition of heterogeneous territories, resulting in the generation of social and geographical inequalities. Politically too, in its reproduction, the capitalist system has been able to stabilise itself through the separation of subjects based on their class, gender, race, nation, and religion. In this respect, crisis situations only radicalise these tendencies, causing differentiated negative effects. The aim of the paper is to analyse the cycles of struggle that took place “within and against” the 2008 crisis in the light of the multiple temporalities that constitute contemporary global capitalism. How to read these dynamics from the perspective of the renewal of internationalism? What challenges does the complexity of the space-time coordinates of global capitalism pose to the processes of political organisation? From this analytical framework, what does it mean to materially implement solidarity processes, build alliances, and coordinate beyond one’s different living and working conditions and beyond nation-state borders?

Josep Maria Antentas: Internationalism(s): Strong and Weak. Scalar Dialectics, Prefiguration and Translation

Abstract: The increasingly chaotic and unstable crisis of neoliberal globalization, puts the question of internationalism back on the table.

The cycle opened after 2011 has been complex in terms of its internationalist drive. A transnational wave of protest was born, based on a series of inter-influenced national movements. The magnitude of the social outbursts and the crisis of legitimacy of domestic political systems “nationalized” the logic of the protests leading to a defensive unsynchronized pace of resistance. Also, the gap between the big challenges of domestic political situations and the organizational weakness of many social organizations absorbed almost all energies in everyday domestic activity.

Despite all these outlined limits, in the long decade since 2011 there has been a paradoxical diffuse and ambient internationalism: there has been an important sense of mutual identification between struggles and of shared common destiny. But, at the same time, there has been a weak capacity for joint international action (with notable exceptions: large global struggles limited in time such as Fridays for Future in 2019; rank and file labour initiatives in large multinationals and platforms...).

Internationalism can be understood as a strategic and political horizon, acting both as a reality and as a goal. A weak and a strong conception of internationalism can be distinguished. The former conceives internationalism in terms of “inter-nationalism” or “(inter)nationalism”, equates it with solidarity between national struggles, and emphasizes the “national” dimension of political struggle. The strong conception of internationalism attempts to articulate a dialectical relationship between different spatial scales (local-national-international). Thus understood, internationalist practice implies not only solidarity between/with national struggles, but also the articulation of joint cross-border initiatives and requires an organizational dimension. The scalar levels should not be analyzed as opposing terrains but as complementary frameworks for action. The concept of the sliding scale of spaces, defined by Daniel Bensaïd (2008), is useful for capturing this scalar complexity.

I argue for the need for a strong conception of internationalism to articulate a strategy of solidarity in an increasingly chaotic global disorder. But some clarifications must be made with respect to this strong conception of internationalism. First, it is necessary to distinguish it from an abstract deterritorialized and “post-national” project, for which the nation-state and states in general have been superseded by the rise of global capitalism. Second, the dialectical conception between the different spatial scales does not presuppose denying the relevance of

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the national-state arena or justifying inaction at the national-state level to previously articulate an (improbable) international coordination or to “wait” for better international conjunctures (Lordon (2015) pertinently emphasized this issue with regard to the Greek crisis, albeit from a weak internationalism viewpoint). In other words, the dialectical articulation of spatial scales is combined with the classical logic of the “weak link”. Third, internationalism must not be conceptually opposed to the national question and self-determination, as shown by the history of the IWMA itself and the role played by the Polish or Irish causes in its activities, or the role of anti-colonialism and anti-imperialism (from Baku to the Tricontinental) in the history of the twentieth century. Fourth, internationalism must also be projected inward, as a lever to think about the working class and subalterns in an inclusive sense and to think about otherness and identity in non-exclusionary terms (there are many theoretical paths to do so, a suggestive one being that of imaginary Marranism a la Bensaïd (2001) or Derrida (1993)).

Finally, two further questions complement the discussion on “strong internationalism”: first, internationalism in terms of discussing and promoting experiences and strategies can also be thought through the prisms of “translation”. This brings us in one sense to Gramsci’s reflections (Q11&46) on the translatability of the language of the Russian revolution to the West, and in another to the need for dialogue and mutual understanding between oppressed and dispossessed struggles and groups (Sousa Santos 2000). Second, it is possible to make a prefigurative reading, that is, a reading from the perspective of prefigurative politics (Raekstad and Saio Gradin, 2020; Swain, 2019), of internationalism. If prefigurative politics seeks to act today as regards the world that we want for tomorrow, there is no doubt that the practice of internationalism, while surmounting all the material difficulties that undermine its daily practice, has a prefigurative logic.

room: rg01
culture stream: marxism and form in the praxis of art criticism

One could argue that art has never been so tied to current issues – despite the shrinking of the political horizon brought by neoliberalism. But what about form and realism? Are they still issues to be considered when assessing works of art? How can the global political economy, social struggles, and modern social disaggregation affect the aesthetical form? How does the praxis of form face and respond to those crises far beyond its strict material limits? Can distinct historical temporalities, often opposed to each other, be dialectically condensed through artistic practices? Is it possible to articulate fragments of art forms through montage into a totalising world mirror? This panel assembles different Marxist perspectives to address these questions, drawing from the concepts of form, technique, history, and social content in Marx’s writings and subsequent thinkers (Lukács, Adorno, Jameson, and Schwarz) – including some of Trotsky’s notes on the cultural aspects of the UCDL dialectics.

We will resort to the following insights: the reading of dialectics as a theoretical expression of a historical movement (Lukács/ Adorno); the recasting of forms first originated in advanced countries, then seized and modified in late modernised countries, resulting in art forms and theoretical considerations of unexpected clarity and force (Trotsky); the casting of “objective form” (Schwarz), out of aesthetical condensation of social rhythms, provide art forms with a social core and historical and materialistic intelligibility. Accordingly, Lukács’ essay on Dostoevsky (1943) points out: “Suddenly, there appeared from an underdeveloped country, where the troubles and conflicts of contemporary civilisation could not yet have been fully unfolded, works that stated ... all the problems of human culture at its highest point ... and presented a totality hitherto never achieved ...” All these insights correspond to the historical efforts of Marxist thinkers who faced the challenge of visiting labyrinths wherever the “heart of darkness” reproduces itself as the world became increasingly unified and conflict-riven under the operations of a global capitalism.

The idea, in sum, is to scrutinise and compare strategies and experiments, ranging from literature to visual arts, that face the challenge of translating irrational and lethal monsters into clear and powerful critical images and substantiate, in the face of these, realistic forces of resistance.

Alex Potts: Marxism and Form in States of Emergency. Lukács Then and Now?

Some of the most fertile Marxist thinking about art and literary form was produced by Central European Communists under the dire circumstances they endured in exile in the mid-and later 1930s – in the midst of or having to negotiate the consequences of Stalinist purges and cultural oppression, as well as intensifying threats of Fascist violence and war. There is no simple answer as to how and why this was the case. The present paper raises such questions partially with a view to throwing light on the present – very different – conjuncture and the legacy for it of the political imperatives driving these earlier thinkers’ intensive engagement with a Marxist aesthetic. Lukács has been singled out because he wrote both from centre of Communist debate about socialist realism and also increasingly

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from the periphery of mainstream Western European modernism and vanguardism as it assumed its classic forms in the interwar and early postwar years. Writing in Stalin's Russia and then under Rakosi's rigid Stalinism in Hungary, Lukács's critical analysis of literary realism is caught up in the political convulsions the 'post-Revolutionary' Soviet world was undergoing at the time. The stand he took was not as an apologist of official socialist realism, as is evident from his negative diagnosis of the general level of new Soviet literary production. What is more, the substance of his critique of modernist experimentation in the literature of the capitalist West has little to do with conventional oppositions between realist representation and supposed distortions of abstract form. Rather it concerns questions of agency and praxis and process – of literary formations whose stories had the capacity to articulate the struggles of a human subject with its objective world, contending with and to some degree capable of resisting the forces and processes constituting its destiny.

Bruna Della Torre: Marx, Lukács, and Adorno: Form and Immanent Criticism in Literature

The concept of form is perhaps one of the most fetishized concepts in critical theory. Anyone who comes across Theodor W. Adorno's work for the first time ends up facing the question: how can one apprehend the form of a novel or a work of art? In what element is the form "hidden" in a novel? In the narrator's position? In the plot? In character building? In language? Adorno referred to form as "sedimented social content." But this definition is sometimes also confusing. Does the truth content of works of art ultimately reside in the form of a work of art or its thematic content? This presentation aims to discuss Adorno's concept of form in dialogue with Karl Marx's and Georg Lukács' work. As Susan Buck-Morss stresses, when Adorno read History and Class Consciousness for the first time, he discovered in Lukács' proposal of reading dialectics as a theoretical expression of a social movement, a path for aesthetic criticism. One way of thinking about form is precisely the inseparability of technique and "social" content. That is why Adorno was able to recognize in the narrator of modernist novels and in his hostile attitude towards representation (produced by different aesthetic resources in each of them) a more profound realism, capable of offering an image of the alienation of capitalist society. Form, in that sense, is not limited to the study of language or aesthetic technique, although it necessarily involves these elements. Form has to do with how these techniques and aesthetic resources themselves are historical and how they relate to the reality in which they emerged and in dialogue with the previous periods of art itself.

Luiz Renato Martins: Objective Form, Territory of Critical Struggle

Amidst debates in the sixties regarding late modernisation in peripheral countries, Roberto Schwarz came to define objective form (1991) as a construct that provides the rhythmic and invisible links between the social-historical domain and the aesthetic. It consists, said Schwarz, of a form comprising a "practical and historical substance" acting also as the "social core of the art form" (1997). By connecting the preexistent social experience to the aesthetically built form, the objective form works as a social contract legitimating the aesthetic form. Socially and historically ordered by a collective and impersonal subject, such construct distinguishes itself from postmodern eclecticism disconnected from the historical process. The objective form offers critical intelligibility before the historical-social matter, but only if taken as a form that is intrinsic to the aesthetic sphere. Thus, the problem of the aesthetic condensation of the social rhythms is therefore concretely and ceaselessly reoccurring – in production and reception – whenever necessary to retrace the reciprocal links between social-historical and artistic forms. Accordingly, the exercise of aesthetic intuition and the critical act in the infighting with the art materials are required to synthesise the structures of the social-historical matter – otherwise inapprehensible in the intrinsic connections to the perception and reflexion about the historical objectivity and dynamics. There are things that only in art emerge and make it an indispensable tool for dialectical historical reflexion. In this sense, this paper will revisit some critical responses that Brazilian art (Antonio Dias, Amilcar de Castro, Mendes da Rocha) gave to the civil-military coup of 1964 and to the late accelerated economic modernisation that ensued. And finally, it will also revisit the contemporary installation Big Wheel (2019, Carmela Gross) – a negative architectural construct that totalised Brazil's tragic moment with rare clarity and epic poignancy.

room: bglt
reassessing corbynism: socialism in lieu of a subject

In this panel, three Marxist activists who were involved through varying positionalities with Corbynism will seek to tease out and theorise some of the tensions which inhibited the project. Reckoning with its commitment to capture the British nation-state through electoral victory and class compromise, we will diagnose to what extent it could have overcome its own predetermined limits, circumscribed as they were by a muddled conception of what was

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possible. By homing in on Corbynism's logics of political economy, the state and socialist strategy, we will reckon with the lessons it provides for future efforts at socialist advance.

Mary Robertson: Class, State, Nation: The Contradictions of Labour's Economic Programme 2015-19

The Labour Party under the leadership of Jeremy Corbyn was notable for coming close to power in a country at the heart of the imperialist core while developing an economic programme that both rhetorically and substantively sought to break with neoliberal economics. This paper critically appraises that programme from a Marxist perspective. It argues that the programme had many strengths, among them structural change, redistribution of ownership and economic democracy, but that there are three contradictions at its core. These concern the conceptualisation of class, state and nation respectively. First, the programme never settles on a strategy with respect to its relationship with capital, variously adopting positions of appeasement or opposition to the capitalist class as a whole, or alliance with fractions of capital. Second, an instrumentalist theory of the state was inherent in the programme, but this left it without a strategy for overcoming the structural barriers facing its most transformative elements. Third, the programme failed to confront the implications of Britain's role in the global economy, with internationalist elements sitting uncomfortably in a policy agenda that never addressed its own implications for countries in the periphery.

Jonas Marvin: Corbynism's Lessons for the Socialist Art of Government

In 1979, Michel Foucault asked, "What governmentality is possible as a strictly, intrinsically, and autonomously socialist governmentality?" This dilemma, which has plagued socialist politics since its inception, remains unanswered. One of the most recent attempts to develop an answer came from an unexpected source – the British Labour Party. Over four years, under the helm of socialist MPs Jeremy Corbyn and John McDonnell, the Labour Left sought to devise schemes for a kind of socialist governance in the face of the fury of capital, the press and their own Parliamentarians. This effort to construct the conditions of proletarian possibility from above – through a nexus of nationalisation, investment, legislation and 'decommodification' – disintegrated before it could ever be realised. But what lessons did this four-year experiment teach those of us invested in the terms of socialist transition? For many, Corbynism didn't exceed the limits of left social democracy. For others, it shone a light on a potential socialist art of government. This paper argues that Corbynism was, in the end, a Gramscian 'laboratory of hope', revealing to future socialists a complicated combination of lessons regarding the capitalist state, proletarian agency, Labourism, the limits of policy, and the necessity of the 'historic bloc' in the quest for socialism.

Jonny Jones: Corbynism versus the Integral State

Corbynism was an attempt to capture and harness the state and utilise it as a means of achieving substantial redistribution of wealth and power in Britain. While it came as a surprise to few that such an effort met resistance, for many supporters the scale and ferocity of the anti-Corbyn surge was not only unexpected but overwhelming, serving at various points to gravely disorganise and disarticulate sections of Corbyn's base and drive in wedges that would ultimately fatally undermine the project. Seemingly disparate elements of civil society appeared to act in tandem, leading to a variety of forms of conspiratorial thinking which partially captured elements of this opposition but which failed to grasp the decentralised yet concerted nature of the assault on Corbynism.

In this paper, the Gramscian theory of "the integral state", and its development by Stephen Maher (2022), emphasising the diffuse quality of state power, and Elizabeth Humphrys (2019), examining the capacity of political society to integrate and re-integrate labour movement actors, is employed as a conceptual tool to analyse both the variegated opposition to Corbynism and the movement's gradual fragmentation and defeat. In doing so, the paper revisits the thorny problem of the limits to the role of state capture in any project of socialist transformation.

room: llt (dlt)
workers' inquiry stream: workers' inquiry and the state

Arianna Intronà: On Claimants' Inquiry As a Form of Workers' Inquiry

The Covid-19 pandemic and its aftermath, as well as the cost of living crisis, have brought to the fore the need for organising around social welfare as a central dimension of, rather than external to, class struggle. Reflecting on my own involvement with claimants' organising, this paper will discuss the ways in which forms of inquiry practiced within claimants' solidarity initiatives share many of the tactics, aims and politics associated with the method of workers' inquiry, while presenting their own specificities. If the aim of workers' inquiry is 'to increase knowledge of workers' situations in order to advance workers' power' (McAllister 2022), claimants' inquiry similarly seeks to map

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out the technologies through which the practice of claiming social welfare is managed by the state, and does so in order to develop collective methods of making these technologies and the policies they deliver unworkable.

The first part of my paper will be empirical and will lay out the ways in which claimants' organising shares the aim and some of the methods of workers' inquiry. I will start by discussing the methods of claimants' inquiry practiced within claimants' solidarity networks active within the contemporary UK context to lay out the ways in which they connect with the traditional method of workers' inquiry. I will focus on how information about evolving practices of claimant management and harassment within the jobcentre is gathered through casework and jobcentre stalls, on the ways in which the introduction of Universal Credit has changed the policies governing the eligibility to social welfare and, in consequence, the social composition of claimants, and on how the introduction of digital welfare has modified the possible forms that solidarity action can take.

The second part of my paper will conceptualise the form of inquiry practiced within claimants' organising in relation to its position within the wider constellation of working-class struggles and the method of workers' inquiry. First, I will argue that claimants' organising has been always been based on a form of inquiry that deserves a central place within the class composition tradition because of its methods as well as its aim to understand forms of state-managed social reproduction from the perspective of claimants. Secondly, I will discuss how the possibility for low-earning workers to claim Universal Credit undoes the boundary between claimant and worker and necessitates the use of the term 'claimants' inquiry' in place of 'unemployed workers' inquiry', although the latter would have been more in keeping with the history of unemployed workers' organising. I will also comment on why the term 'claimants' inquiry' is preferable to '(un-)employed workers' inquiry' from a Marxist autonomist perspective. I will conclude by reflecting on how connecting claimants' inquiry to workers' inquiry works in the spirit of social unionism as what brings about the 'interweaving of labour struggles and social movements' (Hardt and Negri 2017: 148).

Imogen Woods: The Point of Production in the Financialised Welfare State: A Workers Inquiry Into Social Care

Abstract: This paper is a workers' inquiry from above into the disability care sector in the UK from a union organiser who's worked in the sector for the past four years. The transformation of the welfare state since the structural crisis of the seventies has revealed the socially reproductive contradictions of capitalism and has led to a privatised, commodified and finally financialised social care sector (Fraser, 2017) that requires new strategic visions for organizing. It's a difficult to organise, fragmented and low paid sector mostly constituted of low paid women caring for the surplus population of disabled persons. This paper argues that the majority of capital accumulation in the sector occurs via financialisation of real estate. Secondly that surplus value is extracted via the transformation of the labour process that has increased both relative and absolute surplus value. Finally, it positions the relationship between workers and people that receive care as an essential relationship to nurture in struggle and the demand for quality care as mandatory for organising success. It proposes via the experience of organising for living wage agreements with councils in the North West that a community organising strategy is the key to successful strategic intervention due to the affective and reproductive nature of the work.

Gizem Sema (O): Civil Society Workers in Challenging Times: The Case of Turkey

Abstract: I would like to share my experience as a person working in NGOs for about five years. This inquiry is about civil society institutions and the people working there who resist various oppressive measures, including unjust imprisonment and precarious working conditions. My goal is to explain how the civil society workers experience the post-2015 period and what kind of defense mechanism they create against intensified oppression since Turkey is still experiencing an authoritarian period with the characteristics of a state of emergency regime. According to the 2020-2021 Press Freedom report by the Journalists' Union of Turkey, 44 journalists were deprived of their freedom in various prisons in Turkey as of 2 April 2021. The report also indicated that at least 57 journalists were taken into custody, while 116 investigations were launched into 101 journalists between April 2020 and April 2021. This experience is valuable because it describes the shrinking space that is taking place and enables us to respond to increasing violations and repressions under the threat of prosecution and precarity. This inquiry does not aim to present a comprehensive landscape of civil society in Turkey and show the impact of the shrinking over every single section, either. However, it will cover the employee of the civil society organizations within the category of defenders, corresponding to 3,3% of the section of the field of civil society institutions. In other words, I will concentrate on the workers in human rights, gender, and Kurdish issues. Furthermore, I will dwell on the experience of employees of the institutions closed in the most recent period and the academics for peace.

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Kira Brenner: The State as the (De)Composer of the Working Class: Autonomist Theory and Unemployed Graduates in Tunisia

Abstract: Since the Arab Spring, graduate unemployment in Tunisia has remained around 30%, with significantly higher rates for female graduates (INS, 2020). At the same time, real wages for less-educated Tunisians have fallen (Ben Chaâben, 2017; Salha, 2013). The low wages for university graduates and for other workers makes Tunisia an attractive destination for foreign investment, and is heavily promoted by Tunisia's Foreign Investment Promotion Agency. This paper argues that the Tunisian state has actively created the category of 'unemployed university graduate' as a way of disciplining the working class and holding down wages not only for the oversupply of university graduates, but also for those at the lower end of the wage scale. By adopting a novel interpretation of the Marxist theory of the state, combined with an autonomous Marxist framework, this paper also argues that the state in its role of collective capitalist can, and does, shape the working class to fit the needs of capital, including foreign capital.

room: r201
primitive accumulation and colonialism

Wayne Wapeemukwa: Decolonizing Primitive Accumulation

Abstract: "For Indigenous nations to live, capitalism must die" (173). With this, Dene philosopher Glen Coulthard put anti-capitalism at the top of decolonization. Yet the view that decolonizing struggles must also be struggles against capitalism is rather new and, in light of the history of Indigenous politics, quite controversial. This is because of the assumption that Marx viewed colonialism as external to capitalism; a view which my paper refutes. To show the immanence of settler-colonialism and capitalism I take the Indigenous Peoples of the northwest known as the Métis as my object of analysis since they were literally born alongside the formation of capitalism. My study clarifies the underlying relation between settler-colonialism and capitalism. My thesis is that only by reconstructing primitive accumulation as a theory of territorial-dispossession rather than historical-evolution can we understand how Marx's view of colonialism is not that it is 'necessary' for accumulation but merely 'aleatory.'

Paul Guernsey: The Historical Ontologies of Primitive Accumulation in Settler Colonial Contexts: Ancestral Enclosures and Spatial Conceptions of History

Abstract: The question of land must be returned to again and again if coalitions and interpersonal camaraderie are to be successful in an era of heightened political chaos that begets intransigent and often incommensurable theory and praxis. This essay suggests that enclosures of Indigenous lands, or primitive accumulations in the Marxist tradition, should also be interpreted as enclosures of Indigenous time, history, and kin, or what might generally be called ancestral enclosures. This designation carries ontological weight in settler colonial contexts where the theft of land has historically specific features and strategically deploys structures of power that are qualitatively distinct. Amongst authors focusing on colonial contexts, Coulthard, Wolfe, Moreton-Robinson, Tuck and Yang, Nichols, and others have emphasized the temporal fluidity of primitive accumulation, noting that colonialism is a structure not a historical event. It is an ongoing social system of domination that continually reproduces itself as settler futurity. This conclusion synchronizes with recent Marxist scholarship on primitive accumulation from Harvey (accumulation by dispossession), De Angelis (the continuity of primitive accumulation), and others. My argument emphasizes that the temporal character of primitive accumulation must be paired with an analysis of heterogeneous material ontologies, attending not only to the "when" but also the "what" of primitive accumulation. The concept of ancestral enclosures is therefore crucial in settler colonial contexts where enclosure appropriates not only the means of production, but also a living, breathing ancestor.

Sai Englert: Striking Settlers: Class Struggle and Dispossession in the Settler Colonial World

Abstract: This paper will discuss the relationship between settler colonialism, capitalism, and class struggle. In particular, it will reflect on the way in which class conflict within the settler population takes on a specific shape because of its dual nature: fought over both the distribution of surplus value as well as the colonial loot. As such, 'settler class struggle', this paper claims, leads to a form of 'settler quietism' – a support by settler workers for the settler state – thereby undermining class-based alliances between settler and Indigenous workers. In addition, 'settler class struggle' also shapes the specific structures of the settler colonial project. The paper will illustrate its claims through examples from Palestine and South Africa.

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marxism and philosophy ii

Alexander Gorman: From the Standpoint of Reproduction: Althusser Between Machiavelli and Spinoza

Abstract: This paper seeks to present Althusser's account of the reproduction of the relations of production in two posthumously published manuscripts: his 1970 manuscript *On Reproduction* and *Que Faire?*, an intervention drafted in 1978 containing Althusser's reflections on Gramsci and Machiavelli in the period of the 'crisis of Marxism'. Building upon Althusser's allusions to the Spinozist concept of *conatus*, I revisit the ways that Althusser's conceptions of structure, superstructure, and the state apparatuses provide us with the outlines of a concept of *duration* that is at work in Marx's account of the capitalist mode of production as a structure that paradoxically survives and secures the conditions of its reproduction by way of continually and rapidly 'revolutionizing' the productive forces and reconfigures the relations of production. Since the publication of the *Communist Manifesto*, Marxists have understood that the capitalist mode of production tends towards the development of increasingly acute global crises. Nevertheless, the crises of capitalism have not yielded the transition to a different kind of society. Nor have they hailed into being the revolutionary subject that would serve as its gravediggers. Instead, we are witnesses to the disconcerting capacity of capital to discover new *forms* through which to secure its expanded reproduction, new forms in which the bourgeoisie secures its domination and maintains relations of exploitation, even succeeding at transforming the workers' class struggle into a means of deepening capitalist social relations. Althusser's account of reproduction provides us with categories and concepts that help us to understand how the increasingly interwoven matrix of crises that the capitalist mode of production generates are a function of its capacity for self-renewal and persistence. Nevertheless, insofar as Althusser develops conceptual resources for grasping the concrete effectivity of the structure upon its elements, his work opens up spaces in which it becomes possible to develop alternative strategies of resistance and the possibility of mass action to shift the balance of forces in a way that conjuncturally favors mass initiative. Teasing out the parallels between the conception of the conjuncture Althusser finds in Lenin, the Machiavellian concept of the *occasione,* and in light of his frequent references to the *structure of a conjuncture* and the outlines of an 'aleatory materialism' developed in his late writings, I look for resources in Althusser that would help to orient ourselves resolutely amidst the dizzying accumulation of crises that defines our present.

Peter Hallward: General Will and Universal Class: Why We Need Both Rousseau and Marx

Abstract: A 'complete' revolutionary theory is a contradiction in terms. Marx's account of proletarianisation, and of the emergence of the proletariat as a tendentially universal class liberated from the particularisms of occupation, nation, ethnicity, and so on, is limited by its reliance on historical teleology. Marx is too quick to assume that the basic question 'what do workers want?' can be answered with an explanation of 'what the proletariat is, and what, consequent on that being, it will be compelled to do' (*The Holy Family*). Rousseau's account of how a group of people can make common cause by generalising a collective will and by participating in collective action, by contrast, foregrounds moral motivations and downplays material interests and constraints. Both the material and the moral dimensions are essential to any account of political will, and recurring attempts to insulate a strictly 'scientific socialism' from neo-Jacobin 'moralism' create more problems than they solve; Julius Martov's under-appreciated contribution to revolutionary theory is a suggestive case in point.

Thomas Carmichael: Transformed Into Necessity: Le Décalage, the Encounter, and Althusser's Rousseau

Abstract: "Although there are no references to Epicurus or Machiavelli in Rousseau's second Discourse or the '[Discourse on] the Origin of Languages', it is to the author of these works that we owe another revival of the 'materialism of the encounter'." – Louis Althusser 1982

In an unpublished letter to Franca Madonia that dates from 1972 or 73, Louis Althusser writes of turning over in his head "some Epicurean ideas to understand some other Machiavellian ideas" [Translation Mine], and this genealogical path from Epicurus through Machiavelli has been the main avenue for tracing the conceptual development of aleatory materialism in Althusser's late work. But as the relatively recently published text, *Lessons on Rousseau*, Althusser's 1972 course on Rousseau's second Discourse, makes plain, both the problematics and the rhetoric of aleatory materialism are already fully present in his explication of Rousseau, a discussion that anticipates by a decade his brief consideration of Rousseau in "The Underground Current of the Materialism of the Encounter," the principal text of Althusser's late position. The importance of Rousseau in the initiation of his late position is all the more striking when we consider that what we have come to recognize as the language of aleatory materialism first appears in Althusser's work in unpublished notes and short posthumously published texts that date from 1966, in his text on the notion of genesis, for example, or his notes on the conjuncture, or on Pierre Macherey's *For a Theory of*

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Literary Production, but it also appears in the contemporaneous notes taken from his 1965-66 course on Rousseau and his Predecessors, where we find the notion of the transformation of contingency into necessity and a meditation on the logic of the encounter and non-encounter in Rousseau. In addition, Althusser's published work on Rousseau in this period, "On the Social Contract (The Discrepancies)" from 1967, turns upon the notion of le décalage/the discrepancy, a notion central to the arguments he first sets out in Reading Capital, but one which can also be seen to bridge the efforts to think the logic of the conjuncture in For Marx and Reading Capital and in his late aleatory materialism. Althusser's observes in his 1975 text "Is it Simply to be a Marxist in Philosophy" that at the beginning of his academic career he proposed "a grand thèse (as it used to be called) on politics and philosophy in the eighteenth century in France with a petite thèse on Jean-Jacques Rousseau's Second Discourse." Althusser then remarks, "And I never really abandoned this project. . .". My paper argues that far from abandoning that project, Althusser used his repeated considerations of Rousseau to chart a distinct conceptual path through the "great law of unevenness" that unfolds in his late efforts to think the logic of the encounter, necessity, collectivity, and the process that has no subject.

room: b104
social reproduction

Rebecca Carson: The Reproduction of Capital / The Reproduction of Human Life and Nature: Capital's Central Persisting Crisis Tendency

Abstract: Attention to the contradiction between capitalist and non-capitalist forms and processes – internal to the reproduction process – reveals an under examined contradiction underpinning Marx's theories of exploitation and alienation: there are two conflictual categories of life operating in capital's reproduction, one capitalist and the other non-capitalist. One concept is used to explain the abstract life process of capital, the other the concrete life of humans and nature. To make this claim, the paper examines Marx's inheritance, considering his retrieval of Hegel's category of life, anthropological presuppositions, and concepts of life derived from the natural sciences, burgeoning at the time of Capital's writing.

Reworking these legacies, this paper deploys an interpretation of Marx that reconstructs the tension between capitalist and non-capitalist forms, where capital's abstract forms require non-capitalist forms as means of reproduction that I term 'immanent externalities' (making this a dialectically internal contradiction of capital). Immanent externalities are internal to capital, however, are logically and concretely understood to retain an element in which they reproduce for their own sake. This represents an ontological distinction within the logical process of reproduction that permits us to analyse the extent to which the concrete remains independent of capital. Consequently, it is then possible to articulate how this independence can be retained and developed for purposes other than the reproduction of capital's abstract forms.

The tension between 'capital's life process' on the one hand and human life and nature on the other begets a contradiction between the possibilities for their respective reproductions. Human life and nature engender natural limits to capital's abstract forms; capitalism curtails the reproduction of natural life. The incompatibility between the life of capital and human life and nature is presupposed by recent theories of ecosocialism as well as social reproduction (which intersect gender and race-based domination with the logic of capital's abstractions). Consequently, these accounts have made the contradiction between capital's self-reproduction and the possibility of the reproduction of human life and nature glaringly apparent. Accordingly, the paper seeks to locate ways in which concrete life can be reproduced in independence from capital's abstractions.

Pedro M Rey-Araujo: Temporal Scales of Capitalist Social Reproduction

Abstract: This communication explores the temporalities of capitalist social reproduction understood in its widest sense, that is, as the everyday reproduction of capitalist dynamics together with their non-capitalist conditions of existence. It is argued that the indisputable hegemony that linear/abstract time currently enjoys due to its affinity with capitalist valorisation processes has contributed to obliterate the extent to which the ongoing reproduction of any social order takes place in an inherently cyclical manner.

The affinity existing between capitalist valorisation processes and linear/abstract time has widely been recognised, in relation to both the role it plays as a mechanism for synchronization and coordination of various activities, on the one hand, and its indispensability as a mechanism for quantifying the expenditure of abstract labour time, on the other. The diagnosis of several contemporary maladies linked to the capitalist such as generalized feelings of time scarcity, or the resilience of asymmetric sexual divisions of domestic labour, all adopt the framework of linear time as their, often, unquestioned framework.

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Nonetheless, the hegemony of abstract time in capitalist societies, ultimately a mechanism for social coordination and quantification, obliterates how social reproduction takes place de facto, namely, through the ongoing reproduction through/of hierarchically nested cyclical periodicities. Capitalist penetration and reconfiguration of the social reproduction processes coexist with several other processes with their own respective temporalities, thus resulting in a complex interplay between, on the one hand, capitalist drives to impose a linear, empty and abstract temporality and, on the other hand, myriad other rhythms (cultural, biological, cosmic, geological) which capital remoulds without ever suppressing their singularity and which, in the last instance, operate as capitalism's conditions of existence.

Hence, we postulate that appraising the heterogeneous temporalities of social reproduction requires engaging with three different temporal scales, the necessarily imperfect repetition of each in each iteration grounding the simultaneous process of reproduction/transformation of any given social order. Firstly, the day, grounded upon the alternation of day and night, and conditioned by human being's biological requirements of rest and sleep. Capital's attempt to enlarge the working day and to reduce circulation times inevitably clash with the biological requirements of the human bodies its acts upon. Secondly, the weekly cycle, a purely social convention grounded upon an alternation of cycles of work and rest. Capital's drives to establish an empty temporality paving the way to its further expansion clash with a variety of cultural conventions implicit in sedimented social processes. Thirdly, the year, grounded in the earthly rotation around the sun, and its associated climate patterns, harbours a conflict between capitalist expansionary drives and the irreducibility of biological and natural temporalities.

Each of these scales contains a normative rhythm in relation to which patterns of socio-temporal segregation are constituted (schematically, daily patterns of work nine-to-five; weekly patterns of Monday-to-Friday work and weekend rest; and yearly patterns of summer monthly holidays). However, their ongoing reproduction inevitably gives rise to patterns of temporal symmetry and temporal complementarity, through which subordinated rhythms ought to emerge to provide dominant ones with their ultimate conditions of possibility. This political dimension, we contend, cannot be properly apprehended through the framework of abstract time.

Dan Swain: On Politicising Social Reproduction

Abstract: The recent revival of interest in social reproduction in Marxist Feminism sees socially reproductive labour as both essential to capitalism and in tension with it, suggesting that social reproduction can both be undertaken in accordance with the needs of capital and the state, but also against them and for ourselves. Prominent examples of the latter might be seen in the recent re-emergence of the language of mutual aid in the COVID-19 pandemic, in which mutual aid groups aimed to fill the gap left by the state's failure to support vulnerable communities. However, in his recent study of disaster relief, Peer Illner warns that such campaigns can just as easily complement state strategies of reproduction and absolve it of responsibilities, vividly demonstrated by the US State Department's glowing endorsement of Occupy Sandy's hurricane relief efforts. This suggests that in order to maintain such efforts as radical projects that neither reproduce the logic of the welfare state or legitimises its withdrawal from the scene, it is not enough to *perform* social reproduction for ourselves, but it is necessary also to *politicise* it.

This paper asks how we might best understand this politicisation. While this includes placing demands on and struggling against capital and the state, it also suggests a particular attitude towards our own activity: Politicising social reproduction means understanding and representing some of our most intimate forms of life-making as both challenging the status quo and anticipating an alternative. This suggests the need to locate and maintain a revolutionary, or even utopian, horizon in the reproduction of life itself. The paper attempts to develop this picture in dialogue with different conceptions of politics and the political: Politicisation as involving struggles with and over the state; politicisation as the staging, establishing and embodiment of practices of democracy and equality; politicisation as denaturalisation; and prefigurative politics, which shares the desire to see radical possibilities in present action. Such dialogue can, it argues, help clarify the challenges and revolutionary promise of political projects that put social reproduction at their heart.

room: g51
critical interventions on practices of philosophy

Marx's 11th Thesis on Feuerbach has often been interpreted as – if not fully discarding then at least – subjugating theoretical work to the needs of practical politics. In fact, this thesis insists us to take a Veränderungsperspektive also in theoretical praxis. The imperative of 'changing the world' should be adopted as the starting point of the theoretical practice.

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Sauli Havu: Practice and Intellectual Autonomy in Bourdieu

Abstract: Sauli Havu analyses the notions of practice and autonomy of intellectuals in the work of Pierre Bourdieu. Bourdieu, inspired by Marx's Theses on Feuerbach, develops a theory of practice. For him, practice is first and foremost pre-reflexive and habitual. He highlights the importance of distance from material necessities as a precondition of intellectual and theoretical work. Consequently, Bourdieu's conception seems to privilege professional intellectuals. In this sense one could argue that in Bourdieu's work the conception of theoretical practice remains traditional and differs from the conception of Marx. Because of the importance he gives to the break between everyday practical understanding and the theoretical understanding of the expert, Bourdieu stresses the importance of autonomous fields of intellectual and cultural production. In his model of 'the social space' Bourdieu assumes that because professional cultural and intellectual elites, while being part of the dominant classes, are dominated inside the dominant class (having less 'economic capital' than economic elites), autonomous intellectuals have a tendency to ally with the oppressed. Thus, when intellectuals follow their own interests, they tend at the same time promote the interests of the dominated classes. The assumption of the a priori progressiveness of intellectual autonomy seems problematic. First, Havu questions what Bourdieu means by 'autonomy'. Second, he asks whether it would be more fruitful to discard such formalistic generalisations and rather study the differences between different types of intellectuals without preconceptions.

Juha Koivisto and Mikko Lahtinen: Contingency

Abstract: Juha Koivisto and Mikko Lahtinen focus on the concept of contingency. As an adjective, contingent can mean either something that is not necessary but possible or something that depends on other things, perhaps so numerous and complex that its occurrence is hard to predict. Because of this unstable character contingency is often experienced as a serious threat to a need to 'make sense' of both history as well as one's own life. However, this fear in its intellectual form is usually an overstated religious or philosophical reaction since common everyday life would be hardly possible under the circumstances of total unpredictability, i.e., chaos. Indeed, it could be said that all social forms are historical, contingent forms of coping with contingency. In his critique of political economy Marx confronts political economy's unhistorical understanding of its own categories and analyses how capitalist relations of production create new forms of regularity based on contingency. Opposed to metaphysical post-modern, post-Marxist (e.g., Laclau and Mouffe) or system theoretical approaches and their ways of approaching contingency, eventually leading to passivity and accommodation, is the perspective of 'practical dialectics'.

Santeri Sorsa: From Education to Culture – and Back

Abstract: Santeri Sorsa studies how the Education Reform politics during neoliberal era have shaped the structures and practices of Education and schooling. It is crucial to understand how these politics affect our everyday life and perception. Presentation has two levels, the first being reform politics and structures of education – examples being Finnish reforms on upper secondary vocational education and higher education, in which schooling has been made more subordinate to capital and work life. Second level is how does the reform politics affect schooling and its practices and eventually how does education shape society, its (class) structures and culture(s). Presentation uses Cultural Studies as a tool of analyzing educational politics in 21st century and looking for ways to curb the unequal and destructive tendencies of current reproduction. At the heart of analysis is the concept of conjuncture in which different institutions such as education, politics and economy affect one another although they are not reducible to one another.

room: g51a
book launch:
sage handbook of marxism

Svenja Bromberg, Sara Farris, Miri Davidson, Marina Vishmidt, Hannah Proctor, Kanishka Goonewardena, Laura Schwartz

The past decade has witnessed a resurgence of interest in Marxism both within and without the academy. Marxian frameworks, concepts and categories continue to be narratively relevant to the features and events of contemporary capitalism. Most crucially, an attention to shifting cultural conditions has lead contemporary researchers to re-confront some classical and essential Marxist concepts, as well as elaborating new critical frameworks for the analysis of capitalism today.

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The SAGE Handbook of Marxism showcases this cutting-edge of today's Marxism. It advances the debate with essays that rigorously map and renew the concepts that have provided the groundwork and main currents for Marxist theory, and showcases interventions that set the agenda for Marxist research in the 21st century. A rigorous and challenging collection of scholarship, this book contains a stunning range of contributions from contemporary academics, writers and theorists from around the world and across disciplines, invaluable to scholars and graduate students alike.

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room: rb01
marxism and philosophy iii

Leandros Fischer: Marxist Accounts of Migration Between “Autonomy” and Gramscian Perspectives

Abstract: This paper aims at providing a critique of the “autonomy of migration” (AoM) approach, prevalent within critical migration studies, from a Marxist perspective. Hailing itself from the autonomist Marxist tradition of “autonomia operaia”, AoM has challenged the prevalent thinking in migration studies between “push” and “pull factors”, emphasizing instead migrants’ capacity for autonomous action. Thinkers of autonomia like Antonio Negri have conceptualized migrants as part of the “multitude”, challenging the existing order through their movements across borders. However, while challenging overtly structuralist accounts that leave little room for migrant agency, AoM has paid insufficient attention to the question of the state and strategies of capital accumulation that are in a position to severely curtail migrant mobility. This appears argues for overcoming the limits of AoM by employing a Gramscian perspective that highlights the potential for civil society alliances between migrants on the one hand, and other subaltern groups within society, such as the working class and racialized and gendered groups.

Matthias Lievens: Analysing Relations of Power(Lessness): Sartre Against Gramsci

Abstract: The left is in a defensive position, but coming to grips with the difficulties and obstacles it faces remains a challenge. The predominant approach on the left is often some version of gramscianism, which understands our political condition in terms of the exercise of hegemony and domination. Gramsci’s sketch for the analysis of the relations of power and their different levels (from the relations of production to the relation of political and military forces) focuses on their degree of development, organisation and universality. The struggle is then about the formation of a historical block and the disorganisation of the opponent through the appropriation and transformation of their ideas, projects and even political personnel (passive revolution, transformism). Hegemony feeds upon counterhegemony. But is the current condition of the left the result of the opponent’s hegemonic capacity? Doesn’t the analysis of class struggle in such terms risk to overestimate the power of the opponent? To experience defeat does not necessarily mean your opponent is winning. This paper draws on Sartre to reconceptualise what it means to struggle and to analyse relations of power, in an attempt to amend and complement predominant Gramscian approaches. What we have to come to terms with, is not primarily the power of the bourgeoisie but the mechanisms through which powerlessness is produced. Sartre’s Critique of Dialectical Reason is built around the dynamic of disempowerment and re-empowerment. In this context, Sartre provides important resources for an alternative account of (class) struggle in terms of the mechanisms through which powerlessness is generated and overcome, such as detotalisation (the ‘loss’ of the ‘totality’ of a struggling group), counterfinality (the transformation of a struggle’s finality into its opposite), and the ambivalence of inertia as both a force of resistance and a force of petrification. From such a perspective, struggle is not always about winning and losing, but about “déjouement”, thwarting or turning around the actions of the opponent. It is not just a clash of forces or organised powers, but the encounter of perspectives of flight, through which agents lose their capacity to act as their own action turns against them.

Silvestre Gristina: “Real Humanism” and Practices of Humanity. a Practical Concept As De-Saturation Device in Time of Crisis

Abstract: In the Complementary Note on “real humanism”, Althusser qualifies Marx’s concept of “real humanism” as a practical concept, i.e., a concept that designates the passage between problematic fields and indicates a new material object of investigation. Althusser presents it as a “negative definition”, which Marx would use to reject abstract humanism, without however proposing a new “content” for humanism – without saturating the concept again with new theoretical contents, themselves abstract. In my talk, I aim to show that the locution “real humanism” thus operates as a conceptual device to de-saturate the “ideologized” theoretical horizon of the young Hegelians during the Vormärz crisis. If Young Hegelians’ conceptual categories seemed then exhausted and incapable of detecting new potential political trajectories or social experiments; it was then necessary to craft a conceptual operator that, rather than offering new predefined theoretical contents, would work as a device of “openness”, capable of creating room for concrete practices of humanity.

Marx questioned Young Hegelians’ abstract concept of humanism, because it provided dogmatic contents and would not allow any access to concrete humanity or any possible change in material conditions. It was a dogmatic humanism, which assumed the human essence as an already given, unmodifiable, fact. Against this abstract model, I would like to rethink Marx’s “real humanism” as a performatively polemic and critical concept. Thus, if “real humanism” has no content, it is because its function is exercised in the criticism of a reified theoretical content that has become ideological. The practical essence of this concept is given in its genetic-critical operativity, i.e., its

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capacity to reconnect humanism to its concrete material source, redetermining the whole concept as a concrete-rooted open humanism.

The concept of “real humanism” has then both a polemic-critical potential and an “investigative” function. In fact, if this practical conceptual locution certainly serves Marx to question an abstract and dogmatic definition of humanity; in his practice of indicating, it also conveys the gaze towards the concrete human being involved in historical social relations, showing humanism in the practices. In this way, it is possible to reconsider the practical concept of “real humanism” as a critical device able to defuse the circle of abstract theory and focus on flesh-and-blood human beings and their social practices of humanity.

Ultimately, I will attempt to show how rethinking the concept of “real humanism” as a practical concept with this “de-saturating” function could be a source to ponder on the kind of practical and polemic conceptuality that could be mobilized in times of crisis. Therefore, the kind of “open” humanism that is at stake here, could serve as an example of a theoretical-practical device capable of creating – in a theoretical horizon that appears closed and saturated – conceptual room for the arising of alternative theoretical and political possibilities that might unfold or be revealed in such critical times. And, contemporarily, this *practical concept* could help detect the potentialities of those practices of humanity, with their institutions and legal systems, that can effectively be found in contemporary struggles.

room: g3
rosa luxemburg and eastern europe

Ankica Cakardic: Walking on the Edges: Rosa Luxemburg in Yugoslavia

Abstract: Have the ideas of Rosa Luxemburg represented a relevant point of reference in Yugoslavia, be it in theoretical or political terms? How was Rosa Luxemburg written about in Yugoslavia, if she was written about at all? Have her works been translated into Serbo-Croatian? Have members of Praxis – the most important journal of Marxist theory and Marxist humanism in Yugoslav space – wrote about Luxemburg’s theory and politics? What about Luxemburg’s legacy in Yugoslav feminist circles? In this presentation I will try to offer answers to those questions and go through some of the diverse examples of published texts on Luxemburg, from literary criticism, to socialist, feminist, and anarchist references. We might describe an analysis of Luxemburg’s legacy in Yugoslavia as “walking on the edges.” As moving between some kind of initial rapture and euphoria, due to knowledge of early works about her and the early Yugoslav translations, to the anguish accompanying the realisation that Luxemburg is too little present in the region today.

Raquel Varela: Rosa Luxemburg, Leon Trotsky and the “Ukrainian Question”

Abstract: Rosa Luxemburg, Leon Trotsky and the “Ukrainian Question” The Ukrainian national question has been analyzed in the past by several authors, among them Rosa Luxemburg (*The Russian Revolution*, published in 1922) and Leon Trotsky (*Problem of Ukraine* 1939). Their approaches differed in several aspects and can be understood within the framework of a debate that links the Ukrainian question to political alliances, the role of imperialism, the composition of social classes (the central debate of the role of the peasants), and the foreign policy of the USSR and Germany. In this article we will try to expose Luxemburg and Trotsky thinking, contributing to the understanding of a current debate about the place of self-determination in Marxist thought

room: rg01
culture stream: from printing to streaming:
cultural production under capitalism

Esther Leslie, Michael Chanan, Antigoni Memou, Mike Wayne

The panel will discuss Michael Chanan’s new book, *From Printing to Streaming: Cultural Production under Capitalism*, to be published by Pluto Press in October 2022. The book is an important and valuable historical and cross-media account of the tensions and contradictions of cultural production under capitalism. For mainstream economics cultural production raises no special questions: creativity is a natural trait of talented individuals, to be harvested for wealth creation like any other form of labour in what is nowadays designated the ‘creative economy’. Karl Marx, however, thought that capitalism was hostile to art, because it cannot fully control the process of creativity. By his own estimation, it was marginal to the accumulation of capital, but that was before the rise of the mass media, based on new technologies of mechanical reproduction, and the emergence of the culture industry as a distinct sector of

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capital, heavily interlinked with other sectors like electronics which provided both the means of production and the means of consumption. In analysing the logic of cultural production under capitalism, From Printing to Streaming traces the development of printing, photography, sound recording, newsprint, advertising, film and broadcasting, emphasising their peculiarities as commodities and their transformation by digital technology, where everything melts into computer code, with profound implications for both cultural workers and the process of consumption. It offers a comprehensive re-reading of the commodification of artistic creation and the struggle to realise its potential in the digital age.

room: bglt
what's left?: results and prospects for uk labour socialists under starmer

This panel brings together two authors of recently-published books on the Corbyn years of the UK Labour Party, and the prospects of a new Left Bloc under the current Starmer leadership. The fate of the Labour Left in the next political cycle following the 2019 electoral defeat opens up important questions of strategy and mobilisation. Despite the best efforts of the Party machinery under Starmer to destroy any political legacy of the Corbyn years, there remains a sturdy ideological and organisational coalition among the left of the Party and outside organisations which can regain momentum for socialist alternatives in a time of general crisis. The panel will address the possibilities of such a counter-hegemonic project re-emerging now; the necessary conditions for its success; and the lessons learnt from the Corbyn experiment in making any fresh attempt by a Labour-led left to gain Government power effective and enduring.

Mike Phipps: Don't Stop Thinking About Tomorrow: The Labour Party after Jeremy Corbyn

Abstract: Much has been written about the four and a half years of Jeremy Corbyn's leadership of the Labour Party, but far less in-depth analysis has appeared on the tumultuous events since. The paper will consider the reasons behind Labour's 2019 defeat, from longer term factors like the international decline of social democracy and the loss of long-held Labour seats in the post-industrial 'red wall', to more immediate issues such as the leadership of Corbyn, the role played by Brexit, and Labour's policies and campaign. It also sets out what the left needs to do to regain its sense of purpose: recognizing the advances that have been made in shaping policy agenda and intervening more confidently on the essential values within the Labour movement and its allies.

James Schneider: Our Bloc: How We Win

This paper lays out an action plan for the British left. To move from defeatism to renewed confidence, a new Left Bloc is mooted: an explicit alliance of socialists in Parliament, the Labour Party grassroots, the trade unions and social movements. Climate shocks, rising debt, inequality and energy costs are hard barriers to neoliberalism's viability. If we can build power and prepare to seize the moment, we have a world to win.

room: llt (dlt)
workers' inquiry stream: workers' inquiry and refusal

Kenneth Novis: Simone Weil and the Limits of Workers' Inquiry

Abstract: Several authors to date have noted the relation of Simone Weil's work to the later revival of workers' inquiry in Europe. However, her experiences are frequently written off due to an alleged lack of political motivation on her part, or her ultimate failure to influence later practices in workers' inquiry. As a consequence of this, her astonishing findings in workers' inquiry have been overlooked. The purpose of this paper is twofold. On the one hand, I seek to challenge the claims made against the importance of Weil's work, examining her political motivations for entering the Paris factory setting and her demonstrable influence upon later operaismo. On the other hand, I attempt to motivate the claim that Weil has something crucially important to contribute to the study of working conditions and their role in the reproduction of capitalist oppression. There are two features of Weil's investigations which I choose to emphasise in this respect. Firstly, while some distinguish between two kinds of workers' inquiry, 'from above' and 'from below,' Weil offers an extended meditation undermining this distinction, considering the conditions in which the militant researcher can be said to become a part of the working community itself. Secondly, while workers' inquiries have sometimes suffered from the unwillingness of workers to respond to more theoretical questions, because of Weil's intellectual background her inquiry manages to consider such questions directly, without at the same time losing contact with the militant purpose behind workers' inquiry in general.

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Dante Philp: Refusal Redux: A Comparative Approach to Contemporary Modes of Refusal

Abstract: Refusal, as daily practice and insurrectionary imperative, has a storied and divisive history within conceptual and practice debate in the 20th century left, emerging as a context-specific ‘term of art’ in various political discourses. Yet, there is a dearth of literature attempting to travel between the distinct theoretical lineages which have thus far addressed the notion of ‘refusal’ and its emancipatory prospects. In a period in which the refusal of work is emerging as a mode of politics articulated across a number of global contexts – from the so-called ‘great resignation’, to the youth-worker phenomena of ‘tangping’ (lying flat) and ‘bai lan’ (let it rot) in China and the related prospects ‘Manuke Revolt’ in Japan – there is an evident necessity of theorising refusal on a comparative scale. Situating refusal within the contours of contemporary crises of accumulation and the dual decay and intensification of repressive (post)colonial and imperial apparatuses, this paper considers the texture and political potency of contemporary practices of refusal, and formulates a comparative approach to such a field of struggle. While ‘refusal’ has most been most notoriously theorised from within the workerist current, from the Quaderni Rossi accounts of new industrial militancy and Tronti’s famed ‘strategy of refusal’ to Negri’s earlier writings on sabotage and more recent accounts of ‘auto-valorisation’, and its feminist inflected reading amongst the thinkers associated with Wages for Housework campaign, a more disparate set of movements have also generated great insight into the politics of refusal. For example, Honig’s recent work on a ‘feminist theory of refusal’ thinks the concept through agonistic and democratic theory, while Coulthard and Simpson render refusal in the context of anti-colonial indigenous struggle and Dinerstein reads refusal as a tactic in relation to the formation of ‘concrete utopias’ working within and against the state in Latin America.

The current approaches to refusal remain often limited to disciplinary siloes – of anthropology, sociology and political theory – or bound within particular localised political contexts, yet, as Euben reminds us, the original notion of *theoria* refers to a traveller between cities, so this paper takes up this challenge in considering how we might better theorise ‘refusal’ in a comparative sense; is there more than a mere family resemblance of the term’s plural usages, and how might we benefit by drawing the panoply of ‘refusals’ into dialogue with one another? Refusal, I shall conclude, offers novel challenges for theorising revolt on a global scale, but in a way that might respond to the current crises for left strategy on an international level.

François-Xavier Huppeau: Memes Within and Against Work

Abstract: In the wake of the 2016-2017 labour market reforms in France (**Loi El-Khomri – Ordonnances Macron**), pro-work and corporate ideology has been central to the institutional discourses. This ideological radicalization of the French bourgeoisie triggered resistances, both in the workplaces and in the french society more generally. Drawing on an ongoing online ethnography within the Facebook group **Neuruchi de flexibilisation du marché du travail** (Labour market flexibilization shitposting), the paper will explore new forms of refusal of work. This group, the largest of its kind with circa 175 K members, exposes working conditions – primarily of interns -, bullshit jobs and ambiguously criticizes France’s dominant pro-business ideology. It will highlight new forms of political composition in a time of crisis of the trade unions bargaining power. The form of refusal of work that is taken here – memes – and online socialisation against work raises questions about workers inquiry in respect to social and political composition and could be useful to grasp phenomena such as the rise of the r/anti-work in the US or the **Tangping** movement in China. The politicization happening for more than one year within Labour market flexibilisation shitposting will also allow us to discuss the current political situation in France in the wake of the **France Insoumise** and NUPES campaign.

Steff Hui Ci Ling: Art Workers’ Inquiry For Decolonial Potential

Abstract: In settler-colonial North America, the economy of the art workers’ labour is currently contingent on the dispossession of land through extractive capital, and extractive capital’s philanthropic participation in financing public and private cultural institutions. Cultural labour has not been directly examined in connection with the expropriation and occupation of Indigenous land, and it has especially not been informed by the perspective of art workers who labour within this context. In this presentation I will discuss my process of drafting an Art Worker’ Inquiry for Decolonial Potential, as it is informed by my professional experience as a freelance and salaried art worker, as well as my analysis of the character of cultural labour in the 21st century. I will be drawing from the praxis, direct actions, political education, and public communications published during the Strike MoMA campaign from April to June 2021. I will also differentiate, compare and critique methods and questions posed by New York-based communist identified group, Red Bloom and their recent 2021 Art Workers’ Inquiry.

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room: r201
race and capitalism i

Michael Goldfield: The Limits of White Skin Privilege

The question of alleged “white skin privileges” has become more prominent recently, especially among liberal whites in the United States. It has also received renewed attention by many on the left. This essay will attempt to do four things: First, it will trace the origins of the term and its many variations on the left, taking not just a U.S., but a global perspective. Second, it will try to provide some precision in the use of the term, both internationally, but also with respect to racially dominant workers in the Economically Developed Countries (EDCs). Thirdly, it will examine the nature of these benefits and privileges that dominant workers allegedly receive, the degree to which these benefits function as bribes, and to what degree they provide obstacles to unifying workers internationally, between EDC and LDC workers, and within the EDCs themselves. Fourthly, it will suggest the best strategies for dealing with these issues.

Charles Post (O): Race and Capitalism: A Necessary or Contingent Relationship?

Anti-racist debate today remains polarized between “class reductionist” (any attempt to address racial disparities reinforces capitalist class relations) and “liberal identity” (disparities in racial representation can be resolved without questioning class inequality) politics. Both positions share a common perspective – racial oppression and class exploitation are the products of distinctive social dynamics whose relationship is historically contingent. This essay is an initial step toward a structurally necessary relationship between capitalism and racial oppression. The essay draws upon Anwar Shaikh and Howard Botwinick’s elaboration of Marx’s political economy; and Ellen Wood’s analysis of the specificity of capitalism imperialism.

room: b103
book launch:jan rehmann, deconstructing postmodernist nietzscheanism

Jan Rehmann, Svenja Bromberg, Peter Thomas, Daniel Zamora Vargas

It is often asserted that postmodernism emerged from “leftist” Nietzsche-interpretations, but it is rarely thoroughly explored. Jan Rehmann’s book investigates how Deleuze and Foucault read or rather misread Nietzsche. They apply a “hermeneutics of innocence” (Losurdo) to his philosophy that erases the elitist, anti-democratic, and anti-socialist dimensions. This misreading also affects their own theory and impairs the claim to develop a radical critique. The late Foucault’s turn to self-care techniques merges a neo-Nietzschean approach with the ideologies of neoliberalism. Rehmann’s critique is not directed against the endeavor to take suggestions from Nietzsche’s astute intuitions, but rather against the conformism to use him as a symbolic capital without revealing his hierarchical obsession.

room: b104
antinomies of alienation and resistance in contemporary capitalist societies

Peter Bratsi: City of Dogs: From Political Animals to Sentient Beasts?

Abstract: The concept of politics as it was invented in the classical world and rediscovered in the modern one refers to the understanding that we are the creators of our societies (which necessarily entails the never-ending task of requiring us to decide what kind of society we want to create). What is the best way of organizing ourselves and living as a community? How can we improve on how we live so that we maximize those values that we believe to be the most fundamental and important? Our capacity to question the virtues of our social worlds and to transform them made humans, in the famous phrase of Aristotle, political animals.

That this capacity, to think and to create, constituted our species-being would be repeated many times in the history of western philosophy (from Plato and Aristotle to Descartes, Spinoza, Marx, and Freud). Increasingly, however, the question of the human/animal divide has been pursued on different grounds; from the primacy of cogito we now have the primacy of sentience, the capacity to feel pleasure and pain. The rise of animal rights, the emergence and spread of veganism, and the giving of human names to dogs are symptoms of this shift and allow us to track the progression of this movement. The paper will examine this very fundamental shift as a product of ever deepening capitalist alienation and the near complete dominance of liberalism. Does the notion that there are no alternatives to liberal capitalism lead to humans increasingly seeing themselves as little more than animals? Permanently divorced from political agency and the radical imagination? For the first time in centuries, it is possible to imagine a future where we are bound to blindly reproduce existing social relations with no critical self-reflection

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and no agency in deciding what the ‘good life’ may be. Are we living through the start of a new dark age, a new age of human regression and servitude? Is this the end of politics?

Kristin Lawler: Class Struggle, Sabotage, and the Great Resignation

Abstract: “Nobody wants to work anymore!” From New York Times reports about empty office buildings to ubiquitous signs on the doors of stores and restaurants to airline executives explaining flight cancellations to the US Congress, a mass refusal of work appears to be sweeping the developed world like at no time since the 1970s. Once again, capital responds to working class refusal with its own refusal, a forced slowdown of investment via the raising of interest rates, the goal clear: disciplining labour. This time, hype about AI and machine learning replacing human labour also functions as part of capital’s ideological counterattack.

While liberals and social democrats tend to respond that people really do want to work, and are working hard, autonomist Marxists look seriously at the way that workers create crises for capital through this spontaneous refusal and understand its continuity with earlier iterations of the working class refusals of work. This intervention will consider the IWW, those classic anti-imperialist work shirkers and war refusers, and their strategies of cultural and point of production sabotage for leverage vis a vis capital, as well as the impact they’ve had on labour movement strategy and especially on the counterhegemonic cultural politics of work refusal, ever since.

Understanding today’s pandemic generated slowdown in these terms opens our eyes to some new and urgent strategies for revolutionary class struggle in a moment of rupture and breakdown in the capitalist order. Currently of course the left is catastrophically weak and the fascist right is rising all over the world but this crisis as well as the return of great power rivalries also constitutes an opportunity for a renewed vitality of revolutionary movements. Arguing that the refusal of work is at the heart of all anticapitalist, anti-imperialist revolutionary strategy, this paper will also look at cultural radicals like the Chicago Surrealists and Situationists, whose affinities with the IWW shaped their direct-action strategy. These interventions – surrealist poetry, psychogeography, the derive – have much to teach us about the development of revolutionary subjectivity in the current conjuncture, shaped especially by the all-encompassing spectacle of our hyper digitized lives.

room: g51
the case for democratic planning

The contemporary era of intertwined crises have brought renewed attention to economic planning – so much so that the Von Mises Institute felt the need to intervene, last Fall, with an [effort] to reclaim the futility of economic planning. Planning’s popularity is indeed on the rise, and not only on the socialist Left. The ecological crisis, punctuated in particular with the climate breakdown, has directed even mainstream attention to the role that state planning can play, for instance, in redirecting investments away from fossil fuels and towards renewables. Planning is also recapturing the imagination on the radical Left, perhaps most pronouncedly in arguments in favour of Ecological Leninism and central planning for rapid transformation of fossil-based capitalist economies (e.g. Malm, 2020). Finally, recent leaps in digitization and information technology have resparked debates on the feasibility of economic planning and its potential superiority over markets in coordinating economic decisions (Sorg, 2022). Yet the recent upsurge of interest in economic planning focuses almost exclusively on the promise of efficiency, rationality and rapid transformation. What these debates largely overlook is the promise of democratic, participatory planning as a vision for building an anti-capitalist economy. Democratic planning, as opposed to the dominant representations of economic planning as a centralized, technocratic exercise, has a long history within Marxist thought and practice. With an intellectual lineage going back to an often forgotten aspect of the Socialist Calculation Debate (Devine and Adamant, 2022; O’Neill, 2006) democratic planning comprises a fundamental pillar of a self-governing society and an emancipatory economic politics. Democratic, participatory planning also opens the space to address questions of ecological limits of economic activity (Planning for Entropy, 2022), gender justice and social reproduction (Hopkins, 2018) and collective determination of needs (Benanav, 2022). This panel aims to revisit and build on this tradition to fuel ongoing debates on alternatives to capitalism and socialist transition. It features contributions that represent a breadth of scope in terms of challenges which frame contemporary debates on economic planning: resistance vs. alternatives to capitalism; democracy in democratic economic planning; ecological crisis and determination of needs; social reproduction and the role of feminist political economy; and institutions of a democratic economy.

Pat Devine, Fikret Adaman: Planning in a Self-Governing Society

Sophie Elias-Pinsonneault: Democratic Planning: Envisioning the Transition Through a Modular Approach

Fredéric Legault: Democratic Planning as Metabolic Self-Limitation

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room: g51a
book launch: politics of the many: contemporary radical thought and the crisis of agency

Rebecca Carson, Alexei Penzin, Stefano Pippa, Benjamin Halligan

In presenting our new book, this panel looks at the role of collective agency in an epoch of permanent war and counter revolution. We address emerging new tendencies of capitalist accumulation and persisting crisis tendencies of collective agency. In doing so our book asks what is the possibility of collective effort to build a global movement that might attempt to engage an alternative through anti-capitalist and anti-imperial mobilisation. In doing so we philosophically contend with what constitutes 'the many.' As Etienne Balibar states in his assessment of the book, 'in this rich and diverse collection of essays, a group of young imaginative intellectuals and experienced scholars tackle head on the question – acutely political, deeply metaphysical – of the productivity of number. They turn the page of abstract unity and open the chapter of complex, emancipatory multiplicity. Lets follow them.'

Politics of the Many draws inspiration from Percy Bysshe Shelley's celebrated call to arms: 'Ye are many – they are few!' This idea of the Many, as a general form of emancipatory subjectivity that cannot be erased for the sake of the One, is the philosophical and political assumption shared by contributors to this book. They raise questions of collective agency, and its crisis in contemporary capitalism, via new engagements with Marxist philosophy, psychoanalysis, theories of social reproduction and value-form, and post-colonial critiques, and drawing on activist thought and strategies.

This book interrogates both established and emergent formations of the Many (the people, classes, publics, crowds, masses, multitudes), tracing their genealogies, their recent failures and victories, and their potentials to change the world. The book proposes and explores an intense and provoking series of new or reinvented concepts, figures, and theoretical constellations, including dividuality, the centaur, unintentional vanguard, insomnia at work, always-on capitalism, multitude (from its 'voiding' to a '(non)emergence'), crowds, necropolitics, and the link between political subjectivity and value-form.

We propose a panel discussion with editors and contributors Benjamin Halligan, Alexei Penzin, Stefano Pippa and Rebecca Carson. Here Stefano Pippa will discuss the books collectively written introduction framing the general project. Alexei Penzin will discuss his chapter 'Il faut Continuer': Always-on Capitalism and Subjectivity, Benjamin Halligan will present on his contribution Multitude Void: The Regal Mode of Imperial Legitimation and Rebecca Carson will discuss her contribution The Marxism of Post-Marxism: Political Subjectivity and the Monetary Link between Italian Operaismo and Capital Logic. This will be followed by a discussion of the coherence of the project that sheds significant light on the crisis of collective agency in the present.

friday deutscher lecture

11 november
19:00 – 21:00

room: bglt

deutscher lecture

ronald grigor suny
was stalin a marxist? and if he was,
what does that mean for marxism?

The Deutscher Lecture is delivered by Ronald Grigor Suny (University of Michigan), who received the Isaac and Tamara Deutscher Prize 2021, awarded to work that exemplifies the best and most innovative new writing in or about the marxist tradition.

The prize was given to Suny's biography of Stalin's early years, *Stalin: Passage to Revolution* (Princeton, 2020).

Chair: Gilbert Achcar (SOAS)

The Isaac and Tamara Deutscher Prize committee is delighted to announce its 2022 shortlist for the prize. the four books on the shortlist are:

- Ilya Budraitskis – *Dissidents among Dissidents Ideology, Politics and the Left in Post-Soviet Russia*
- Kolja Lindner – *Marx, Marxism and the Question of Eurocentrism*
- Silvia Federici – *Patriarchy of the Wage: Notes on Marx, Gender, and Feminism*
- Gabriel Winant – *the Next Shift: The Fall of Industry and the Rise of Health Care in Rust Belt America*

Current members of the Deutscher Jury: Gilbert Achcar, Alex Callinicos, Alejandro Colas, Ben Fine, Rob Knox, Chun Lin, Esther Leslie, Alfredo Saad-Filho, Chris Wickham, and Lea Ypi.

friday soas festival of ideas

11 november
21:00 – 01:00

soas campus

sound & solidarity and shubz

SOAS festival of ideas – open to HM Conference delegates! Please register for a place (it may fill up!): <https://www.soas.ac.uk/about/event/sound-solidarity-and-shubz>

Shubz, an institutional takeover with a soundsystem which they describe as “a ritual of resistance within Spaces of Power.” It’s running 20:00–01:00 and is free.

Sound & Solidarity provides space for collective explorations of music. Hosted by Sound Advice & Arman Nouri, the gatherings celebrate the power of music and discussion in articulating approaches to challenging colonialism and offering solidarity.

This will be a collective music listening session, in an intimate and relaxed setting, with each participant offering up a track or even a performance for discussion. This is a very limited capacity event.

Sound & Solidarity will be followed by a SHUBZ, taking over a space on SOAS campus, with DJ sets hosted by Houseplants and friends running into the night.

SHUBZ

Sound Advice uses the SHUBZ as a ritual of resistance within Spaces of Power. Through occupation of institutions we pay tribute to a predominately London phenomenon usually hosted in domestic spaces or small local social infrastructures to create a more informal night culture. The Shubz was a space predominantly for communities who struggled to be culturally represented or even allowed into formal nightclubs.

Sound Advice is a platform exploring new forms of spatial practice through music. Through experimenting with a range of projects in different media, designers and urbanists Pooja and Joseph debate issues of critical importance in the urban environment and develop alternative space for the future that speculate on how to make change. This is always accompanied with lyrical tips and music.

Arman Nouri is an artist, organiser and educator, working in and between the spaces of cultural and spatial practice. He is a co-founder of Kin Structures, an arts organisation exploring new approaches to building and sustaining cultural and community infrastructure. Arman teaches at Central Saint Martins where he leads the Critical Creative Practices unit in MA Cities. He is a founding member of Houseplants, a party and DJ crew based in London and Amsterdam.

saturday

session nine

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09:15 – 11:00

room: g51
the case for democratic planning

Kostas Skordoulis: Pandelis Pouliopoulos and the Problem of Revolutionary Strategy

Abstract: Pandelis Pouliopoulos (1900-1943) was an important figure in the Greek revolutionary movement. The first General Secretary of the Communist Party of Greece (KKE), he would then be one of the founding figures of the Greek Trotskyist movement. At the same time, he was an original thinker, with important contributions on the questions of revolutionary strategy.

It is our intention to enable a broader audience, other than the Greek-speaking, to be acquainted with the thought of an important leader and theorist from a peripheral social formation and also enrich the discussion of how the revolutionary left dealt with the complex questions posed in a social formation that faced the contradictions of not only capitalist industrialization, but also of peripheral antagonisms, wars, population exchanges, attempts towards ethnic ‘homogeneity’ etc. In this paper, I discuss the ideas of Pouliopoulos on revolutionary strategy as presented in his two more widely known works: a) “Democratic or Socialist Revolution in Greece” written in 1934 as a response to the policy outlined in the 6th Plenum of the Central Committee of the KKE and b) “The Popular Fronts and Proletarian Policy” written in June 1937 criticizing the policies of the Comintern and the KKE that led to the rise of fascism in Europe and the establishment of the Metaxas dictatorship in Greece.

Yiannis Katsourides, Leandros Savvides: Radicalisation to the Right. Secular(Ish) Pandemic Politics and Electoral Success: The Normalization of the Greek Cypriot Far Right

Abstract: The conditions of the Covid-19 pandemic arguably challenged our conceptions and perceptions of democratic politics. Emergency powers and limitations of media, citizens and political organizations' freedoms have, in turn, raised concerns that Covid-19 is 'infecting' liberal democracy itself. Science as an authoritative practice and scientific reason were one of the most significant aspects of this debate with science being utilized both for and against the pandemic in unprecedented ways, context and extent. One of the many facets of this worldwide tussle has been radicalisation to the right, an indication of a profound ideological and cultural crisis. In this paper we try to examine whether the pandemic presented a window of opportunity for the Greek Cypriot far right party ELAM to raise its visibility as opposition force and in what ways. We also investigate the mutations of populist rhetoric and practices in the Republic of Cyprus trying to see patterns of endurance and evolution emphasizing the treatment of science in their political positioning. Similarly, we explore how far right, populist politics have affected the political dynamics in Cyprus. In so doing, we utilize material from the party itself vis a vis the significant issues raised during the pandemic but analysis is not confined to pandemic politics alone. The article tries to shed some light on the interaction between populism and crisis and the utility of science and technology in its attempt to penetrate democratic politics.

Ioannis Levisianos Lampropoulos: Population As a Field of Operations: The Mechanisms of Counterinsurgency and the Events of March 2021 in Nea Smyrni

Abstract: The covid-19 pandemic and the ensuing global health crisis have radically changed the landscape both at the level of global politics and internally in state entities. In order to control the pandemic, the states were called upon to implement measures to restrict the movement of citizens. While in some countries governments weighed the balance between health protection and constitutional freedoms, in others, including Greece, particularly harsh and disproportionate measures were applied. In early November 2020 a lockdown was announced by the Prime Minister for an initial period of one month. The continued extension of this that lasted six months in total, the failure of the state mechanism to curb the dispersion of the virus, the addition of additional restrictions on hours and distances, and the psychological fatigue of those who had been living for months in this context, created a mixture of anger and rage which caused a social explosion and conflict on the occasion of the unprovoked beating of a citizen in Nea Smyrni Square (Athens) in March 2021.

Conflicts within the urban environment have been of interest in the international literature, particularly in recent decades. Krulak's 'three-square' theory and the later addition of the 'fourth square', the of that has to do with communication and information, are particularly informative for understanding contemporary urban conflicts. The extension of these theoretical tools to the level of police operations is particularly revealing of new forms of suppression of urban tensions. Counterinsurgency mechanisms now (also) focus on dominating the field of communication, attempting to cut off the forces of insurgency from the local population.

This paper seeks to analyse the events of Nea Smyrni with the theoretical tools of counterinsurgency. At first, attempts a partial but informative summary of the literature. Then analyses the Greek government's policy of

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suppression during the pandemic before the events on March 2021. Lastly, focuses on the events of Nea Smyrni as the main and the most dominant incident that reveals state's policy during the lockdown period.

room: g3
critical studies on imperialism

Becka Hudson, Robert Knox: Against the Boomerang: Imperialism, Materialism and the Politics of Nostalgia

Abstract: In recent years there has been an explosion in work that seeks to reveal the contemporary legacies of colonialism as they are configured in the imperial core. From policing, to militarism, to psychiatry, to racism, to borders, the story goes, we can see the formative – and indeed determinative – effect of the colonial experience in the metropole. In this way, there is said to be a ‘boomerang effect’ whereby techniques and technologies developed in the colonial period return to the metropolis and structure contemporary life. In this paper we argue that whilst the boomerang argument is of Marxist provenance (particularly in Aimé Césaire’s work), contemporary invocations engage this heritage loosely at best, and abandon it entirely at worst. A pronounced inability to reckon with interlocking temporalities and social relations leads such accounts to rely on intangible ‘imperial nostalgias’, and other unexamined explanations about the weight of the past. This, we demonstrate, lends contemporary ‘boomerang’ arguments an air of mystification, often obfuscating more than they reveal; the colonies are imbued with a power that cannot really be explained. We argue that this tendency’s analytical oversights have significant political consequences. By occluding the specific social relations of imperialism, such approaches often end up collapsing the metropole and periphery – with contemporary domestic phenomena simply understood as colonialism. This historical scrambling generates political confusion. Insofar as the boomerang effect remains at a mystified level, it offers almost no sense of what meaningful political action would look like. Against this, we suggest a return to the original Marxist articulation of the concept. There, the ‘return’ effects of colonialism were situated very specifically within the context of the social and material relations which generated European fascism. We argue that our contemporary moment requires such a model, in which the ‘boomerang effect’ is rooted more rigorously in an account of capitalist social relations. It is from here, in paying attention to the specific conjunctures which shape and are shaped by these social relations, that a politically useful and historically clear-sighted account of any boomerang might emerge.

Panagiotis Sotiris: Rethinking Anti-Imperialism Today

Abstract: The war in Ukraine and increased rivalry between the ‘West’ and Russia and also China has made the question of imperialism and anti-imperialist struggle a central and urgent question, both theoretical and strategic. After all the questions of imperialism, war and the articulation between the national and the international level have always presented a kind of analytical but also strategic litmus test for the strategy of the anticapitalist Left. A renewed theory of imperialism can enable us to understand the current dynamics of rivalry and antagonism in the imperialist chain, the conflicting strategies articulated and why these dynamics take the form of an escalation of conflict and war. It can help us understand why the ‘West’ (in the sense of the alliance between G7 countries, NATO members, the EU and traditional allies of the US) has opted for an aggressive strategy and how on the other hand Russia and China form part of a process of inter-imperialist rivalry and are far from representing any resistance to imperialism. This can also help us situate the war in Ukraine in its context beyond the ‘narratives’ offered by both sides. This means that it is not possible to struggle against war without struggling against imperialism in the sense of the need for combining the struggle for social transformation with the struggle for de-linking from imperialist networks, on the economic, political and ideological level. De-linking is not linked to some form of isolationist utopia but to the fact that any process of social change must reduce its exposure to the pervasive influence of internationalized capitalism and the ways that competitive pressure induces the reproduction of capitalist social relations, whereas participation in imperialist organizations also functions as a means to safeguard capitalist relations of exploitation and oppression. At the same, this points to an internationalism that actually struggles for ruptures at the ‘weakest links of the chain’. This rethinking of the dialectic between anti-capitalism and anti-imperialism can help us also avoid the tendency to treat anti-imperialism as simply of question of ‘choosing sides’, while at the same time pointing to how imperialism does not simply represent aggression but also a class strategy. It also points to how a potential rupture from or de-linking from imperialism, reclaiming popular sovereignty and re-inventing internationalism can only be thought in a socialist and communist horizon, as part of an attempt to create conditions for a subaltern historical bloc. And, it also points to how the movement against can way can only be a movement against the causes of war, something that today is more urgent than ever.

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Jonas van Vosse: Marx's Primitive Accumulation and Subsequent Imperialism Theories As a Perspective on the Human, Nature, Race and Gender

Abstract: This presentation seeks to develop and systematize Marx' approach of primitive accumulation, and the imperialism theories inspired by it, as tools to understand the relation between humanity under capitalism, its boundaries and the possibilities to unify different anticapitalist struggles.

In his Critique of the Gotha Program, Marx defended that value derived from two components: nature and human labour. The definition of what is human under capitalism is thus practically defined through accumulation process and the boundaries of capitalist/modern civilization. Whatever lies beyond this frontier is ideologically constructed as non-conquered, wild territory or "nature". Capital dispossesses nature's value through the colonial enterprise of sacking, enclosure, the metabolic rift, etc.

Marx had originally approached this process of colonial sacking of territories beyond the boundaries of Capitalism as an initial phase of primitive accumulation of Capital. To cope with the challenges and dynamics of colonialism and imperialism that led to world war I, Rosa Luxemburg would eventually assign a central role to primary accumulation which happens not only before but also parallel to Expanded accumulation, as a continuing process, rather than an initial phase.

This form of accumulation applies to all phenomena that are nature or which are "naturalized". In the permanent search for new maiden territories for capital and the parallel historical development of bourgeois ideology; race and gender have literally been "naturalized". Capital deals with the extra normal human identities of gender and race in a similar way as it does to nature. Racialized people have been pushed towards the fringes of society and humanity, robbed of their history and rationality, and having been attributed with animalistic characteristics. In the same way, women have for a long time been denied rationality and agency; their essence had been reduced to their virgin natural bodies pushed towards the "natural" activities of reproduction.

Various Marxist and Post-Marxist scholars, particularly with an (eco-)feminist inspiration, have been inspired by the perspective on primitive accumulation to apply the approach to several of these "natural" fields in the last decades. To name some examples: Maria Mies and Silvia Frederici have developed it in the idea of primary accumulation on the economy of the family and female bodies. Jason Moore has used it in the field of nature and climate. Nancy Fraser focussed on it in her debate with Dawson on the question of racial capitalism...

From this perspective, value is continuously extracted both through exploitation and dispossession – the latter occurring in the relation between capital and non-capitalist Economies – and it is the accumulation process. This presentation argues that the analysis of the relation between capitalism and external economies, and the role of the state and violence, through the logic of primitive accumulation, is systematically applicable to the wider concept of nature as a whole and defines the possibilities of Humanity and emancipation in the context of Capitalism.

Several authors, such as David Harvey, Ellen Wood, etc have reengaged with the dynamics of primary accumulation and imperialism to understand the relation between Neoliberalism and the state over the past decades. This paper is going to analyse how Marx's perspective on primitive accumulation provides an advantaged conceptual perspective to systematize the relative understanding of nature and human, race and gender within the context of capitalist development, within the recent crisis of neoliberalism, the recent return of the state and the return of nature in the form of the Climate Crisis and the Pandemic and how it potentializes the articulation of social struggles.

room: rg01
culture stream: marxism and literature

Di Bai: The Future That Hasn't Been Imagined Socialist Utopia in Fan Wennan's Sci-Fi Comics China 2098

Abstract: In the post-socialist China, the memories of its existed or "real" (to quote Michael Lebowitz) socialism characterized by its due themes of the socialist revolution and the socialist construction are very much alive despite of their suppression by both the state and the capital. Different from their parents' simple nostalgia, the millennials are imagining a future built upon the structures, ideologies and aesthetics of the socialist past, a future that would be an alternative to the present neoliberal capitalistic global system.

This paper will introduce the works of Fan Wennan, one such a millennial artist, China 2098. China 2098, a series of 30 paintings narrating a sci-fi story produced in 2020, became an overnight sensation in China's social media. The artist's intention is to explore the socialist sci-fi universe, to demonstrate the romantic vision of communism, and to present to the world the Chinese solution to the global crisis via his artistic style: grand construction punk. This paper will discuss 2 major threads in China 2098: 1. Socialism is the Grand Narrative; 2. Socialism is to build a community with a shared future for mankind.

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session nine

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09:15 – 11:00

Thomas Travers: 'Epics of Magical Appropriation': Refusing and Remythologising Labour in Outlaw Literature

Abstract: According to the Argentine writer and critic Ricardo Piglia, money is the 'best novelist' in world literature. For those who possess money, the story of its original appropriation must be dissimulated and cleansed of its violent, extra-economic history. For those without, money is the medium through which to dream, an affective general equivalent whereby all conceivable joys can be obtained. To acquire such expressivity, however, money cannot be earned through wage labour – which only reproduces conditions of economic precarity and political servitude – but must be 'made' by forms of 'imaginary labour', like counterfeiting, forgery, and blackmail, as well as petty theft. In this paper, I will read Piglia's account of money, and its 'economy of passions', alongside Jason Read's work on the production of subjectivity and the affective composition of political economy. By turning the economy into a 'personal war', outlaw appropriation, the paper will argue, short-circuits the scene of 'social subjection' – the interpellation of subjects as wage workers – and the scene of 'machinic enslavement' – the fragmentation and degradation of productive minds and bodies. On the one hand, the imaginary labour to which outlaws turn to appropriate wealth constitutes a refusal of sorts, one that provokes state repression and renders capitalist social relations contingent. On the other, the riches pulled out of the imagination are often the work of virtuosos who, counterintuitively, remythologise the productive power of labour. To conclude, the paper will assess the genre's political ambivalence and question whether its capitalist 'magic' can be refunctioned for revolutionary ends.

Kevin Potter: Frontiers of Dispossession, Futures of Mutual Aid: On Ursula Le Guin's *The Dispossessed* and Octavia Butler's *Parable of the Sower*

Abstract: This paper analyzes two dystopian, science fiction novels, both of which offer lucid commentaries on forces of dispossession and fragmentation that ensue under capitalism and imperialism: Ursula Le Guin's *The Dispossessed* and Octavia Butler's *Parable of the Sower*. In Le Guin's text, two opposing planets – Annaren and Urras – illuminate one another's capacity for disempowerment and subjection, elucidating the limitations of achieving solidarity and popular sovereignty within capitalist as well as anarchist social models. In Butler's *Parable of the Sower*, neoliberal capitalism shapes the terrain of racialization, displacement, suffering, and exploitation in urban environments. In both texts, the protagonists of each have to navigate a past and a future – a past characterized by the familiar forces of expulsion and dispossession; and a future which offers the capacity for solidarity and hope. In these texts patterns of primitive accumulation determine the subjectivity of characters, while also creating the material necessity to leave one's place or community in search of another horizon of possibility. In addition to analyzing the novels' themes, this paper will also demonstrate how both texts anticipate capitalism's tendencies toward crisis, and the ideological forces that naturalize class antagonism, inheriting a theoretical tradition from Cedric Robinson, Silvia Federici, David Harvey, and Wendy Brown. These forces include: racism, scarcity, individualism, paranoia, and atomization. Furthermore, given the ongoing structural inequities that continue to permeate the present, I will suggest how both Le Guin and Butler's novels enhance our present understanding of dispossession, especially in the era of climate change, COVID-19, and Russia's war on Ukraine. In particular, these texts remind us how dispossession and alienation mutually reinforce each other, creating the conditions that dictate our subjectivity and fragmentation under conditions of imperial domination. Yet, they also remind us of the stakes of using class solidarity as a bulwark against primitive accumulation, as the hope for survival depends upon it.

room: bglt

salvage: what is freedom in the twenty-first century?

Richard Seymour, Kevin Okoth, Jamie Allinson

What sort of freedom is now possible? The ecological crisis appears to raise the urgent necessity of restrictions on certain capitalist freedoms to which we are habituated: consumption, travel and work all require a drastic reformation. The Covid-19 pandemic, itself an acute expression of ecological frailty, resulted in severe biopolitical controls as governments flailed to keep infections and mortalities within a politically and economically tolerable bandwidth. As Alberto Toscano notes, this created a dilemma for the Left given its "contradictory desire for the state". Meanwhile, the Right's response, from calls to permits mass deaths in pursuit of capitalist freedom to anti-lockdown protests in defence of 'normality', leveraged the severe immiseration of life and discontent arising from these restrictions. In the same way, its rearguard action to defend fossil capital exploits the desires invested in that narrow, parochial form of freedom known as 'petromodernity'. That this 'freedom' politics is in practice profoundly authoritarian, counter-subversive and driven by what Wendy Brown calls 'sociophobia' – an aversion to any claim made on behalf of social, collective interests as a form of tyranny – doesn't obviate the Right's correct intuition that

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freedom is essential to a meaningful life. At the same time, debates on the Left prompted by Black Lives Matter and the campaign for 'abolition' of police and prisons raises familiar strategic dilemmas about how to loosen the grip of the state, while arguments about 'degrowth' and the possibility of a 'universal basic income' raise questions about how to decouple living standards and well-being from the capital-relation. They also recall Foucault's admonition that freedom is not identical with a moment of liberation, in which systems of oppression and exploitation are overthrown, but must be on-goingly practiced. How, then, can freedom be practiced? For Marx, freedom from the "realm of necessity" begins with "socialised man, the associated producers, rationally regulating their interchange with Nature". But this is not freedom as an accomplished state-of-affairs, as Marx's scepticism toward utopian blueprints indicates. Rather, it is freedom as the open-ended ability to create and act on new, improbable desires. Borrowing the language of theologian Gabriel Marcel, the free human is *Homo Viator*: on the way. This panel will ask to what extent we can be free of the state, free of the capital-relation, and free to make our way.

room: llt (dlt)
workers' inquiry stream: international inquiries

Suddhabrata Deb Roy: Organising Domestic Workers in India: Analysing Revolutionary Unionism Amongst Delhi's Domestic Workers

Abstract: Domestic work in India takes place mostly within a highly feudal set-up. Domestic workers in India are one of the most low-paid workers in the country with many of them getting less than US\$ 15 a month for one hour of work daily. Their jobs have no security and no benefits that one usually identifies with a job, in spite of their 'informal' status as essential workers in many urban localities. The status of unionization within domestic workers in India has largely been of an abysmal nature. However, in recent times, the work of the Sangrami Gharelu-Kamgar Union (Revolutionary Domestic Workers' Union) has been a beacon of hope within the domestic workers' movement which has for so long been dominated by tokenistic apolitical bodies and co-operatives. The paper brings forward an analysis of the unionization of domestic workers in Delhi under the Sangrami Gharelu-Kamgar Union (SGKU), their relationship with the Maruti Workers' Movement in India, and how the involvement of working-class organizers and students in the latter movement has shaped the methods they employed in organising the former. Autonomist Marxist theories and the idea of class composition have played a major role in the formation of this union. This paper analyses the experiences of unionization of both the organisers and the workers engaged with the union and puts forward a descriptive analysis of the challenges that they have faced in the formation of the union leading up to their first convention in 2021.

Gaurav Bansal: Coal Prices, Agrarian Change and Working-Class Struggles: An Enquiry Into the Husk Loading Work in Southern Punjab, India

Abstract: Coal prices have touched record heights in the last two years, and they are posed to remain elevated amidst robust demand and persistent supply side disruptions exacerbated by the war in Eastern Europe. But how does the rise in global coal prices affect a young landless worker in rural Punjab, a state in North-west India? For one, the rise in coal prices had led to an upsurge in demand for its cheaper substitutes, such as the paddy husk, a biofuel. This husk is picked from the rice processing industries (as husk is a byproduct) and transported in overloaded tractor-trolleys to the industries which demand them. This has generated a sudden rise in demand for a new kind of work and a new category of workers, whose task is to load the trolleys. The husk loaders work in a gang of 10-12 workers and face adverse working conditions as they pick heavy weight on their heads (upwards of 50 kg) for long hours which, in the long term, has adverse health effects and even causes morbidity. We keep these husk-loading workers at the centre of our study and draw out the salient features of the labour processes at work, the number of days they receive work, their location of work, work hours, wage rates and hierarchy among workers. Further, we bring rich insights on organising these workers for a broader working class politics by drawing on the actual experiences of a labouring class organisation active in the region, of which one of the authors is an active member.

Lorenzo Cini: Labour-Power and the Invisibilization of Its Value. Insights Into the Struggles Within Platform Work and the Textile-Clothing Sector

Abstract: Marx conceives of capitalism as the production mode based on the valorization of labour-power. Within such production, the struggle between capital and labour over the capture of this value is seen as central. Building on this perspective, as well as on contemporary Marxist studies, I argue that capital tends not only to valorize and capture labour-power, but first and foremost to "invisibilize" its value. The (mis)recognition of labour-power's contribution to the production process is a key struggle in capitalism: capital aims to obscure labour-

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power's contribution, whereas workers strive to have it fully recognized. In the paper, I claim that this process of "invisibilization" of the value of labour-power is a relevant form of surplus-value extraction, only marginally identified by Marx in Volumes I and III of Capital. I aim to show the extent to which this form of extraction is still present in contemporary capitalism, characterized by precarious and informal employment relations. To do so, I explore two sectors of the current economy, the textile-clothing sector and platform work, similarly characterized by highly informal/precarious relations, but exhibiting a very diverse level of technological innovation in the labour process, the former being of a low technological intensity, the latter (relatively) highly intensive. Overall, my study points to how the rediscovery of the analysis of the nexus between work-process transformations and surplus-value extraction – which is the core of the Marxian labour theory of value – is crucial to understanding contemporary processes of labour informalization and technological innovation.

Hazal Göçmen (O): Union Democracy and the Study of Wildcat Strike in a Textile Factory

Abstract: This research focuses on the contentious relationship between union officials and rank-and-file members in an example of the wildcat strike in a textile factory in Urfa. The intra-union democracy in Turkey is deficient in terms of compliance with democratic principles in implementing union practices. The deficiency of union democracy is because the opportunities provided to the union officials strictly separate them from the rank-and-file members since this causes a worker aristocracy between paid officials and the members. The delusion that coming to the administration by-election does not directly cause democracy in the decision-making processes through the active participation of workers. Additionally, the relations between union officials and the employees or the state's ideological and political impact on the unions weaken the union's power. Contrary to the union bureaucracy approach, which emphasizes the role of paid officials as being experts about technical and administrative issues despite rank-and-file members in a trade union, this research suggests that a strong labour movement is possible through the high rates of participation of the workers in every step of the decision-making process. Therefore, this study exemplified a case where workers felt excluded from the union and organized a wildcat strike. Hence, this research plans to figure out the inside dynamics, conditions, and consequences of a wildcat strike in a case study by analyzing the conceptions of workers about the union functions. Urfa is a province where feudal and tribe relations are still determinants, with low rates of organized labour and high rates of religious motifs. Hence, the motivation points of textile workers raised in a strictly hierarchical province for democracy will be studied. Focusing on the insufficiency of union democracy and workers' wildcat strikes, this research starts with investigating the mechanisms to participate in the decision-making process in trade union organizations. This research aims to examine the viewpoint of the workers, who are unionized in a short time and then prefer the wildcat strike because of the union bureaucracy. Moreover, this research will examine the results of the wildcat strike to perceive the workers' conceptions of the consequences, whether desperation or excitement for finding other channels of the struggle. Besides, this study will investigate the changing attitudes against a union and a labour movement after the strike through a critical approach. This research aims to contribute to how the working-class struggle dynamics change and what are the fundamental points that affect the movement relatedly to the historical development of capitalism and class movement in Turkey.

room: r201
pandemic i

Gregoris Ioannou, Giorgos Charalambous: Critical Junctures, Ideological Continuity and Change in Western Europe: Comparing the Pandemic Times with Other Crises

Abstract: Hitherto, studies focusing on the crisis politics of the Covid-19 pandemic and in particular on evolving ideological legacies, social change and political competition, exhibit two weaknesses. They treat ideology mostly as an independent or intervening variable, lacking attention on the effects of the pandemic on ideas and ideologies. And when focusing on the political impact of the pandemic, they exhibit an overall ambiguity as to the fundamental questions of political science and sociology, what aspects of politics writ large are changing, how (if at all) new legacies in politics and policy paradigms are taking hold. We aim to address these deficiencies by undertaking two tasks. First, we develop a two-level assessment of ideational change by combining theories of change and accounts of political development, theories of conflict structuration (cleavage theory) and theories of ideological power and resistance (theories of hegemony). Second, we apply the resulting framework through a comparative history of 'crisis', of which the pandemic is a case, by juxtaposing it with two previous cases, the securitisation crisis of the early 2000s and the post-2008 financial-turned-economic crisis, coupled with a humanitarian crisis and alarm over climate change. In this way we provide a clearer understanding of the elements of continuity and change as they manifest themselves in the critical juncture defined by the Covid-19 pandemic, its management and aftermath. This setting of

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the ‘current’ in an historical context allows more nuanced discussion of the shifts occurring in the ideological and socio-political spheres and an assessment of their implications.

Gabriela Azevedo, Camila Carduz: Surviving Bolsonaro and the Pandemic: The Obstacles and Strategies For Racialized and Gendered Class Resistance in Brazil

Abstract: COVID-19 pandemics affected Brazilian’s reality in several ways. As President Bolsonaro implemented its neoliberal-far right agenda, including the expansion of the ongoing militarisation, the working class felt the absence of health, social, work and pensions’ public policies as well as income support to guarantee the right to physical isolation in order to contain the spread of SARS-Cov-2. This paper aims to analyse the differential impacts felt by sectors in the working class through data from agencies such as CEPAL, ILO, ONU Mujeres and OXFAM, to make a statement in Social Reproduction Theory argumentative track, underlying that class analysis nowadays must take into consideration its actual composition (i.e. racialized, multi-gendered, various sexual orientations, territorialized, disabled people). During the Covid-19 pandemics, the effects and consequences of these economic and social phenomena in the capitalist accumulation process, as capitalism’s structural crisis intensification, accelerated transformations in productive and reproductive restructuring that corresponds to the present historical moment. In that context, resistance took place through solidarity and social mobilizations, like Mãoz Solidárias, Vidas Negras Importam and Collective Solidarity Kitchens. Governmental politic choices were responded by working class initiatives that were key to survival and also to make political resistance to bolsonarism, deepening class consciousness and opening up new possibilities for class organization.

Maria Chehonadskih, Alexei Penzin: Capitalist Continuities Through Pandemics, Crisis, and War

Abstract: The paper focuses on the theoretical and philosophical aspects of continuous capitalist accumulation in the conjuncture of the post-pandemic crisis and war. This continuity was reflected in such terms as ‘24/7’, i.e., the incessant processes of production, exchange, consumption and communication that traverse the global social field and its time zones. The recent pandemics and lockdowns created a model for suspensions and pauses in the socio-economic continuity. Various forced measures have been introduced by the capitalist state in order to provide the continuous accumulation ‘by other means.’ At times different from classical neoliberal repertoire, these measures resembled a ‘war communism of capital’ (such as temporary nationalisation of public infrastructure and furlough scheme). The Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 has become routinised and framed in the continuity mode by flows of war refugees, sanctions, arm deals and military aid packages, shocking images and incessant media commentary. Whilst, as previously in the case of the global pandemic, it was argued that only a ‘war communism’ could be a radical solution to stop the catastrophic invasion, we argue that in reality we encounter, rather, an emergence of something like ‘war capitalism’, with all its modifications but within the same continuity. In this paper we will analyse how the war capitalism redefines the social reproduction, including the status of war refugees. We will draw on the concept of a non-teleological continuity that can be traced to the discussion of continuity (Kontinuität) in Marx’s analysis of capitalist production, as well as on the theory of negative social reproduction developed during the First World War and the Russian Civil War by Alexander Bogdanov and Nikolai Bukharin.

room: b103
marxist political economy i

Louis Mosar: Marxising Impersonal Market Domination

Abstract: William Clare Roberts republican reading of Marx’s *Capital* could be a major contribution to normative Marxist political theory. In his book *Marx’s Inferno*, Roberts develops the idea that Marx had a concept of impersonal market domination. This concept is especially relevant in formulating a Marxist reply to contemporary normative political theory, in which the idea of ‘property-owning democracy’ is becoming popular as an alternative to both the welfare state and laissez-faire capitalism. However, as certain critics have pointed out, Robert’s concept of impersonal market domination seemed to be build around a Neo-Austrian conceptualisation of markets as a preference-aggregating catallaxies. I argue that a Marxist interpretation of impersonal market domination is nevertheless possible. Such a Marxist reading of the concept is possible through the work of Anwar Shaikh. As Shaikh points out we have to distinguish between the sphere of production and the sphere of consumption. The sphere of consumption is not regulated by the logic of capitalist competition whereas the sphere of production is. It is capitalist competition that constitutes impersonal market domination. This is in accordance with some other remarks that Roberts makes in regard to impersonal market domination. Such as the idea that workplace and class domination is conditioned by impersonal market domination.

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Andrea Ricci, Giuseppe Quattromini: World Market and International Law of Value: Reconstructing Marx's Unwritten Volumes of Capital

Abstract: Marx never completed the last three books of his Critique of Political Economy, devoted to the State, Foreign Trade and the World Market, respectively. They would have focused on the dualism immanent to the capitalist mode of production between the cosmopolitan tendency to the creation of the world market as the totality of capitalist production and the nationalist tendency to the elaboration of its specific state form. Foreign trade, the subject of the middle book, acts as the concrete mediation, by shaping international relations of production, the international division of labour, international exchange, export and import, and exchange rates. The historical results are the 'essential modifications' that the law of value undergoes at the international level, where labour productivity acts in the same way as labour intensity in the formation of world commodity value. They manifest themselves in the different value of money between capitalistically developed and backward countries, realised by a fictitious price -the exchange rate- lacking in the domestic market. The world market is the final destination of Marx's dialectical reconstruction of the concrete capitalist totality as the synthesis of many prior abstract determinations. It emerges as an arena of contradictions and conflicts between social classes and between states, where capitalist exploitation of global labour operates through imperialism, uneven development and unequal exchange.

William Jefferies: The US Rate of Profit 1964–2017 and the Turnover of Fixed and Circulating Capital

Abstract: This presentation addresses how Marxist economists have estimated the quantity of fixed and circulating capital advanced in the denominator of the rate of profit calculation. Generally, Marxist economists have used neoclassical fixed capital estimates of opportunity cost, as applied most notably, in the US system of national accounts. These Hulten and Wykoff measures aggregate the lifetime revenues (both costs and profits) of fixed assets and so grossly overestimate the value of the fixed capital stock. This presentation applies the Internal Revenue Service Depreciable Assets less Depreciation for a more accurate estimate of the actual quantity of fixed capital advanced. Furthermore, it criticises the absence of a convincing measure of the rate of turnover of Marx's circuit of capital accumulation $M \dots C \dots P \dots C' \dots M'$ in most rate of profit estimates. Developing the work of Bertrand and Fauqueur, this presentation demonstrates that the cash conversion cycle or net operating cycle mirrors Marx's circuit. This presentation applies the cash conversion cycle to Internal Revenue Service Total Corporations data 1964–2017 to estimate the rate of turnover. The presentation addresses the distinction between unproductive and productive output and develops an estimation of those respective quantities based on Internal Revenue Service data. It combines these elements together to estimate the US rate of profit from 1964 to 2017. It finds that the US rate of profit rose strongly, albeit with dramatic fluctuations, after 2001.

room: b104
brexit and british politics

Jonas Marvin: Nation, Race and Class After Brexit: Contextualising the 'Historic Bloc'

Abstract: In 2016, the European Union referendum in Britain marked a watershed moment of class decomposition. On one side, the traditional Tory electorate alongside older workers from the deindustrialised English & Welsh rustbelt supported the triumphant campaign to leave the European Union, refracted as it was through nationalism and racism. Conversely, multicultural workers in the large British metropolises cohabited with the beneficiaries of neoliberalism in defence of EU membership. This event marked a profound caesura in working-class politics, pitting anti-racism and social rights against class resentment and bitterness toward neoliberalism. In this paper, I want to unearth the evolution of this historic rupture in the half-decade since the referendum. By tracing complex and unexpected developments since, from the pandemic and Black Lives Matter to the rise and fall of Boris Johnson, I will argue that the polarisation towards the Right many assumed Brexit represented hasn't necessarily occurred as straightforwardly as imagined. With new forms of anti-racism, social movement struggle and labour organising emerging, the Conservative Party's clean path to hegemony remains interrupted even as contemporary socialist politics struggles to find its feet. The question I seek to tackle is, upon what social foundations can Gramsci's 'historic bloc' be composed in Britain, and under what contours can this bloc be constructed against capital, race and nation?

Daniel Finn: Irish and Scottish Nationalism After Brexit: Class, Nation and State At the Edge of the Union

Abstract: The fallout from the Brexit crisis has prompted many commentators to ask if the break-up of Britain that Tom Nairn predicted in the 1970s is finally at hand. In Scotland and Northern Ireland alike, the best-supported political

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party wants to end the Union, leaving English nationalism to plough its own geopolitical furrow. Sinn Féin and the Scottish National Party have both called for referendums that, if successful, would dismantle the United Kingdom.

As they seek to exploit the opportunities with which British politics has presented them, the two parties carry the burden of their respective histories. The long-term trajectories of Irish and Scottish nationalism are radically distinct, and the more recent track records of Sinn Féin and the SNP diverge over questions as fundamental as armed struggle against the state. Yet there are also striking parallels between them – not least the decision by their most influential leadership teams to combine nationalism with a certain kind of left-wing politics, without which they could never have risen to their present-day levels of support.

This paper will examine the modern history of the two parties, the relationship between class and nation in Irish and Scottish politics, and the prospects for a break with London on either side of the North Channel.

Patrick Neveling: The Freeports Abyss: Contemporary UK Freeports in the Historical Fixes of Capitalist Imperialism

Abstract: The 2019 UK government announcement to make new freeport licensing a pillar of post-Brexit economic policies had significant and critical resonance. Among the widespread international media commentary, critical op-eds in leftist publications like Tribune Magazine identified the freeport policy initiative by then Chancellor of the Exchequer Rishi Sunak as a revival of 1980s Thatcherite freeports. 2022 Tory promises to open “Full-Fat” freeports are commonly seen as “Thatcherism on steroids”. Yet, freeports are more than Thatcherism. Eighteenth century freeports in the Caribbean were central articulations of the rivalry between European imperialist powers, while nineteenth century Indian Ocean freeports and charter cities consolidated British global hegemony. Twentieth century free ports and special economic zones were central to the transition from British to US-American hegemony and twenty-first century freeports, zones, and charter cities are sites of the contemporary contest over hegemony in the capitalist world system. The presentation theorises these findings and locates contemporary UK freeports in an expanded Arighian model of imperialism’s historical fixes, considering freeports as locations of imperialist rivalries as well as locations of ruling class warfare against working classes in a given nation-state based political economy.

room: g51

domination and its discontents

Domination has become an increasingly popular concept for describing the network of social relations that persist under capitalism. From Moishe Postone’s influential *Time, Labour, and Social Domination* (Cambridge, 1993) to William Clare Roberts’ Marx’s *Inferno* (Princeton, 2018), theorists have variously framed the Marxist critique of capitalism as a critique of impersonal domination. This panel explores the implications of domination as a concept: its heuristic strengths and weaknesses; its relation to concepts of exploitation, expropriation, dispossession, and repression; its role in theories of political action; its contrapuntal figuration with social and economic excess, and the very possibility of thinking and describing the relation between capitalist domination and ongoing attempts to overcome, circumvent, and sublate it. In so doing, our panelists complicate existing notions of domination while attempting to posit the possibility – and necessity – of relations beyond its violent horizons.

Alya Ansari: Methodologies of Domination: Ideology and the Critique through Representation

This paper asks what Marx’s method of critique offers a theory of capitalist domination. In a letter to Ferdinand Lasalle, Marx describes **Capital** as a “critical representation of the bourgeois economy as a system... at one and the same time a representation of the system and, through the representation, a critique of it.” Dissatisfied with the tendency of classical political economy to take capital at face value, “critique through representation” is Marx’s rejoinder to the challenge of presenting an account of social relations as they appear while also evincing the immanent mechanisms of domination by which capital engineers this specific organization of social relations in order to sustain itself. However, owing to inconsistent translations in Marx’s various writings and correspondence – translations which obscure the determinative role of **Darstellung** in Marx’s critique of political economy – “critique through representation” has not been sufficiently explored as a strategy of critical inquiry in English-language scholarship on **Capital**. This project attempts to articulate Marx’s conception of domination and its role in the capitalist mode of production through this methodological commitment. Drawing from Hegel’s **Science of Logic** and untranslated essays by German scholars Michael Theunissen, Hans Friedrich Fulda, and Rolf-Peter Horstmann, this project asks: How is Marx’s conception of domination different from, or compatible with, French approaches to the twin problematics of ideology and commodity fetishism? And in what ways can the critique through representation evince capital’s production of the nonidentity between domination and liberation?

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Thomas McGlone, Jr.: Will, Hence Domination? Conceptual Implications of New Marxist Readings

My paper considers how contemporary “returns” to Marx in academic philosophy express themselves in terms popularized by non-Marxist political theory. The concept of domination, which appears increasingly in new works on Marx, such as William Clare Roberts’ *Marx’s Inferno*; and on anticolonial struggle, such as Adom Getachew’s *Worldmaking after Empire*; has been utilized informally throughout the history of Marxist thought. However, the version of domination commonly referenced in recent literature on Marx is that offered by Philip Pettit’s philosophy of republicanism. In this presentation, I argue that as domination becomes a pervasive term of art in Marxist theory, it is increasingly important for scholars to examine the roots of this concept in the theories of Pettit and other thinkers of social republicanism. If Marxists are to incorporate a normative notion of domination into our analyses of capitalism (though it is not immediately evident that we should) then we must understand the concept’s relation to Pettit’s arguments on agency, and of the concept of domination’s relation to the concept of will. By uncritically adopting a republican notion of domination, I argue that we run the risk of overlooking that (1) there are contentions regarding will and subjectivity in Marx’s work which challenge common notions of agency, and that (2) non-Marxist accounts of domination and agency may hamper our ability to analyze the historical specificities of capitalist subjectivity and exploitation. Consequently, any attempt to introduce the concept of domination to Marxist theory and practice demands critical exegesis, as well as a systematic questioning of Marx’s relation to normative philosophy in general.

Samuel Mercer: Domination and Anti-Humanism: A Further Reply

Abstract: In a rejoinder to my review of their critique of post-work thought, Ana Dinerstein and Frederick Pitts (2022, p.284) justified their theoretical humanism as an “attempt to understand the subject’s struggle in and against the inhumane reproduction of human life in and through forms of social domination”. Taking leave from their rejoinder, this paper considers the concept of domination from a theoretically anti-humanist perspective, to consider whether domination remains a useful concept for the advancement of Marxist theory, or whether this concept is an ideological synonym for theoretical humanism within contemporary thought about work and employment today.

room: g51a
marxist theory and critique ii

Lotte List: Critique of Crisis – Koselleck’s Schmittian Philosophy of History

Abstract: In a 1948 essay, Carl Schmitt wrote that German intellectual history of the 18th and 19th centuries was connected in a fateful sense with the words “critique and crisis”. Six years later, Reinhart Koselleck submitted his PhD thesis, informally supervised by Schmitt, under the title of those same words. In it, he developed a theory of modernity as a crisis originating in the Enlightenment concept of critique.

It is no secret that Schmitt was an important influence on Koselleck. Yet Koselleck’s later work on the methodology of conceptual history, and specifically his conceptual history of crisis, is often considered in isolation from his early theory of crisis, thus separating his historiography from his Schmittian philosophy of history. The common origin of the concepts crisis and critique in the Greek ‘*krisis*’, meaning decision or separation, has become a standard point of departure for conceptual discussions of crisis, while the question of how this decision relates to Schmitt’s decisionism has been widely ignored.

In this paper, I argue that Koselleck’s conceptual history of crisis is fundamentally molded on a Schmittian philosophy of modernity as crisis temporality. This philosophy of history is the metaphysical foundation for Schmitt’s conservative state theory. Through Koselleck, however, it is scientifically rehabilitated and displaced towards a ‘neutral’ history of the *concept* of crisis, rather than its *theory*. Furthermore, I argue that this is an important source for the tendency on the intellectual left to diagnose our time as a ‘permanent crisis’.

Mikkel Flohr: Against Sovereignty: Karl Marx’s Critique of Political Theology

Abstract: In Karl Marx’s preparatory notes for his unfinished *Critique of Hegel’s Doctrine of State*, he identified G.W.F. Hegel’s political philosophy as an expression of “political theology,” which was to be the subject of his projected critique. However, the manuscript was never finished nor published during his lifetime. The aim of this paper is to reconstruct Marx’s incomplete critique of political theology. The paper takes political theology to refer to the fundamentally religious conception of the state as a sovereign subject that transcends and determines society from without. A conception, which, in spite of its descriptive limitations and normative implications, remains predominant within political theory. The paper argues that the contradiction between state and society that derives

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from the implicit transcendent-theological lineage and structure of contemporary conceptions of the state, can be overcome via the (post-)Hegelian resources of Karl Marx's unfinished manuscript. Marx's resolution emphasises the primacy of civil society (and its contradictions) in regards to the state, without therefore resorting to abstract negation, as most prior critiques have done. Rather he suggests that it is the social significance of the idea of political theology and concomitant practices that constitute the earthly existence of the modern state.

Rodrigo Costa De Andrade: The Quest for a General Marxist Methodology on Social Formations: Reassessing the French Marxist Anthropology Debate

Abstract: The understanding of social reality of non-Western societies by Western authors is problematic. Marx does not make a complete exception to it. While he has not intended to provide a systematic body of theoretical work dedicated to this subject, contrasted to his vast written production on capitalist societies, he did write about it throughout his life and these specific works show contradictory and inconsistent opinions about non western peoples among them. The linear development scheme of the first works, such as *The Communist Manifesto*, in fact reveals Eurocentric and deterministic positions regarding the historical development of non-Western nations. In these texts, European capitalism and colonialism almost had a civilizing mission for societies on the fringes of the West, constituting a necessary historical stage to be accomplished if the society in question aspired to overcome alienated and oppressive forms of sociability. This scheme was repeated numerous times by Marxist authors in the 19th and 20th century (e.g. Kautsky, Plekhanov, Mikhailovsky, etc.). During the XX and the XXI centuries, a series of authors from the "Third World" (e.g. Edward Said, Mariátegui, Walter Mignolo, Anibal Quijano, among others), many of them associated with the decoloniality or postcolonialism academic movements, have questioned whether Marx was an Eurocentric author and if marxism was suited as a method or analytical tool to comprehend non western societies. Other authors, like José Aricó, Pedro Scaron, Jean Tible and Kevin Anderson, have gone into his defense to propose that there is a shift, or various shifts, in Marx's views from the very Eurocentric perspective on colonialism, during the first years of the 1850's, to a more cautious and respectful view on other peoples' struggles' potentialities, after being involved in the International Workers' Association and in the Irish national liberation movement during the 1860's. The Marx of the late 1870s, who dedicated himself to reading anthropological and historical works on non-European societies, recognized the possibility of communist development out of tsarist Russia (and possibly for other non-capitalist societies), stating that the European historical development revealed only the specificities of these nations, not meaning universal and determined stages on the historical development of any other nation. Hence, there would be the possibility of overcoming oppressive and contradictory forms of social relations even in pre capitalist societies. The level of plasticity of the Marx's theoretical approach to incorporate social realities which have a different historical trajectory from the Western one can also be assessed through Marx's more systematic and rigorous writings on the very rise of capitalism and the articulation of different modes of production. When writing on historical changes and different modes of production, even if aiming specifically towards interpreting Western capitalist society, Marx had to deal with contingency and historical realities which are essentially different from capitalist's one. Still, it is not clear whether Marx had provided a general methodology or a metatheory on social formations or, at least, some insights on the comprehension of them in their generality. During the late 1960's and 70's, some French marxist anthropologists, who departed from Althusser's debate on social reproduction, tried to understand social formations of non capitalist societies based on production determinacy. These French social thinkers such as Godelier, Meillassoux, Terray, Rey, among others, unlike Marx, actively tried to provide such general theory. In our paper we evaluate their philosophical assumptions and their methodologies in order to illuminate the question we have proposed since it was an important episode in the history of marxist thought of a practical attempt to provide such a general theory on social formations. The question of a general theory or methodology inspired in Marx's work is still an open one and a most urgent one. In a world where the history of underprivileged classes and groups can no longer be ignored, Marxism as a practical and theoretical critical tool must address reflections to understand not only the relations from capitalist centers towards its pre capitalists peripheries but also the latter's history by their own means.

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book launch: complete works of rosa luxemburg,
volume iv, political writings 2, "on revolution" (1906–1909)

This is the second of three volumes of the Complete Works devoted to the central theme of Luxemburg's life and work – revolution. It contains essays, articles, pamphlets and speeches on the 1905–06 Russian Revolution and its aftermath, exploring such issues as the mass strike and other spontaneous forms of self-organization, the task of building broad-based democratic socialist parties, and the challenge facing efforts to forge a transition to socialism in developing countries. 80% of the material appearing in Volume IV has never before been translated into English. In this panel, discussants will explore how our understanding of Luxemburg's ideas is deepened, nuanced and even altered by the new material available in English, raise new questions about Luxemburg's significance for our era, and highlight the necessity of conducting this excavational work for socialist history. To focus discussion, while each discussant will speak on particular issues raised by the new work, there will be particular commentary on two key works translated for the first time 'Lessons from the Three Dumas' (translated from Polish) and 'Notes on the English Revolution'.

Sandra Rein

Abstract: Sandra will speak about the importance of the Collected Works project as a whole and how the volume was conceived and developed: including the process of the selection of texts. She will talk about the different audiences Luxemburg wrote for in the volume, the Polish party, the German workers and more, and what translating her work from the original source texts allows us to do. In particular, she will highlight how the newly translated material enriches some of the most well-known concepts in Luxemburg's work, including the mass strike.

Ben Lewis

Abstract: Ben will place Rosa Luxemburg's writings on revolution in this period in the context of broader debates in German Social Democracy about the significance of the 1905 German Revolution, placing Luxemburg's work in dialogue with Karl Kautsky's own responses to the revolution, and broader debates about the mass strike taking place in the SPD. He will also discuss how Luxemburg and others conceptualised the 1905 Revolution in the history of revolutions (in e.g. the Festschrift 1649–1789–1905, published for the first anniversary of Bloody Sunday, and written by Mehring, Kautsky and Luxemburg).

Julia Damphouse

Abstract: As a recent member of the Luxemburg Complete Works will speak on how the new material adds to and complicates the contemporary understanding of Luxemburg's thought – including popular misconceptions of her as a kind of spontaneist or anti-Bolshevik. In particular, she will discuss the overlooked similarities in how Luxemburg and Lenin conceptualised the proletariat taking and maintaining power, and present a reinterpretation of their differences. In doing so, Julia will attempt to illuminate what Rosa Luxemburg understood as 'democracy' and how it related to the development of capitalism: distinguishing her from those who co-opt her as representing a fundamentally anti-revolutionary 'democratic socialism'.

Rida Vaquas

Abstract: As a recent member of the Luxemburg Complete Works Editorial Board, Rida will try to answer the question of why the 1905 Revolution, and Luxemburg's response, has anything to say to the political and social crises we face today – as we are, as HM's theme puts it, facing the abyss. If Luxemburg understood the nineteenth century as performing the task of 'constitution of the class rule of the modern bourgeoisie': the 21st century so far seems to be the ossification of the class rule of the bourgeoisie. Rida will attempt to explain to what extent Luxemburg's concept of revolution can be meaningfully used to understand social upheavals today: raising the challenge of how we can have mass protests and indeed, mass 'political moments', without revolution. This will explore how Luxemburg's perspective on the necessity of political organization (Moreover, only in political organization, in their own class party, do workers recognize their ultimate historical goal – to liberate humanity from the hell of capitalism) can be applied to situations today where 'mass movements' have emerged outwith the structures of class parties. How do we establish class-based political organization in an era of what Anton Jager has described as 'hyper-politics'?

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colonial and imperial politics

Sam Salour, Teddy Paikin: in the Tracks of Political Marxism: Colonialism, Imperialism, and Capitalist Development
Abstract: This article engages with the debates that have taken place in the pages of Historical Materialism concerning the theoretical validity of certain fundamental tenets of the Political Marxist tradition. We offer an intellectual history of the development of the school and its critics with reference to three crucial moments: the early capitalist development/underdevelopment debate, the thesis of the separation of the economic and the political, and the early 2000s debate on the nature of imperialism. We show how the primary discord in each moment relates to the theoretical importance granted to the category of imperialism, explaining how this division subsequently acquired strong political undertones. Ultimately this paper seeks to reconcile the two positions by offering a charitable defense of Political Marxism while acknowledging the concerns of its critics, and pointing to contemporary work in the tradition that addresses its previous limitations.

Ahmad A. Borazan: The Great Divergence From a Middle Eastern Perspective

Abstract: The paper reevaluates the Neo-institutional explanations of the Great Divergence with a focus on the Middle East. It criticizes the current institutional account of the Middle East's underperformance in contrast to the West in the early centuries of the modern era. It argues for a developmental state-based explanation for the Great divergence. It seeks the answer at the intersection of ideology, systemic vulnerability, and political economy. The explanation is sought in a historical examination of the path-dependent evolution of the relationship between the religious scholars/ulama and the political authority, and the role of systemic vulnerability manifested in fiscal and external constraints in shaping the changing attitudes of the political rulers toward managing the economy and the private economic interests. The paper has important insights for explaining the Great Divergence and the current Middle Eastern political and economic debacles. It refutes the essentialist and culturalist interpretations of the Great Divergence and qualifies Douglas North's thesis on the importance of secure private property in capitalist development. Furthermore, the paper interrogates the primacy given to political authoritarianism in Acemoglu and Robinson (2019) and Kuru (2019).

Xavier Gaillard: Down With All Shahs and Caudillos: Anti-Imperialism, Radical Theology and the Fight Against Inequality in the Iranian and Nicaraguan Revolutions

Abstract: Following on previous comparative historical studies in theory of revolutions literature on the roots, processes and outcomes of the Iranian and Nicaraguan revolutions, this paper draws on my doctoral sociological research on the similarities between the heavily Marxist-influenced religious revisionism that radicalized sectors of the clergy and the citizenship of both countries to expand the comparison to how anti-imperialism – that is to say, the enunciated struggle against former dictatorial regimes' wholesale adherence to the United States in several matters economic, cultural and political – intersected (in either discourse, actions and programs) with the condemnation of widespread inequality and the championing of a "preferential option" for the poor. This study aims to present the main points of resemblance, in terms of ideology and operations, between some of the main actors in the revolutionary processes – namely orthodox or 'eclectic' Marxist groups often supported or informed by either religious factions or ideas (such as the Christian Base Communities and the FSLN in Nicaragua, or the Mujahedin-e-Khalq in Iran), in particular how they 'raised consciousness' with their denunciation of government-condoned and imperialist-tinged capitalism and foreign encroachment, portrayed as one of the (if not the sole) main factors of social injustice, and thus strategically framed them as one of the foremost reasons to revolt. Given the former dictatorships' similar relationships with the US, both countries' problematic history of American interference before 1979, and the notably resembling revolutionary processes and alliances between the various contenders, this research hopes to learn from the parallelisms between both cases to arrive at cross-area and cross-cultural conclusions on how anti-imperialist counter-hegemony was constructed and maintained until the fall of the regimes.

room: rg01
book launch: museums and wealth: the politics of contemporary art collections

Nizan Shaked: Museums and Wealth: The Politics of Contemporary Art Collections

Abstract: The modern museum is a model institution of the neo-liberal nation state. Until recently, Marxist scholars have focused on significant ideological analysis, yet, there has been no critique of the museum's political economy. Published in 2022, Museums and Wealth The Politics of Contemporary Art Collections fills this gap, developing

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methodologies for describing how public collecting establishes the symbolic value of art, which sustains its monetary value and its markets. The book offers an example of how sovereignty structures use the nonprofit system (and also NGOs) to establish constellations where the representation of power supports the state's ability to administer currency. The author, Nizan Shaked, moderates a panel where Angela Dimitrakaki, Marina Vishmidt, and Dave Beech discuss themes arising from the book. Shaked will first present a brief development of art's relation to the value-form, showing that its ability to siphons value from the general aggregate relies on the role and function of museums in the history of imperialist social relations. Panelists will engage questions such as: do we classify museum collections as commons, are they a necessary component of art's ability to hold value, are art institutions components of civil society, or should we account for them as forms of social reproduction? Can museums be transformed or should they be abolished, and what would each strategy entail? The panel will also ask if totalising analysis is a preferred path to racial, gender and other modalities of equity, and what distinguishes Marxist methods from the liberal discourse of equality and diversity.

Marina Vishmidt: Conflict of Disinterests: On Models of Accumulation and their Exceptionalisms

This paper will be a response to several of the compelling analyses in Museums and Wealth, and will focus on the structural and symbolic dimensions of arts institutions in national narratives about the accumulation of wealth and the public good through a comparison between the US model of the non-profit museum and the German kunstverein. The former represents a tighter imbrication of private advantage and public beneficence, while the latter can be seen as one example of a differentiated landscape where more mediations are installed between accumulation and cultural support. This comparison will then cycle back to Shaked's arguments for what a material transformation of the role of the museum – or public cultural infrastructure – in capitalism could look like, and the ways in which this transformation will rely on larger shifts that disassemble current understandings of 'public' and 'private' insofar as these categories are extrapolations of liberal tropes of 'interest' extended to the entirety of social life.

Angela Dimitrakaki: The Private–Public Nexus in the Arts: Ethics against Politics?

Should we be struck by the difference between Nizan Shaked's book subtitle 'The Politics of Contemporary Art Collections' and the newly launched demand of an 'Ethics of Collecting' (<https://ethicsofcollecting.org/>) endorsed by progressive artists and curators? What is the connection between ethics and politics in the function of the museum as a guardian of public heritage and creator of privatised value for contemporary art? The connection of public and private in relation to politics and ethics will be the focus of this paper. To complement Shaked's analysis of the American paradigm, this presentation will outline how the public-private plays out in the context of Greece, set in the European periphery. Greece is an interesting case study because of its connection to shipping capital and the cult of 'benefactors' that regulates cultural life and collections. Of particular interest is how contemporary right-wing discourse presents the collaboration between public and private as a modernisation of the arts. Even more interesting is that this happens against a background of increased authoritarianism that finds different expressions, including self-censorship in the cultural sector for fear of being blacklisted across public and private institutions. Ultimately, what does contemporary capitalism want when it pushes for a private-public collaboration in art?

Dave Beech: Condition Report: Museum, Document, Masquerade

Abstract: In response to Nizan Shaked's reexamination of the economic, political and social capture of the public by contemporary capitalism in her analysis of the institutional practices of art museums, this paper will pay close attention to the nature of the public of the art museum in comparison with the readership-public of the newspaper, the scene of the gallery, the discursive communities of the university, the spectacle of mass media, the crowd and the passerby on the street, the network and commons of digital technologies, the community of the neighbourhood and the forms of membership, participation and solidarity of protest, struggle and revolution.

room: bglt
capital(ism) and the handling of the covid19 pandemic

Toby Green: The Covid Consensus – A Critique from the Left

Abstract: In this paper, Toby Green discusses some of the main arguments in the forthcoming second edition of his coauthored book with Thomas Fazi, The Covid Consensus: The Global Assault on Democracy and the Poor -- a Critique from the Left (Hurst, January 2023). This critique provides an internationalist-left perspective on the world's Covid-19 response, which has had devastating consequences both for the Global South and for the poor and disadvantaged in Western societies. As the fortunes of the very richest soared, nationwide shutdowns caused small

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and medium enterprises to disappear off the map; violence against women to spike; and tens of millions of children to have their education disrupted or in the worst cases destroyed. The paper tackles head-on the refusal of the global political class and mainstream media to report the true extent of the socioeconomic assault against the poor and of the erosion of democratic processes brought about by unprecedented policies.

Mike Haynes: Class and the Differential Harms of Lockdowns

Abstract: During the Coronavirus pandemic of 2020-2022 governments responded by using non pharmaceutical interventions to try to control infections. These 'lockdowns' required governments to take on exceptional powers. These extended to limiting movement within countries and in some instances between them. The left generally supported these measures, often arguing that they did not go far enough. They attacked scientists who doubted their wisdom. A significant number on the left even claimed that lockdowns could lead to the elimination of the virus in the form of 'zero covid'.

This paper will argue that such analyses ignored the differential impact of lockdowns between countries and within them. Except in the extreme cases of more or less complete border closures lockdowns cannot be shown to have had more than a small, temporary effect in transmission. But they did have huge social consequences. The paper will explore the role of class in determining these shorter- and longer-term effects of lockdowns. It will argue that those on the left who supported these measures failed to confront the extent to which, by virtue of the social positions they occupied, they were offered superior protection from both the virus and the negative economic and social effects the non-pharmaceutical interventions.

Misreading the challenge the pandemic created for capitalism, the pro lockdown left instead exposed the extent to which they had become an offshoot of what some see as the professional-managerial class, a Brahmin group (Piketty). The paper will argue that pandemic raises the question of how, if ever again, the left can claim to speak for the common interest of all workers wherever they are.

Panagiotis Sotiris: The Pandemic Revisited: Thinking Beyond Lockdowns and 'Zero-Covid' Fantasies

Abstract: The aim of this presentation is to revisit some strategic questions regarding the ways that the Left responded to the pandemic. The starting point is that important segments of the Left basically accepted the main tenets of the dominant strategy of handling the pandemic, both in the sense of a strongly disciplinary approach, exemplified in the alignment with the 'lockdown' strategy and rhetoric, despite its many limitations, and the also the acceptance of subsequent measures and strategies that also pointed towards a 'disciplinary' logic, such variations of 'vaccine passes'. Moreover, segments of the Left not only endorsed aspects of the 'zero-covid' strategies, that also proved to be untenable (and authoritarian if we look at the Chinese example), but also were very critical of anyone trying to challenge the dominant strategies. The aim of this presentation is to suggest that these limitations of Left responses to the pandemic had to do with two important and interlinked contradictions of contemporary left-wing formations: (a) An inability to have a critical approach to science, which led to accepting the neutrality of science, in contrast to a long Marxist critique of how scientific practices are conditioned by economic, political and ideological relations of force that point to their non-neutrality. (b) An inability to think of radical alternative social configurations and ways of organizing social life to deal with a health emergency in ways that went beyond the limits of authoritarian statism. However, the very tragic experience of the pandemic points to the fact that it was possible to have an alternative strategy beyond both an authoritarian and disciplinary logic and a neoliberal 'laissez faire' approach. A strategy that could be described as a democratic 'biopolitics from below', based on solidarity, collective self-organizing and inventiveness, protection of the vulnerable, and refusal to suspend sociality.

Christakis Georgiou: Capital in General or Big Pharma in Particular? Corporate Power and the Handling of the Covid19 Syndemic

Abstract: Much of the Left's attitude on public health measures (both non-pharmaceutical and pharmaceutical interventions) during the covid19 syndemic has been informed by an underlying theoretical understanding of how corporate capital in general exercises power in contemporary advanced capitalist societies. In this view, corporate capital as a whole pushes in the same direction. This view has no space for intra-capital, sectoral splits over public policy. As a result, the self-evident fact that NPIs were disliked by many sectors of the capitalist class led many on the Left to conclude that those policies were capital-unfriendly – and that they deserved our support. Consequently, opposition to the whole set of authoritarian public health measures (from lockdowns to mask mandates and vaccine coercion) governments went on to implement was interpreted as a capital-friendly tactic espoused by the Trumpist right in the US and the radical right in the EU.

This paper starts by challenging that theoretical premise, before showing how the whole range of measures implemented have been functional to the interests of at least one sector of corporate capital in particular, namely

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the pharmaceutical corporations, and how these corporations had a decisive influence in shaping policy to fit their interests. I explore how the political economy of the pharmaceutical industry and its political power have shaped the policy response. Theoretically, the intra-capital splits involved in the handling of the covid19 syndemic can be understood as reflecting a struggle over the inter-sectoral redistribution of surplus value leading to surplus profits for the pharmaceutical industry through rent-seeking political activity.

This framework can account for the major aspects of the handling of the syndemic: the intentional use of fear and lockdowns to create demand for a pharmaceutical Deus ex machina (a vaccine or a new antiviral drug); the aggressive and in many places coercive promotion of that Deus ex machina; the protection of the industry's rents through the patenting of those drugs (and thus the vaccine apartheid that arose in 2021); the systematic discrediting of effective generic treatments; and the silencing of scientific and political opposition to these policies.

room: llt (dlt)
workers' inquiry stream: histories of workers' inquiry

Matt Myers: Robert Linhart's Marxism

Abstract: This paper will be the first to offer a full survey of the intellectual contribution of Robert Linhart to the history of Marxism in either French or English. Linhart was the co-founder of the UJCml (Union of Marxist-Leninist Communist Youth) and its leader from 1966-spring 1968, leading member of the Gauche prolétarienne (GP), co-editor of the GP's monthly *J'accuse*. He is best known, however, for his (still untranslated) pathbreaking book *Lénine Taylor et les paysans* (1976) and his bestselling memoir as an workplace entryist at Citroën's Choisy car plant in 1969, *L'Établi*. His work remains little known despite his important political contribution to May 1968 and Maoism in France. Linhart appears in a number of memoirs and studies of '68, has been the subject of an article in *Libération* and a long radio interview on France Culture in 2011, and parts of his work has been the subject of intellectual study, though none of these analyse the full arc of development and his contribution to the contemporary Marxist tradition as a militant and writer. The paper will provide an intellectual history of Linhart alongside his entwined political commitments (from his membership of the PCF's Union des étudiants communistes (UEC) to the present). In particular, it will analyse his contribution to history of Marxism (particularly of the Russian Revolution and global Maoism), workers' enquiry tradition, the sociology of work, and peasant studies. It will also analyse the development of his thought from the late 1970s – through less well-known academic articles written as a teacher-researcher in sociology at the University of Paris 8 – until his 1981 study of sugarcane workers in North East Brazil, *Le sucre et la faim*. The paper will use more and less well-known published sources, archival material from the ENS Rue d'Ulm (where Linhart was a student in 1968), and an extensive oral history interview by Linhart with the paper's author in February 2020. It will also contextualise the biographical account in his daughter Virginie Linhart's 2008 book, *Le jour où mon père s'est tu* (particularly Linhart's "mutism" after his suicide attempt following the death of Hélène Althusser (with whom, alongside Louis Althusser, he was very close friends).

Jonas Grahn: Workers Speak For Themselves! – CLR James, Raya Dunayevskaya, Grace Lee, and the Founding of a New Marxist Research Method

Abstract: In Detroit in the 1940s CLR James, Raya Dunayevskaya, and Grace Lee found themselves upset with the racism and dogmatic thinking in various Trotskyist groups at the time. They therefore felt a need to direct Marxist theory and the socialist movement toward a development where racism and sexism were not considered a distraction, but central, to the revolutionary movement. In order to do so, they started exploring other sources than the given standard literature and new ways of gaining knowledge of the present. Most importantly, they started to talk directly to workers, and especially to Black workers in the auto factories. These workers, Charles Denby and James Boggs were two of them, talked about the racism they were exposed to in the factory, both by bosses and other coworkers. But they also told about the racism they met outside the factory walls, at pubs and restaurants, at their kid's schools, and in their neighborhoods. James, Dunayevskaya, and Lee, assisted these workers in writing down their experiences, and also in contextualizing it and in developing a conceptual and theoretical framework together with them. Today, we can conclude that this was a pioneering attempt of doing a form of radical ethnographic work, at a time when intellectuals showed no or little interest in what workers thought or did. "While the workers acted and showed they had a mind of their own, the intellectuals parroted empty phrases and ignored the workers. There has never been a greater theoretical void in the Marxist movement or out of it" Dunayevskaya wrote in *Marxism and Freedom*, from 1958. In this paper, I will explore what underlying notion or idea James, Dunayevskaya, and Lee had in their original attempt of involving voices from below in their work as activists. I will also discuss how they did it, what they thought were important, and why. By rediscovering and studying the

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thoughts and forces that motivated this moment, when a new Marxist research method was born, we can find inspiration and new perspectives on how to develop our own research today.

Alan Tuckman: The Institute For Workers' Control and the Workers' Inquiry Tradition in Britain in the 1960s and 1970s

Abstract: The Institute for Workers' Control (IWC) was established, significantly, in 1968 although this was following a series of seminars dating back to 1964. The founding of the IWC also drew from the emergent 'new left' and workplace trade unionism, particularly the growth in shop steward numbers and organisation. Comments and criticism have tended to represent the IWC as principally the work of three founding and prominent academics: Ken Coates, Tony Topham and Michael Barrett Brown. However, while they were the most productive authors, they were united in their academic practice being not as mainstream University staff but as tutors in continuing education departments engaged with shop steward and other adult classes. These trade union classes were to active trade unionists and allowed considerable reflection on industrial development in their industries by shop stewards. Topham, for instance, for many years took classes with the Hull docks shop stewards committee – a strong force in national union as well as politics – who could reflect on the efforts for decasualisation and later containerisation in a series of IWC publications. This drew from the 'new left' bottom-up approach to class better known in work by E.P. Thompson or by History Workshop which emerged from this very milieu.

Drawing from publications and unpublished papers of the IWC, this paper considers the activities of the IWC in attempting to construct an alternative agenda for industrial organisation based around the method of workers' inquiry. The plenary conference platforms were well reported, with then Labour front bench spokesperson and Cabinet Minister Tony Benn, and union leaders such as Hugh Scanlon getting considerable publicity especially from a press projecting a panic about left wing policies and union control. However, even at an early stage, some associated with WI were in attendance. Tom Bottomore, responsible for an influential distribution of Marx's' Inquiry, gave a talk at the initial 1964 seminar. At the 1967 conference E.P. Thompson and C.L.R. James had an exchange over the May Day Manifesto, a definitive document of the UK 'new left'. More important than this circumstantial evidence of the influence of the workers' inquiry approach we look at the activities of a number of the industrial seminars which met and developed on the pedagogy of the shop steward classes. These brought together active shop stewards, especially around the emergent combine committees, alongside trade union officials and academics, to research, reflect, and critique, industrial developments at a time of radical change. Industrial capitalism was going through a strong phase of internationalisation and rationalisation, with the Wilson Labour Government of 1964-70 both promoting a substantial wave of corporate takeovers and mergers, while complaining about the influence of 'the gnomes of Zurich'. Workers were beginning to develop strategies to challenge this rationalisation. In 1969 shop stewards at GEC-AEI-EE on Merseyside proposed a sit-in to challenge redundancies and plant closures, a proposal assisted by the IWC, although a strategy overturned at a mass meeting. The following year the shop stewards at the Upper Clyde Shipyards, another construct of the Labour Government, challenged the newly elected Conservative Government attempt at closing yards by their work-in. A wave of occupations followed. While the IWC became widely associated with this strategy, and especially with the establishment of workers' cooperatives from the closures, there were other strategies emerging through and around the discussions and debates.

Some of the industrial seminars began to research their own industries: motors, aircraft, docks, chemicals, as well as public sector. All were experiencing the rationalisation with the resultant redundancies and closures. Data was accumulated, circulated, and sometimes forming the basis of IWC publications, especially in their Bulletin and in their pamphlet series. The activity around this group, consisting of shop stewards and union officials, complemented by a group of academics, facilitated both conference seminars and specialist meetings, ultimately produced a detailed workers inquiry into the motor industry. Facilitation also occurred for shop stewards elsewhere, with specific support given to the expansion of combine committees and extending their role into plans for companies and industries. A central question arising for workers facing company plans for closures, mass redundancies, or other detrimental changes, changes argued to be inevitable and essential by management, was their own alternative. Some of the most impacted companies were rooted in the armaments industry, the IWC brought together Combine Committee members from Vickers and from Lucas Aerospace discussing common concerns. When Tony Benn, newly appointed Secretary of State for Industry in the Wilson government, suggested to the Lucas Shop Steward Combine Committee that they proposed their own corporate plan to challenge the company plans for rationalisation and concentration on defence work, not only was he drawing from the ethos he had been absorbing through the IWC the Combine were also acclimatised to a bottom-up initiative. After surveying the various Lucas plants, they produced their plan for socially useful production. The approximately 150 potential products suggested that the shop stewards put forward as capable of being manufacture with available skills and facilities included hybrid vehicles, heat pumps, and kidney dialysis machines. The plan was dismissed by Lucas management, criticised by some unions as the product of an unofficial body, and stonewalled by government. The workers' inquiry was taken

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up by a range of shop steward combine committees, including at Vickers, often modelled on Lucas Aerospace but never as developed. As the Conservative Government replaced Labour, and the neo-liberal policies of Thatcherism began to attack interventionism the idea of socially useful production became embedded in an alternative strategy coming up from the shop floor. However, while such initiatives remained in the sediment of workers arsenal, as Thatcherism established itself trade unionism, and particularly shop floor organisation, was drawn into a fundamental struggle for survival. But, as organically rooted in workers own experience, worker inquiry and the demand for socially useful production, has reemerged as the wasteful anarchy of capitalist production become challenged.

room: r201

latin american marxism i: chile

Lorenzo Feltrin, Gabriela Julio Medel: Noxious Deindustrialisation and Extractivism: Chile in the International Division of Labour and Noxiousness

Abstract: This paper interrogates the concept of ‘noxious deindustrialisation’ – employment deindustrialisation in areas where significantly noxious industries are still operating – in the context of economies based on extractivism. Starting from the case of Chile – and the industrial area of Quintero-Puchuncaví more specifically – we argue that noxious deindustrialisation in the Global South differs from the same phenomenon Global North because the two stand on opposite sides of the international division of labour and noxiousness. In Chile, industrialisation was reversed since Pinochet’s neoliberal coup d’état forcibly returned the country’s economy to a ‘classic’ colonial function as an exporter of primary products, restoring employment precarity and deepening ecological destruction at once. This legacy makes noxious deindustrialisation even more intractable, as the simple closure of large-scale polluting industries – such as the Quintero-Puchuncaví industrial area – would deepen the extractive nature of Chile’s economy, while their permanence has thus far meant the protracted existence of so-called ‘sacrifice zones’, where communities are exposed to severe noxiousness while receiving very meagre socio-economic benefits in return. The solutions envisioned by the involved actors, from new versions of left-wing developmentalism to the *buen vivir* perspective, will require a radical transformation of global socioecological hierarchies.

Fernando Quintana Carreño: Towards the Re-Constitution of the Common: Social and Strategic Notes on the Chilean Revolt and Constituent Process

Abstract: This presentation is an attempt to offer a provisional balance of the experience of Chile’s 2019 revolt and the consequent constitutional process, from a socialist point of view.

First, I will offer a summary account of the main events that characterized the revolt. In that account, I will provide a class analysis of the social actors that participated in it, and then I will outline the main strategic dilemmas of the left-wing sectors that intervened. As it will be clear during my exposition, Chilean neoliberalism has produced a specific kind of ‘alienated subjectivity’ (in the sense of Georg Lukács) that played a huge influence on the outcome of the whole process, especially on the way in which the popular movement relates to representative institutions, such as political parties and authorities.

Secondly, I will expose the main features of the constituent process, and I will explain how this process articulates with the ongoing crisis of Chilean democracy. My provisional hypothesis (the plebiscite will take place on September 4th) is that, while the rejection of the proposed constitution would severely aggravate the democratic crisis, the approval would not solve it either. The crisis of democracy is rooted on a deeper level, and it has to do with the social and cultural effects of neoliberalism. Overcoming it requires a long-term political response.

Finally, I will try draw some practical conclusions for the working classes in the future of class struggle in Chile. The question I will try to address is: How to sustain radical mass politics, in a context of individualism, mass disorganization, intense ideological manipulation and recomposition of authoritarian ideologies? For me, the key is in the struggle for the re-constitution of the common as a strategic orientation for the political parties of the working class. That is, building strategies for cultural change, through the practical demonstration that the needs of the individual are best met when they are addressed collectively. Recovering basic democratic-republican ideas is a necessary condition for the promotion of a truly socialist agenda.

Andrés Cabrera Sanhueza: Crisis of Hegemony and Constitutional Dispute in Chile: An Analysis of the Political Situation in the Aftermath of September’s Plebiscite (2019–2022)

Abstract: The paper proposes an analysis of the tactics and strategies developed by the main political forces in Chile, especially the left, in a context of crisis of hegemony, focusing on the period 2019 to 2022. Since the start of this period, Chile has experienced the emergence of an uprising (2019), the development of a constitutional

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process (2020-22), and the electoral victory of the left and Gabriel Boric in the last presidential election (2021). This process will complete its most important stage with the plebiscite to be held on 4 September 2022. On that date, the Chilean people will vote on whether to approve or reject the constitutional proposal drafted by the Constitutional Convention. In light of this, the presentation will offer a preliminary interpretation of the results and, most importantly, an outlook based on the new situation and the tactical and strategic challenges for the left in Chile.

room: b103

book launch: jamie allinson, the age of counter-revolution

jamie allinson, ibrahim halawi, miriyam aouragh

This panel, in line with the conference theme, will discuss a new book on the crucial question of contemporary counter-revolution: Jamie Allinson's recently published *The Age of Counter-Revolution: States and Revolutions in the Middle East*. In this book, Allinson examines from a Marxist perspective the fate of the 'Arab Spring' uprisings that began in 2011. Although these uprisings have come to symbolise defeated hopes for democracy and social justice in the Middle East, in the book Allinson demonstrates how these defeats were far from inevitable. Rather than conceptualising the 'Arab Spring' as a series of failed revolutions, Allinson argues it is better understood as a series of successful counter-revolutions. By comparing the uprisings in Tunisia, Egypt, Syria, Bahrain, Libya and Yemen, this book shows how these profoundly revolutionary situations were overturned by counterrevolutions.

Placing the fate of the Arab uprisings in a global context, Allinson reveals how counter-revolutions rely on popular support and cross borders to forge international alliances. By connecting the Arab uprisings to the decade of global protest that followed them, the book demonstrates how new forms of counter-revolution have rendered it near impossible to implement political change without first enacting fundamental social transformation.

The panel will begin with an introduction to the book by the author, Jamie Allinson of the University of Edinburgh. Ibrahim Halawi of Royal Holloway, University of London and Miriyam Aouragh of the University of Westminster will then respond with their own discussion and critique of the book, followed by a broader discussion.

room: b104

critical political ideas

Chris James Newlove: Foucault's Misunderstood Maoist Phase: Between Nietzsche and Marx

Abstract: Recent research on Michel Foucault has placed his turn towards Neoliberalism within the political context of the 'second left' tendency within the French Socialist Party and the rise of the 'new philosophers'. Prior to this shift, Foucault's activism with the Prison's Information Group (GIP) alongside the Maoist Proletarian Left (GP) is predominantly described as related to his notion of the role of the 'specific intellectual' within single issue movements against disciplinary power. Drawing on the Collège De France lectures and the 'popular justice' interview, this paper argues that during the period of 1970-73 Foucault advocated a Maoist politics while theoretically his lectures oscillated between Nietzschean and Marxist conceptual poles. The Collège De France lectures highlight the deeply Nietzschean themes of Foucault's work beyond purely methodological questions. The lectures also contain a wide ranging deployment of Marxist concepts, rather than merely their 'local use'. Theoretically and politically contextualising Foucault's increasing hostility towards Marxism from the Abnormal lectures (1974-75) onwards is crucial to understanding his later shift towards Neoliberalism.

Conrad Hamilton: Twilight of the Immanent Idols: Nietzsche, Deleuze, Land

Abstract: The past few years of Marxist theoretical discourse have been defined, in part, by a reevaluation of Nietzsche. Once hailed as a thinker whose flat ontology of power could help get us beyond both the dialectical residues within Marxism as well as the limitations of a narrow class-based praxis, contemporary assessments have stressed the dangers of his work: how, for instance, his collapsing of the distinction between rational justification and causation repudiates the rationalizing drive of the Enlightenment (Brassier), or how the amorphousness of the category of "power" lends itself to neoliberal appropriation (Losurdo). Yet while these attempts to critically reckon with Nietzsche's legacy via the disentombing of the late Lukács are welcome, less energy has been invested in tracing out the consequences of his influence, both for poststructuralism as well as more recent, reactionary currents. Exemplary of the influence of Nietzsche on poststructuralism is Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's **Anti-Oedipus**. At bottom a prolix, post-'68 political manifesto for what Althusser called the "French middle strata," Nietzsche's influence in the text is decisive to its de facto affirmation of capitalism. Keeping with the Nietzschean ethos

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of immanence, Deleuze and Guattari conceptualize capitalism as being the only system capable of liberating the libidinal energies necessary to achieve its own veritable overcoming. While this argument is perhaps defensible on Marxist grounds, what's troubling is the conclusion they derive from it: that any attempt to escape capitalism via negation (that is, Leninist vanguardism) is tantamount to slave morality, and that Third World "de-linking" of the type advocated for by Samir Amin will only lead to an interminably violent retrogression to despotism.

In the '70s and '80s, these ideas contributed at best to kind of diffuse and ineffectual "minoritarian" politics; at worst, to the legitimization of the "socialist" (but not, certainly, communist) position of François Mitterrand. In the '90s, however, it took on a more ominous form – a form epitomized by the writings of Nick Land. For Land, Deleuze's thought needs to be purified of the moralistic fetters he places upon it: a process that, once complete, will reveal to us a transfigured Deleuze, who unambiguously sees the intensification of the capitalism as the only way forward. From this starting point, Land – true to his word – would eventually do away with Deleuze's Marxian Nietzscheanism, adopting a set of reactionary positions eerily similar to those held by Nietzsche himself. Whereas Nietzsche called for the usage of the eugenics of good health to bring about the master race, Land wants to use transhumanism to accomplish the same thing ("hyper-racism"). Whereas Nietzsche thinks capitalist leveling will compel a "higher sovereign species," to distinguish itself, Land wants micro-states run by joint-stock capitalists. And whereas Nietzsche wanted to import Chinese labourers en masse to swat away the social struggles that had gripped Europe, Land's advocacy of a China vulgarly conceived as a capitalist success story amounts to the same thing: the championing of cheaply exploitable Chinese labour.

room: g51
marxist political economy ii

Janaína de Faria: From 'Money as Capital' to 'Capital as Capital': A Further Transition in Capital

Abstract: In *A Companion to Marx's Capital*, David Harvey particularly emphasises the importance of Volume II of *Capital* for grasping Marx's overall project, but considers his methodological exclusion of credit from the analysis of capital reproduction schemes in Volume II as "annoying and frustrating" (Harvey, 2013:5). In this paper, I reconstruct Marx's theoretical edifice from Volumes I to III, focusing on the categorical treatment of money, capital and credit. Its core argument is that the step-by-step conceptual moments in Marx's *Capital* cannot be considered disconnectedly: the famous concept of commodity fetishism in volume I culminates with the analysis of capital fetishism in the Manuscripts of 1864-5 (the basis for volume III of *Capital*). This is central for understanding how values socially created in production are transmuted in circulation into revenues, appearing as natural offspring of things: labour earns wages, capital yields profit and interest, and land generates ground rent. Marx called it political economy's trinity formula and identified interest-bearing capital as the most fetishist form of capital. Put it simply, the investigation of interest-bearing capital – the basis of the credit system – unfolds how it is possible for money to yield more money "as it is the property of pear trees to produce pears" (Manuscripts of 1864-5: 493). The categorical transition in volume I from 'money' to 'capital' is widely discussed in the scholarly literature and, although a position in the debate is presented, the main novelty of the analysis is the identification of the logical transition from money as capital to capital as capital, when Marx introduces the concept of interest-bearing capital. The integration of volume II in the theoretical discussion of hoarding and credit – in a different sense than David Harvey's – is also unique. Finally, I return to the methodological argument brought about by Harvey. I attempt to show that "the least-read and least-considered of the three volumes of *Capital*" (Harvey, 2013:6), as Harvey describes Volume II, does constitute a crucial step within Marx's overall exposition, but cannot be treated apart from the methodological unfolding of categories that ultimately shed light on the fetishist character of capital – the cornerstone of Marx's critique of political economy, an aspect that Harvey seems to overlook.

Michael Roberts, Guglielmo Carchedi: A Marxist Theory of Inflation

Abstract: Conventional mainstream theories of inflation have failed to explain changes in price inflation in modern fiat currency economies. Both the quantity of money theory of inflation and the Keynesian demand-pull, cost-push have been proved wrong empirically; forcing the mainstream to fall back on a subjectivist inflation expectations theory.

Mainstream economics is in a confusion about what just does drive inflation in the prices of goods and services. In particular, there is no satisfactory explanation for the overall secular decline in the US inflation rate in the post-war period, or for the period of disinflation after 1980 in spite of a first inflationary period before 1980.

This paper argues that mainstream theories of inflation falter because they are not based on the law of value that operates in the capitalist mode of production. We offer an explanation based on Marx's value theory. We argue

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that changes in the US inflation rate since 1960 depend, primarily on a tendentially decreasing fall in profitability of capital, and secondarily on the response of monetary authorities in a world of fiat currencies. We provide a model of a value rate of inflation (VRI) that provides a strong explanation of consumer price inflation in modern economies, with some predictive power..

Andy Higginbottom: Half a Step Forward: Evaluating Arthur's *The Spectre of Capital*

This paper is a critical commentary on Chris Arthur's new book *The Spectre of Capital*, concentrating on Chapters 13 and 14, an interpretation of Marx's transformation procedure.

In contrast to Arthur's earlier contributions, that argue that Capital needs to repositioned as a homology of Hegel's Science of Logic, here Arthur takes fuller account of the political economic content. This is reflected in his reworked version of the conceptual development of industrial capital, that nonetheless claims to be a better sequence of exposition than Marx. Instead of the full Hegel we now have the half Hegel.

There are many insights in Arthur's treatment of the transformation of value to price. He points out a major misunderstanding in much current literature that takes simple commodity prices as a starting point, rather than a contrasting hypothetical outcome. However, Arthur repeats two basic errors – a) failing to distinguish capital used up from capital advanced b) presuming a constant equivalence across sectors between labour time and money– that obviate a well-grounded solution based on the capital's domination of living labour. Furthermore, Arthur adopts the interpretation of Reuten that workers in the high organic composition sectors are exploited at a higher rate of surplus value than workers in other sectors, which can become a foil for eurocentrism. Arthur writes from a high level of scholarship, but even his half Hegel is not enough to draw out the revolutionary consequences of Marx's transformation.

room: g51a
abolitionist praxis

Ashley J. Bohrer, Wilson Sherwin, Stella Becerril

The current conjuncture renders visible many realities about political struggles under late capitalism. One of which remains particularly glaring: the insufficiency of reforms. In this panel, three Marxist Feminists of disparate disciplines and backgrounds discuss some of the most pertinent lessons from contemporary and past struggles for abolition, drawing on their particular expertise in rent strikes, carceral abolition, and the struggle against waged work respectively. Discussing Marx's oeuvre, as well as on-the-ground struggles faced by organizers, this panel melds theory and everyday experiences as rich and edifying material on which to model future efforts. In bringing together these three forms of abolition, the panel engages with productive questions about the meaning of abolition (across prisons, rent, work, and of course the ever-present context of the abolition of slavery), and the relationship of abolition to communism.

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room: bglt

**meet with the editors of
historical materialism**

Historical Materialism: Research in Critical Marxist Theory is a Marxist journal, appearing four times a year, based in London. Founded in 1997, it asserts that, notwithstanding the variety of its practical and theoretical articulations, Marxism constitutes the most fertile conceptual framework for analysing social phenomena, with an eye to their overhaul. In our selection of materials, we do not favour any one tendency, tradition or variant. Marx demanded the 'merciless criticism of everything that exists': for us that includes Marxism itself. Details for submitting articles to the journal can be found [here](#).

Since 1997, the Editorial Board has extended its activities beyond the production of the journal. We contribute to producing the Historical Materialism Book Series published first in hardback by Brill followed by a paperback edition published by Haymarket. We organise the annual HM London conference in mid-November, now in its nineteenth year. Affiliated networks have organised conferences in Ankara, Athens, Beirut, Delhi, Istanbul, Montreal, New York, Rome, Sydney and Toronto.



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room: rb01
hope in hopeless times

John Holloway, Ana Cecilia Dinerstein, Marcel Stoetzler, Beverley Best

How can we think of revolutionary hope in the present age of capitalist catastrophe? There are no significant revolutionary parties and the experiences of trying to overcome capitalism through the conquest of the state have proved disastrous. The creation and proliferation of anti-capitalist spaces or cracks is all-important but can they bring down the power of money? Perhaps we need to see how our struggles have produced a new fragility in money, expressed in the unprecedented expansion of debt in the last forty years. Money, the great container of our lives within the logic of capital, is in crisis. The attempt to restore monetary validation is at the core of capitalist struggle at this moment. What does this mean for revolutionary hope and for anti-capitalist struggle?

room: g3
book launch:
matt huber, climate change as class war: building socialism on a warming planet

Matt Huber, David Schwartzman, Feyzi Ismail, Richard Seymour, Steve Maher

In this groundbreaking analysis, Matthew T. Huber argues that the carbon-intensive capitalist class must be confronted with its disproportionate effect on the climate. Yet, at present the climate movement is unpopular and rooted in the professional class, where it remains incapable of meeting this dizzying challenge. As an alternative, Huber proposes a climate politics to appeal to the majority – the working class – and he evaluates the Green New Deal as a first attempt to channel working-class material and ecological interests. He advocates building union power in the very energy system that must be transformed. In the end, winning the climate struggle will require an internationalist approach based on planetary working-class solidarity.

room: rg01
culture stream: there are plenty of businesses like show business:
launch event for 'marxist keywords for performance'

Jaswinder Blackwell-Pal, Shane Boyle, Caoimhe Mader McGuinness, Clio Unger, Martin Young

There has been growing interest in questions of labour process, management and financial infrastructures within the arts, and the study of theatre and performance specifically. But there lacks shared critical understanding of what terms such as "value" or "capital" mean and how they can be applied when studying performance forms like theatre, dance, or live art. The range of meanings that performance scholars attach to the word "commodity" or even the seemingly obvious entities of "class" and "the state," for example, reveals more than a slight degree of imprecision or disagreement. It indicates a lack of systematic thought and, consequently, a need to interrogate the categories used for discussing performance's political economy. Collectively written by nine people, "Marxist Keywords for Performance" (2021) contributes to growing critical attention within theatre and performance studies towards political economy by defining key Marxist concepts and exploring how they can be applied to study performance. We will present on the first published iteration of our project, recently published in a joint issue of The Journal of Dramatic Theory and Criticism and Global Performance Studies: GPS, this panel introduces our aims in writing the keywords and reflects on our collective research. As Tithi Bhattacharya (2017) reminds us, the aim of any critique of political economy should be to "restore to the 'economic' process its messy, sensuous, gendered, raced, and unruly component: living human beings capable of following orders – as well as of flouting them." A critique of the political economy of performance, as we understand it, should have this same goal. In this panel, we introduce the first five keywords of the project (capital, class, commodity, the state, and value) and discuss their potential use as a critical research and teaching resource for scholars interested in historical materialism and in the relation between political economy and performance.

Performance and Political Economy (PPE) began meeting as a monthly seminar in London in May 2018. This iteration of our keywords project has nine contributors, but our collaborative research process involves input from the wider collective. The contributors to "Marxist Keywords for Performance" are: Jaswinder Blackwell-Pal, Shane Boyle, Ash Dilks, Caoimhe Mader McGuinness, Olive McKeon, Lisa Moravec, Alessandro Simari, Clio Unger, Martin Young.

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room: bglt
salvage: neil davidson's marxism: a roundtable

Jamie Allinson, Luiz Renato Martins, Cat Boyd, Smina Akhtar, Charles Post (O)

Neil Davidson (1957-2020) was Scotland's leading Marxist historian and sociologist, whose intellectual contribution spanned across the globe. Neil's seminal works *The Origins of Scottish Nationhood* and *Discovering the Scottish Revolution* showed Scotland to have been one of the first countries to experience the uneven and combined development of capitalism and a 'revolution from above' in the late 18th century. Neil extended his work to the historical and conceptual status of bourgeois revolutions, the relationship between nation-states and capital, and the uneven and combined development of modernism. His 2012 book *How Revolutionary were the Bourgeois Revolutions?* comprehensively argued for the reinstatement of the concept of the 'bourgeois revolutions' for the understanding of global modernity. These were among nearly one hundred academic articles and political interventions as well as four collections of essays Neil published during his lifetime. His work was translated into Spanish, Portuguese and Mandarin and he was a frequent fixture at conferences in Europe, North America and Brazil. This Historical Materialism panel, the first to convene since Neil's tragically early death, takes the opportunity to reflect on and develop Neil's contribution to Marxism.

room: llt (dlt)
workers' inquiry stream: romano alquati and co-research

Francesca Ioannilli: Alquati's "Modellone" and His Hypothesis on Hyper-Industrialization and the Centrality of the Reproduction of Human Capacity Based on Co-research As An Autonomous Political Process'

Abstract: "It is a road with moments of fatigue and perhaps even boredom for those who feel they have to travel it, because they consider this world unlivable and therefore want to transform it in the direction of their desires that cannot be satisfied in it (this is the great point of the motivation of the co-researchers). If one is already satisfied in Capitalism and enjoys it and living in it enough, conricerca is of no interest". R.Alquati

The best known Alquati is associated to 'Quaderni rossi' and 'Classe operaia' experience, almost completely unknown is the theoretical production of the 1980s and 1990s.

Alquati's path is always an open process of revolutionary research which cannot be fixed in a static group or identity. In the same way, categories have never constituted postulates valid once and for all: on the contrary they are variables to be thought, verified and rethought continuously, elements of an overall method of reasoning. It is precisely through this processual method, always keeping the decisive question of subjectivity at the centre, that Alquati's elaboration and research paths of the 1970s those on the 'middle-class university', the 'social worker' and the formation of an 'intellectual proletariat', are of great importance and can be understood better now than when they were proposed. In this sense, if the end of the 1970s is read and interpreted by most as a moment of radical change, as the end of the sphere of production as an engine of wealth or the exhaustion of the factory and industry, Alquati speaks instead of 'hyper-industry'. With this category he highlights how capitalist restructuring as a response to the cycle of previous struggles rather than the end of a mode of production marks the extension of that mode of action to other spheres. What we are experiencing is not the exhaustion of that process but its radicalisation. By industry we do not mean the physical structure but the way of organising human action, it is the form of incorporation of social knowledge. The process of industrialisation thus indicates the progressive workisation and the subjection of numerous spheres of the reproductive sphere to capitalist rationality.

In the 1980s Alquati began drafting the 'modellone' – literally "big model" – that is a proposal for interpreting the reality of contemporary capitalism: it is a complex system, because the reality in which we live is complex, divided and hierarchised by levels of reality. The levels are modes of being of the system, different determinations of the same process of production of domination. The system is not horizontal but hierarchically stratified, it has a pyramid shape based on the specific purposes of the multiple processes that are part of the capitalistic system and characterise it as such. It is this ability to read complexity from the point of view of partiality that allows him to move from the detailed and specific analysis of a dimension that therefore appears static, to a dynamic dimension. Thus, taking up the Marxian method of constructing forms of abstraction, he is able to place the present transformations within a broader process.

The reflection on human active capacity is central in the Alquatian model. It is the hot resource inside the human body which is formed and increased for capitalist purposes transforming its 'different utility'. In the hyper-industrial society it is above all the psychic, intellectual, affective and emotional capacities that are the object of valorisation. Active capacity is subjected to processes of commodification that make less and less possible to distinguish

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between working and non-working capacity. Given what has been said, formation is the reproduction of human active capacity as a commodity: it is the intellectual and communicative part of this capacity that is at the centre of the capitalist system, at the centre of the processes of rationalisation and mezzification that then lead to the machinisation of human active capacity. So formation is considered as a process of modification and empowerment of the human subject necessary for capital system to evolve and as a reconfiguration of the human agent. Formation can proceed in the direction useful to capital but can potentially be reversed against with the aim of de-machinising human active capacity.

Like all his theoretical production, this way of representing reality does not serve to represent a cage-system from which there is no escape but, on the contrary, it aims to simplify the complex reality in order to be able to imagine the construction of counter-paths and processes of escape.

In order to do so, being able to understand the tendency and anticipate the direction of processes is necessary, with regard to the different phase we are living in and its similarities and differences with the previous one. How did technology and digitization impact on the quality of work and the form of exploitation? Where does the reproduction of human capacity take place? How does this process evolve and what are the significant variables to look at? Which spaces of ambivalence does it create?

Once again it is through inquiries in the different ‘industries of reproduction’, as for instance universities, that we can gain new and different knowledge. Engaging with, transforming and being transformed by who is directly positioned in core fields of valorization and stimulating counter-processes of subjectivation – as the “co” in front of research suggests – is the first moment of this road that has a faraway origin that we can lean on identifying its limits and richness.

Elia Alberici: On Some Philosophical Foundations of Alquati's Co-Research

Abstract: In the context of the global renovation of Marxism, after the Hungarian crisis of 1956, Italian Workerism developed a heterodox reading of Marx. Needless to say, their reading was driven by the need of a theoretical and practical understanding of the ongoing working class struggles in the Fordist factories. It is my view that the most fundamental aspect of the ‘Workerist Marx’ as well as the theoretical pillar of this experience consist of a peculiar conceptualization of the living labour as subjectivity. This concept is able to show the ‘philosophical foundations’ of co-research.

Firstly, if the philosophical formulation of the subjectivity of living labour is advanced by Mario Tronti, this works demonstrates how it would not have been possible without the contribution of Romano Alquati. In order to prove this, I will discuss Mario Tronti and Romano Alquati’s texts during the Sixties, considering their writings in the journals Quaderni Rossi and Classe Operaia (1961–1965: the origins of Italian Workerism) until Tronti’s Workers and Capital (1966). From this discussion it is possible to describe co-research from a theoretical and philosophical viewpoint. Against a dialectical understanding of labour power, living labour always exceeds the objectifying cage of the capitalistic accumulation. However, capital does not simply need labour power because it is a living ‘thing’: the arcane of surplus value lays in its essence of subjectivity. Capital, in last analysis, puts at value the human living subjectivity, which possesses an intrinsic antagonism to capital’s objectivity. According to logical and ontological reasons, class subjectivity precedes capital, thus, the latter has always to ‘follow’ the antagonism of the former in order to maintain (subsume) it in the cage of valorisation. In this framework, capitalism is understood as a never-ending conflict between workers and capital, based on their capacity to organize the subjugation of the other. The theoretical formulation of this concept would have never been possible without Alquati’s inquiries in the Italian factories. To put it shortly, he is capable of describing the ‘movements’ of worker subjectivity. Workers’ refusal of being a part of capital, although ambiguous and invisible (e.g. desiring a position in the office), is described highlighting its continuous conflict with capital’s attempt of valorise it. Moreover, Alquati’s intuition over the role of worker information at the assembly line demonstrates how labour power is not valorised in biological and mechanistic terms, once again, it is human subjectivity that is put at labour. Thus, discussing of the subjectivity of living labour posses a political meaning which goes hand in hand with its theoretical status. To put it briefly, only political organization may impede capital’s subsumption of the movements of living labour. In this sense, this discourse is tied with a specific form of Leninism which starts and ends with the viewpoint of workers’ subjectivity over production.

Co-research, in last analysis, is the tool which makes possible understanding the spontaneous movements of living labour and, at the same time, organizing them politically toward revolution. In this sense, it is not a ‘pure’ concept, rather, following the Workerist spirit, its theoretical and practical aspects are inextricably related. From this discussion several questions arouse: which relations exist between the philosophical and the technical/methodological aspects of co-research? Is co-research a theoretical concept or is it fully extinguished into praxis? Discussing co-research at the light of Alquati and Tronti’s argument of the subjectivity of living labour can provide a philosophical and political viewpoint, beyond a simple methodological discussion.

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Matthew Lee: Romano Alquati's Conception of Militant Co-Research and Contemporary Class Composition in Britain

Abstract: 'Enough with the tears, with the culture of the left: the revolutionary militant searches for strength, not weakness.' – Gigi Roggero on Romano Alquati

In recent years, we have seen a rise and fall of a social democratic tendency on the British left. Such a tendency managed to regroup large numbers by putting hope in a 'labour movement' from above, be them MPs or trade union bureaucrats, to fill the deficiency of a militant mass movement, and to introduce radical policies from the top down. With the failure of this attempt to impose radical politics from above, many see the left as in a point of decline, and unable to get over the strategic impasse of what is to be done next. Yet whilst this impasse occurs, class struggle continually renews itself. In this paper, I shall make a critical reappraisal of Romano Alquati's conception of 'militant co-research' and critique its reception in the Anglophone world thus far, where it has become synonymous with either workers' inquiry itself, or co-authorship. Rather, I will demonstrate how Alquati's conception of militant co-research is a reference of central importance for developing workers' inquiry beyond sociological and towards revolutionary means. Through this critical reappraisal of 'militant co-research', and by analysing concrete examples of it in recent class struggle, I aim to make the argument that any contemporary revolutionary strategy must begin by recognising and understanding the living currents of class struggle that thus far have remained invisible to the wider left.

This paper will proceed with this argument through two stages:

Firstly, I will critique the mainstream reception of the term 'militant co-research' in the Anglophone world as being understood as solely a methodology, and subsequently, depoliticised. Through this critique, I will then propose a counter-understanding of militant co-research, as a collective process that forms part of working-class self-organisation. As such, I will argue that militant co-research can be understood as an important part of the framework of workers' inquiry and class composition, but should not be understood as synonymous with either of these terms.

Secondly, I will succinctly highlight and analyse three examples of where we can see militant co-research occurring today: in an Amazon warehouse; amongst delivery drivers in South London, and in an inner-city school. The first two of these examples will be based upon two workers' inquiries by those involved in these struggles and an interview with an Amazon worker I previously conducted. The latter example shall be based upon my own experiences working as a teaching assistant. Through highlighting and analysing these examples, I will lay out how the conceptual framework of militant co-research can be used in concrete situations to understand and further class struggle. In short, with the renewed interest in workers' inquiry and the politics of *operaismo*, this paper aims to not only re-propose an important concept into our lexicon, militant co-research, but also demonstrate concrete ways in which understanding this concept can help us see new forms of class struggle to intervene in.

room: r201
latin american marxism ii

Adriana Gregorut: Crisis of Care and Neoliberalism in Brazil

Abstract: This paper proposal is a part of my PhD research agenda. Its overall objective is to dialogue with the literature from the theoretical field that has been called Social Reproduction Theory (SRT), in relation to critical studies of law and the State. SRT is a set of works that mobilise and update the category of "social reproduction" developed by Karl Marx, adopting it as a lens of analysis to interrogate contemporary social processes and understand the role of care/domestic work (generally feminised) in the construction of social hierarchies, especially in the context of neoliberal capitalism (BHATTACHARYA, 2017; ARUZZA, 2013; FERGUSON, 2020). In debate with this literature, I propose to reflect on how the State, institutions and the Law act to mediate social conflicts arising from these processes.

These contributions become more relevant in the context of the crises related to the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly what the literature has called the "crisis of care" (FRASER, 2017), or the "crisis of social reproduction". From there, a series of analyses have developed in order to understand the specific effects that measures of restriction and social distancing, carried out virtually all over the world, exert on the distribution dynamics of social reproduction work. But more than this, these analyses propose to understand the COVID-19 crisis as the "culmination of a long-term attack against 'forces of social reproduction' around our planet" (MEZZADRI et al, 2021, p. 2). Thus, by focusing on the links between relations of production and reproduction, SRT seeks to understand the transformations in labour markets and processes in recent decades, especially marked by issues of gender and race.

However, works developed within the SRT framework are mainly focused on the reality of northern developed economies. In a survey carried out during the doctoral research developed so far, I identified that, among 118

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articles in scientific journals published since 2005 in the field of SRT, 72% were written by authors linked to academic institutions of the Global North.

Thus, the reception of the discussions held by SRT in Brazil lacks the necessary theoretical mediation, being essential to understand, first of all, the processes of development of neoliberalism in Brazil, in its various phases (SAAD FILHO, 2021).

I propose to deepen the study on the performance of the State and its institutions in the face of the crisis of neoliberalism and, in particular, the crisis of care. According to Nancy Fraser (2017), the latter is one aspect of a general crisis involving social, economic, ecological and political elements. For the author, this crisis is an "acute expression of the social-reproductive contradictions of financialised capitalism" (FRASER, 2017, p. 22) and is deeply related to the structural elements of financialised capitalism, specifically, and of the capitalist mode of operation as a whole. We start from the idea that the recent history of capitalism is marked by constant tensions between social reproduction and production, which are mediated by the state, which, in times of economic crisis, tends to withdraw from social reproduction activities as a result of the imperatives of reducing public spending, especially on social welfare, shifting the responsibility for these activities to the private and domestic sphere.

In this sense, the state often acts to mediate the contradiction between production and reproduction, when these are unbalanced due to the recurring crises of capitalism (PLOMIEN et al, 2010). Its action takes place in various spheres – in the market, in public infrastructure, in labour regimes, in law (RAI, GOLDBLATT, 2020) – in the latter case mainly through its regulatory function.

That the crisis of care is contained within or stems from a larger crisis of the capitalist system itself is evident in these analyses. However, it is not so clear how this relationship is established. And, above all, how it manifests itself in different local contexts, such as the Brazilian context that is of most interest to this research. As mentioned, a difficulty that arises is that the vast majority of works that have mobilized the category of social reproduction to observe issues related to gender in neoliberalism are based on the observation of realities in the Global North. Although the broader theoretical framework that has been outlined is useful for thinking about the reality of Brazilian women, it is important to make the necessary theoretical mediation between these different levels of abstraction. The articulation with a political economy literature that is concerned with the unfolding and processes of neoliberalism in Brazil seems essential to this endeavor. It is important, for example, to understand the "social-developmental strategy" (LAVINAS, 2017) adopted in the country during the left-wing governments of the workers party (Partido dos Trabalhadores – PT), which has as its main characteristics the adoption of income transfer measures, universalization of credit and increased access to durable consumer goods, making mass consumption the engine of economic growth. It is a strategy embedded in a broader context of transformation processes "from the model of industrialization by import substitution to the neoliberal model", which involved "successive reforms to liberalize imports and financial capital flows, privatize industry and infrastructure, relax labour relations, impose fiscal and monetary contraction measures and promote the internationalization of national companies" (SAAD FILHO, 2015, p. 1229).

On the other hand, more recently, the demands imposed by the health crisis resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic may have also represented a crisis of the neoliberal model, whose paradigm of the minimum state is being questioned, forcing a change in the liberal discourse, which begins to recognize the importance of public spending, especially to sustain universal health systems (SAAD FILHO, 2020).

Note that in both approaches (crisis of care and crisis of neoliberalism), the State appears as a mediator of both the expansion of the capital accumulation regime and the conflicts arising from the recurring crises of capitalism. An articulation between these two fields seems promising, therefore, in order to locate more precisely the unfolding and consequences of these phenomena for gender issues.

In summary, there is a need for a better understanding of the crisis of care and the crisis of neoliberalism in developing economies, such as Brazil, as well as the role played by the State and its institutions in mediating these crises. This paper proposal aims to contribute to this growing theory, by attempting to articulate gender issues brought by SRT with studies on the development and crisis of neoliberalism in developing countries, especially in Brazil, and the role of the State in mediating social conflicts arising from these crises.

Marcelo Badaró Mattos: The Notion of "Permanent Counterrevolution" in the Work of Florestan Fernandes and Its Relevance to the Study of Contemporary Political Processes

Abstract: The deadly combination of war, pandemic, climate catastrophe, radicalization of capitalist forms of exploitation and oppression, in addition to a deep cultural and ideological crisis, led the organizers of this event to resort to the idea of a time of "permanent war and counter-revolution".

In 1975, during the military dictatorship in Brazil, the sociologist Florestan Fernandes wrote his most important work: The bourgeois revolution in Brazil. In it, Fernandes explains that, in peripheral countries like Brazil, under the

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conditions of dependent capitalism, the specific form of the transition to monopoly capitalism and the constitution of the bourgeois state was marked by a state of "permanent counter-revolution". Pressed by the need to overexploit the working class in order to guarantee internal accumulation, in a circuit of uneven exchanges with the central capitalist economies, the local bourgeoisie rejected any project of incorporation into full citizenship and/or social guarantees for the working majority of the population, against which the ruling class waged a prolonged and preventive "civil war", open or veiled. Hence, in his analysis, far from identifying itself with "bourgeois democracy" as the ideal form of exercising class domination, the Brazilian ruling class has built state power in a "bourgeois autocratic" model, more suited to the "counterrevolutionary" form of domination.

This paper intends to explore Florestan Fernandes' insights on the "permanent counterrevolution" and the "bourgeois autocracy", verifying their relevance in face of the exhaustion of the possibilities of social reforms in the framework of contemporary democracies and the growing weight of extreme right-wing political alternatives in these democratic regimes. More attention will be given to the case of Jair Bolsonaro's government in Brazil.

Amélia Maciel, Luis Henrique De Sousa, Mychelly Rayanny De Sousa Rocha: The Violent Capital Accumulation by Dispossession in the Brazilian Amazon

Abstract: Increasingly, the value chain incorporates spaces still outside the capital accumulation circuits. Examples of the commodification of spaces not yet commodified are the expansion of agro-industry over forests, fishing, hunting, logging, and mining in environmental preservation areas reserved for native populations. This expansion of the market over forests is related to the debate on the repetition of primitive accumulation, as developed in chapter XXIV of Karl Marx's *Kapital* (1867), as well as the question about capitalist expropriations, according to Rosa Luxemburg in the book *The Accumulation of Capital* (1970), and also of accumulation by dispossession by David Harvey, in his book *The New Imperialism* (2004). From these perspectives, we can then understand that the spoliation of indigenous lands and the incorporation of native forests into the global circuits of capital are the current forms of expropriation that Marx referred to in Chapter XXIV of *Capital*. Marx observed, in his historical review of primitive accumulation in England, that the commodification and privatization of land occurred through the violent expulsion of peasant populations. The same happens with the lands occupied by Brazilian indigenous people. A recent tragic example of international repercussion was the murder of indigenous expert Bruno Pereira and the British journalist Dom Phillips. It took place on June 5, 2022, on indigenous land located in the Brazilian Amazon. Bruno Pereira aimed to meet with the indigenous people in the region to talk about their territories' defense. Their lands are often invaded for the dispossession of their natural resources and incorporation into the circuits of capital. Dom Phillips was doing field research for his future book called "How to save the Amazon?". This book would aim to bring greater visibility to the conflicts experienced by indigenous and riverine people against land invaders. They were murdered after photographing a boat that practiced illegal fishing in an environmental preservation area. To understand the violence to which indigenous peoples are subjected and answer the question "How to save the Amazon?" it is necessary an investigation into the accumulation of capital by repetition of the mechanisms of primitive accumulation and its dialectical relationship with accumulation by exploitation through the extraction of surplus value.

Luis Andueza: Subjectivity, Fossil Capitalism, and Uneven and Combined Extraction in Indigenous Amazonia

Abstract: This paper examines contemporary processes of subject formation associated to extractive infrastructure in the Peruvian Amazon. It first introduces the historical and geographical development of the Amazonian oil complex, and the 'ethnopolitical field' through which its spatial and social contradictions are expressed. Through the examination of the case of Urarina territories, the paper analyses the ways moral economies constituted through local spatio-political strategies vis-a-vis previous extractive cycles combine with rapid processes of commodification of subsistence and the 'ethnobureaucratic field' of extraction in the constitution of new forms of political subjectivity and dynamics dependant antagonism.

room: b103
urban resistance and global displacement

In the last decade, we have witnessed multiple resistance and revolutionary movements overtaking large cities across the globe. These movements are rooted in historical precedents which deserve further inquiry. Many of these contemporary movements are reminiscent of historical precedents of past mobilizations often including similar struggles. In this panel we bring together work on moments of urban struggle, resistance, and solidarity that hinge upon global mobility and displacement, such as detained migrants in Madrid, working class refugees in

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Beirut, and former day-labourers in Tokyo. Through specific case studies the panelists ask:

– How do local urban histories and the material realities of the neighborhood shape the demands of movements, and inform the kinds of tactics and solidarities that are employed?

– How do displaced peoples struggles over freedom of movement and the right to the city overlap with one another?

– How is political subjectivity formed in relation to spatial struggle?

The conference theme also prompts us to think about the strategic crisis of the left but also the ‘resources of hope’ that we can find in contemporary struggles, particularly when considering the shared struggles across temporalities and geographies. The multiple case studies discussed in this panel also present an opportunity to reflect on the meaning and content of internationalism today.

The panel will include two papers. The first considers a specific informal neighborhood in eastern Beirut that witnessed during the 1960s a solidarity action between refugees and migrant labourers who banded together when facing the shared threat of eviction by fire. The second, addresses a struggle over land use in the outskirts of Madrid, where an uprising of detained migrants resonated with the struggle over historical memory, anti-fascism, and anti-capitalism.

Diala Lteif: Class Struggle and Formation: Karantina the Slum of Beirut, Lebanon

Abstract: Lebanon has featured prominently in the news since 2011 as the largest host of Syrian refugees per capita. Syrians are the latest group of many displaced persons Lebanon has witnessed in the 20th century, including Armenians, Kurds, and Palestinians. A dominant narrative in the refugee literature correlates the local reception of each group in Lebanon with the state’s desire to govern the sectarian demographic balance, also known as the ‘politics of numbers’ – whereby groups from particular sects have been more welcomed than others. In this paper, I call for a nuanced reading of the sectarian politics perspective through an analysis of class solidarity in the context of Beirut. I explore the everyday and political life of Karantina, a Beirut neighborhood that has hosted successive waves of refugees and migrants. More specifically, I focus on a 15-year period, starting in 1960 and abruptly ended by the Lebanese Civil War in 1975. During that period, the neighborhood evolved into a space of collaboration and cohesion between the native population, the migrant labourers, and the Palestinian, Armenian, and Kurdish refugees who had settled in the area. The paper focuses on the shared class struggle that fuses this group together based on the material conditions of their housing. Theoretically, I explore the intersection of Henri Lefebvre’s work on space and class struggle with the work on theories of social classes by Engels and Sartre, as well as Lebanese scholars such as ‘Amel and Traboulsi. Mixing oral histories, archival research, and participant observations, I highlight the dialectical relationship between class struggle and housing materiality, while positioning Karantina as a key case study to understand social class in the pre-war context of Lebanon.

Leah Montange: Detention Abolition, Historical Memory, and Urban Space in Madrid

Abstract: El Centro de Internamiento de Extranjeros – Aluche (CIE Aluche), is a migrant detention facility in the outskirts of Madrid, Spain. This prison is in what was once the hospital building for the Carabanchel prison complex, a large Francoist-era panopticon prison that housed every one of Franco’s political prisoners post-Civil War until 1976. In this paper, I trace a political struggle over land use at the site, and focus in on a watershed moment where an uprising of detained migrants resonated with the politics of historical memory, anti-fascism, and anti-capitalism that inform this land use struggle. I consider resonances between rebellious politics of detained and undocumented migrants, no borders activists, and political prisoners in 21st century Spain. In particular, I demonstrate how the simultaneity intrinsic to urban space offers possibilities for new political coalitions to form.

room: b104
marxist theory and critique iii

Johan Alfsson: Alienation Beyond Essentialism and Subjectivism – An Immanent Critique of Capitalism

Abstract: Alienation implies that a relation (e.g., towards oneself, one’s activity, labour product or relation towards others) has been skewed and transformed into something it is not supposed to be. Thus, the concept holds a normative idea of how relations should be constituted. Alienation studies thus needs an answer to why we should be connected to what we have been separated from when being alienated. How to determine this is seldom elaborated and varies in the literature. From a broad reading of the alienation literature, I identify four different perspectives that gives different answers to the normative question: an essentialistic, a subjectivistic, a historical and an immanent. I argue that the first three perspectives contain several problems and don’t give a proper answer to

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the normative question. I then argued that what I call a radical immanent perspective can overcome these problems. When rooting the answer of what an alienated relation has lost in an immanent perspective, an understanding of the studied context is needed. We need to grasp what premises upholds the social context. In critical theory the point of departure has many times been the premises of self-determination that is entrenched in modern society. I argue that rooting alienation in modern society risks stretching the concept and making every type of reduction of self-determination to alienation, and thus making the concept vague and unprecise. Instead, I argue that we should focus on the capitalist mode of production and the premise that upholds it. I will argue that to understand alienation in present capitalism we need to understand value-domination and how it reduces the possibility to steer the goals of society and our lives. I conclude that if alienation is seen as a contradiction between the premises that upholds the capitalist mode of production and the impossibility for its premises to be realised within capitalism, the problems identified in the other normative perspectives can be overcome.

Jeff Noonan: Exploitation: The Suppressed Secret of Inequality

Abstract: The ubiquitous attention paid to growing inequality in the mainstream media, amongst left-liberal and social democratic politicians, and an influential and highly visible cohort of economists (Thomas Piketty, Robert Reich, Jeffrey Sachs, Joseph Stieglitz) should be regarded by socialists as a salutary political development. When not even capitalism's ideological supporters can ignore the life-destructive costs of material inequality, a door is opened towards more radical criticism and transformative practice. Marxists need to walk through that door by posing the question to left-liberal critics: why is inequality pervasive and growing, globally, between Global South and North, and within the major liberal-democratic capitalist nation states? The typical answers: lack of political power in the global South and unfavourable terms of trade, inequalities of education and opportunity, the higher returns available through financial speculation as opposed to investment in the real economy, all have some truth, but do not get down to the essential issue: where does the ruling class's wealth come from in the first place? It is of course true, as Piketty has argued, that entrenched wealth can use its advantages to create policies which favour the growth of their holdings, but he has no answer of where those holdings came from in the first place. Marx's understanding of the exploitation of labour still provides the best answer to this question. The proposed paper will distinguish Marx's explanation of exploitation from moralistic interpretations of the term and demonstrate how it can explain that which the liberal critiques of inequality all presuppose: how the ruling class gets its wealth in the first place. The focus will not be on the labour theory of value (whose basic principles will be familiar to conference attendees) but on the political opportunity the wide social concern over inequality presents for socialists.

Anita Zsurzsán: Pulling Fascism by its Roots: Lukács's The Destruction of Reason in Light of the Rising Global Far-Right

Abstract: The publication of the latest English volume of Georg Lukács's *The Destruction of Reason* puts the Hungarian philosopher's much-debated work back in the spotlight. The new edition includes a thought-provoking introduction by Italian scholar Enzo Traverso, whose contribution is an attempt to contextualize Lukács's analysis in the Marxist tradition offering new grounds for debate. Originally published in 1954, Lukács's book concludes that the post-Hegelian German philosophical tradition (mainly Nietzsche, Rosenberg, and Heidegger) prepared the ideological and intellectual foundations of fascism and nazism. In my presentation, I argue why it is essential to perceive Lukács's work in a historical context: the initial drafts of the book were prepared in the 1930s at the height of Nazi violence across Europe. Undoubtedly, Lukács's book is a militant anti-fascist text that wasn't only attempting to understand the birth of fascism but to combat it within the European social and cultural context. I will briefly reflect on the book's controversial reception in Eastern Europe and why a new assessment could be a valuable tool for understanding the current rise of global fascism in Hungary and beyond. Ultimately, I will also address how Lukács's bold method in *The Destruction of Reason* could be perceived through the current cultural and ideological crisis intensified by the war in Ukraine. In the past months, Ukrainian scholars have argued that it's time to take a critical look at Russian culture, philosophy, and literature to examine the roots of Russian imperialism and fascism. Some blame Russian culture for the invasion of Ukraine that resulted in boycotting 'all things Russian' across the Western world. Can this phenomenon be understood through Lukács's method of analyzing the German intellectual tradition as a source of fascist thought, or is it a mockery of those ideas?

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room: g51
pandemic ii

Adrien Tournier: An Airborn Perspective on Capitalism, Health and Infectious Diseases

Abstract: We will argue for the political necessity of defining Covid-19 disease as a never-ending airborne pollution and a symptom of the ecological crisis in capitalist world-ecology. Our broad objective is to show that the political and social defeat, during the still on-going Covid-19 pandemic, partly rests in the confinement of Covid-19 as an infectious disease, framed by biosecurity politics, discourses and practices, deployed in measures preventing contact and touch, hunt of superspreaders and patient zero. Such a biopolitic framework expands the disaster rather than suppress it, while nurturing denialists discourses which mirrors biosecurity paranoiac perspective.

COVID-19 should rather be defined as an airborn disease, proliferating in closed spaces and hermetically sealed environments, haunting workspaces, housing and infrastructures we collectively inhabit. In many ways, such a disease come from "bad air", specific ecological conditions that Hippocrate writings and middle-age medical knowledge intensively tried to identify throughout the years and the pandemic events occurring back then. In fact, looking back at the history of medicine and the debates between contagionism and anticontagionism in 19th century Europe can help us reflect on the definition of health and diseases under capitalist conditions. Defined as an airborn disease, covid-19 should provoke deep and structural changes in infrastructures, schools, trains and subways, hospitals, etc. Since 19th century, history of medicine and health shows the political and epistemological reasons of infectious perspective over airborn considerations, and how they expand far beyond economic considerations on the allocation of state economic investment.

As previous research has shown, the development of the modern life sciences and classical political economy are parallel and mutually constitutive events. The historical genealogy of microbiology after Pasteur and Koch reveals in this perspective how antimicrobial treatments changed hospitals architectures from 1880s to 1950s (suppressing air-flows, closing their windows and shutting out the sun) and how disease were redefined putting the emphasis on individuals and bounded risk groups rather than on the surroundings and the conditions of an industrial workplace for example. Since then, medicine focuses on germs and close contact infections, pharmacology rather than aerography, putting aside care for social surroundings and milieu as a few case study of SRAS pandemic in 2003 and Covid-19 can show (we will reflect on those case-study). In short, history of infectious disease is the history of individual responsibility, self-made man immunity and of the historical configuration of public health under capitalism. The roots of infectious diseases are social, pandemics are conditioned by contemporary biosecurity approaches and the centrality of close-contact and imposed social distanciation. A material and political history of biopolitics and the environmental dimensions of the biotic itself can help reveal the conditions of a healthy life in contemporary capitalism. It also allows to discuss contemporary struggles in the ground of modern science and how the historical study of biopolitics can help a materialist and marxist perspective on the covid-19 pandemic.

Phethani Madzivhandila (O): The Deep Social and Political Scars Left by the Way Capitalist States Managed the Pandemic

Abstract: We are living in a time of great upheaval in the age of advanced global imperialism, the Covid-19 pandemic has exacerbated the already existing crisis of capitalism. Since the beginning of 2020, the world has been battling the deadly coronavirus; in modern times, there has not been a pandemic as severe as this one since the Spanish flu. The lives of millions of people were radically affected by the Pandemic. Even in the Global North, where there is a relatively advanced healthcare system, they still could not manage to adequately respond to this disastrous moment due to the long and sustained systematic attacks on welfare services, the situation reached breaking point with dire economic, political and social consequences felt across the globe, especially in the Global South.

This paper explores the responses of capitalist governments across the globe with a specific focus on the Global South and its relations to the Metropolitan bourgeoisie states. Exploring the analytical lenses of Dependency scholars and historical and dialectic materialism, the arguments advanced in this paper are primarily that the response of these Governments was in fact market economy responses, rather than responses grounded in the building a social safety net for citizens. Globally the health care system is profit-driven and has been ravaged by decades of austerity measures so therefore it was not an out-of-the-norm practice when even a health crisis of COVID's scale was used to advance the unquenchable thirst of capitalism.

How does the historical fact of capitalism tending to imperialism and accumulation on a world scale as Lenin argued help us navigate our reality under capitalist countries and its hegemony in the face of a global pandemic? Thus, capital accumulation derived one way to the Global North was at the expense of the third world and greatly weakened third world states and economies, effectively reversing previous development. The history of imperialism

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and the current reality of neo-colonialism has been immensely important in shaping our view of the modern world and it helps us understand what the pandemic means for us.

Finally, the paper provides a forward-looking perspective post the crisis's implication for revolutionary Marxists globally. Without a doubt, we have a responsibility to expose and overthrow the bourgeoisie classes in developing countries and their counterparts in developed ones. By doing so, we will create the necessary conditions for the workers' struggle for complete liberation and socialism as well as advance the cause of the global socialist revolution.

Marius Birckhardt: The End of the End of Nature: From Climate to Pandemic Realism

Abstract: Contemporary critics recently proposed to think of the current crisis of authoritarian liberalism as the end of the end of history (Hochuli and Hoare 2021). Similarly, one could claim that the ecological crisis, including climate change and most recently the pandemic of COVID-19, either caused by capitalist destruction of ecosystems creating an increased risk of zoonotic spillovers or by handling error in a laboratory where the level of biosecurity is nonetheless maximum (Guillibert 2021), mark the entry in what I might call the end of the end of nature. The reality of intensified ecological crisis puts predominant constructionist approaches of critical theory into a deep ontological and epistemological crisis (Haber 2006, Malm 2018). Even though many environmental theories have previously outlined a necrology of nature – Stephen Vogel's Against Nature, Timothy Morton's Ecology without Nature or McKibben's The End of nature, the ecological crisis forces us in the contrary to account for nature as an autonomous realm of reality *sui generis*, as « a set of specific causal powers » unproduced by human activity (Soper 1995), without abandoning though the legit constructivist critique of reductionist naturalism. Based on the hypothesis of climate realism, Malm argued that the era of the warming condition calls for a renewed framework of society-nature causal interaction where social and natural causal powers form a unity-in-difference (Malm 2018). Nature and society belong to the same ontological entity (theory of substance monism), while nature is neither exterior nor reducible to social processes both conserving their autonomous causal powers (theory of property dualism). Following Malm, I would like to develop an eco-Marxist perspective of the pandemic as a form of 'revenge of the real' (Bratton 2021). In the same way that the social circuit of fossil capital Marius Bickhardt accumulation M-C-M' has not simply produced or constructed a new climate but has rather caused a perturbation of natural cycles, including the planetary boundary of carbon (Salvage Collective 2021) – as Malm puts it: "Global warming is not built but triggered. The climate is not created but changed, unhinged, disrupted, destabilized" -, an eco-marxist pandemic realism argues that fossil capitalism does not produce diseases or epidemics but disturbs the regulatory function of ecosystem's biodiversity creating a dilution effect of dangerous pathogens (Malm 2020). Thereby it causes an epidemic feedback effect that has its own causal powers and is thus beyond society's control. Malm's hypothesis of the paradox of historized nature according to which "the more profoundly humans have shaped nature over their history, the more intensely nature comes to affect their lives" also applies to the analysis of the pandemic: against constructivism and new materialism but also Moore's world-ecology, we need ever more than now an analytical dualism of the irreducible realms of the natural and the social in order to prevent ecological disasters: "the more problems of environmental degradation we confront, the more imperative it is to pick the unities apart in their poles" (Malm, 2018). Even though social factors of pandemics apply both to the level of their genesis (rooted in deforestation and the loss of biodiversity) as well as their transmission through the expansion of an ever more interconnected world-market, capitalist transport systems and aviation, the reality of viral contagion remains an irreducibly biological process where humans become themselves objects of viral circulation beyond their individual intentional control (Bratton 2021). Completing climate realism with its pandemic version allows us to respond to the criticisms aimed at a certain Marxist climate centrism (Balaud/Chopot 2021) that tends to reduce the ecological crisis to the phenomena of climate change, while neglecting other planetary boundaries such as the nitrogen or water cycle. The political conclusion of pandemic realism thus gives great importance to the necessity of maintaining the regulatory function of biodiversity concerning post-capitalist models of society. Without doubt, it is closer to a the idea of Half Earth socialism (Vettese) than to a solar communism (Schwartzman) that is likely to rely on an extensive use of land for energy production at expense of biodiversity.

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room: g51a
marxist feminism: political struggles

Sahil Kumar: The Objectivity of the Form of Value and the Value of Housework

Abstract: Capitalism is a mode of production. But its foundations lie in the sphere of exchange. Before there can be the production of Surplus Value, there needs to be a universalization of the general form of Value. The universalization of the general form of value happens with the introduction of Labour-Power into the world of commodities and the market, which at the same time leads to Labour's abstraction. The abstraction implicit in the commodification of Labour-Power gives birth to a new social substance that is the source of what Marx calls the commodity's "metaphysical subtleties and theological niceties". This new social substance, which is the now abstracted labour or Abstract, Homogenous Labour, becomes the universal measure of all things and takes the objective form of Value. The enigma of the Commodity Form arises from this "phantom-like objectivity" of the Form of Value. In a paper published in 2013 under the title "The Logic of Gender", the Endnotes Collective argues that the concrete activities performed within the "Indirectly Market Mediated" sphere of the household do not produce Value as these activities within such a sphere do not yet constitute labour in the capitalist sense. Through a reconsideration of the labour performed in such "Indirectly Market Mediated" spheres as the household, in the present paper I will argue that they do indeed produce Value in the properly capitalist sense as Value within capitalism has an objective persistence that goes far beyond labour's direct or indirect mediation via the market, as the form of Value in capitalist society becomes a matter of production and no longer merely an attribute of the market. I will further argue that this position that first emerged with theorists of the Wages for Housework movement has far-reaching implications, both theoretical and political, for a Marxist understanding of contemporary capitalism itself.

Olimpia Capitano: Domestic Work Is Work. Global Care Chains and Domestic Workers in Rome (1970–1989)

Abstract: Eleven years ago, an historic International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention (C189) was hailed as a breakthrough for the tens of millions of domestic workers around the world. The Convention has pointed out domestic workers' exploitation and has remarked domestic workers' rights. Actually, many Countries ratified C189 but not much has changed. C189 is not mandatory and real changes aren't concretely required. Domestic workers are still fighting for recognition as workers and essential service providers. In the present moment domestic working condition are even worse because of the pandemic. The Covid-19 crisis has highlighted the urgent need to formalize domestic work to ensure their access to decent work, starting with the extension and implementation of labour and social security laws to all domestic workers.

Domestic workers' exploitation is strictly related to the social marginalization of women and racial ethnic niches. Moreover, if we consider capitalist exploitation connected to globalization and social reproduction, we must underline the main role of global care chains and the international and racial division of reproductive labour. These dynamics have also shaped a contradictory mobility of class. In fact, it often happens that middle class women from "third world" countries move to "first (white and Eurocentric) world" ones to work as domestics, earning a little more but experiencing a downgrade in their social status. Domestic work is a privileged starting point to develop an intersectional analysis. Moreover, domestic work implies ambiguous relationships between workers and their employers, which are often linked to personal dependency, economical and not economical coercive mechanisms. The point of view of the household can also enable to question the borders between the public, the private sphere, and their social construction. My PhD research inquires domestic workers' agencies, focusing on Rome during the seventies and the eighties, especially in relation to Cape Verdeans, Filipino and Eritrean domestic workers. During these decades many Capes Verdean, Filipinos and Eritreans (especially women) moved to Italy and particularly to Rome, leaving their countries, devastated by colonial wars, and looking for a job and better life conditions. But these workers were "invisible", their work wasn't considered as a "proper" work, and coercive mechanisms were hidden into the space of the household, socially constructed as private.

My goal is to question connections among material exploitation, and its cultural normalization and social legitimization, starting from domestic workers' experiences during the first global care chains' formation period and adopting an intersectional perspective. As suggested by Mignon Duffy, understanding occupational segregation and the devaluation of reproductive labour in the paid labour market requires theoretical models that build links between structural and cultural explanations and integrate gender with race-ethnicity and other important factors such as citizenship. These theoretical models will only emerge from careful empirical research that documents at the broadest as well as at the most detailed level the historical processes through which current labour market configurations have arisen. Actually, intersectional theories need to be built on a sufficiently complex historical ground, rooted in the empirical understanding of phenomena. My research is strongly interconnected to both

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social and oral history. My work is still at a starting point, but I have already collected interviews with Cape Verdean, Filipino and Eritrean domestic workers who have worked during seventies and eighties (and who are often still working as domestics). The paper I'm proposing is focused on these interviews. I aim to start from different but similar experiences, collocating them into the deeper historical background.

I'll start from domestic workers' voices, and I'll argument my first impressions about links and contradictions which characterize the intersection of marginalities and the relations between agencies and the exploitative dynamics in social reproduction. In the first part I'll introduce some data about immigration in Rome, domestic working sector's social composition, national laws about domestic work and immigration. In the second part I'll focus on domestic workers' experiences, choosing at least a couple of interviews for each racial group. In the last part I'll present some open questions comparing the historical context, individual experiences, and workers' self-perception.

Isabelle Darmon: Social Sustainability and Transition Capitalism: A Critical Theoretical Understanding

Abstract: This paper offers a clarification and theoretical elaboration of the notion of social sustainability. I do so in order to draw attention to the continued reproduction of the inequality-unsustainability nexus characterising capitalist transition initiatives, to cast light on some of its mechanisms and to thus place the fight against the reproduction of inequality at the heart of environmental and social transformation. The article puts forward the very simple, yet very consequential, thesis that capitalist transitions, far from halting socio-economic inequalities, further spur them, which in turn leads to new unsustainabilities that may eventually cancel out the efficiency gains or the compensations designed in such transitions. I articulate this thesis through a critical theoretical approach, drawing on Nancy Fraser's notion of capitalism as an institutionalised social order, and situating transition initiatives within such a frame. Finally I seek to show the merits of a structural approach to transitions, and its attention to dynamics of reproduction, capture and circulation of wealth, and their counterpart of relegation and dispossession, by comparison with systems-, indicator-based approaches currently orienting much progressive transition research.

Hester Eisenstein: Abortion, Patriarchy, and the Nation State

Abstract: In the wake of the Supreme Court's fateful decision in Dobbs, US women are facing a fundamental return to back alley abortions. In this paper I want to explore how the issue of abortion has become central to women's revolutionary struggles around the world. Silvia Federici showed us that the wresting of control over childbirth from midwives to male doctors is linked to mercantilist concerns over population as key to state power. This concern is alive and well in the policies of countries such as China. How are women activists countering these policies and what is the significance of abortion rights to a broader left agenda?

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room: rb01
pandemic iii

Suddhabrata Deb Roy: Covid19, Care and Crisis: Scheme Workers and the Pandemic in New India

Abstract: Care work was and continues to be one of the central pillars of the response to the Covid19 pandemic by the Indian government. Care work in India usually revolves around the various schemes that the Indian government has brought forward over the past few decades. The structure of the management within these schemes is highly bureaucratic in nature with multiple levels of enforcing authorities, with very few options for workers to voice their concerns. The nature of employment in these schemes are highly diverse including fixed-term employment, target-based employment, casual employment, and the like. Workers employed in the various schemes of the Government of India are placed right at the bottom of the labour hierarchy in the country with wages on an average ranging from Rs 10,000 to as low as Rs 3,000. The crucial facet of this section of the workers which makes them distinct from other sectors of labour participation in the country is the gendered nature of the employment in these schemes where women account for more than 95% of the workforce with a particular emphasis on single mothers and lone breadwinners in the family. Schemes such as the Integrated Child Development Services {ICDS} and the Mid-Day Meal Scheme {MDMS}, employ thousands of women on meagre salaries. The major issue within these schemes which affects the workers is the non-recognition of their labour as 'work' per se and its categorisation as social or community volunteering which effectively places them outside the purview of traditional workers' politics in the country.

The scheme workers found their workloads heightened manifold during the pandemic. They were often left to perform their duties without any protective equipment or guarantees of job sustainability or increased renumeration. Scheme workers have been also engaged in numerous movements demanding fair wages and their rightful status as workers within the society. Their modes of protest have included the participation of both the mainstream political left, syndicalists, as well as the extra-parliamentary left. The paper analyses the findings of over 50 qualitative interviews conducted with workers and union organisers engaged in various schemes of the Government of India in Delhi, Hyderabad, Rohtak, Mumbai, Pune, Kolkata, Bhubaneshwar, Guwahati, Vishakapatnam, Bhopal, Chennai and Bengaluru. The paper analyses the relationship between the gendered nature of their work, their organisations and the effect which their movements have on the conceptualisation of creative modes of protest from below through a Marxist-Humanist perspective.

Maud Simonet, Eve Meuret-Campfort, Giulia Mensitieri, Fanny Gallot: Mixing Productive Genres in a Regime of Exception: The Case of Mask Production During the First Lockdown in France

Abstract: During the pandemic crisis, the mask became an object of crystallisation of work related issues. Symbolizing women's unpaid labour exploitation as denounced by a number of volunteer seamstresses collectives, the mask was also praised as a springboard for the revitalisation of the French textile industries and of the Made in France sector. Based on the study of local configurations of masks production (Lille, Paris, French West Coast), this paper will examine its types of production (voluntary, artisanal, industrial), its production actors and players (government, corporations, volunteer organizations) and its productive scales, in order to shed light on the mixing of productive and reproductive genres that arose in that « state of exception ». Paying attention to the volunteer seamstresses mobilization against the use of women free labour, we will explore both the paid and unpaid labour as well as the economic and symbolic value that lied behind the masks economy, from a feminist perspective mobilizing the Theories of Social Reproduction.

room: g3
marxism and anti-semitism today

Manuel Disegni: Jews, Money, and the Capital. Modern Anti-Semitism in the Perspective of Marx's Critique of Political Economy

Abstract: Money is Jewish – says Marx in Capital vol. I – just inasmuch as commodities are Christian. The theoretical core of Marx's concept of money can be traced back to his early essay On the Jewish Question. In retorting to Bruno Bauer's rejection of Jewish emancipation, he observed that the modern subjectivity tends to represent its own inner split into bourgeois and citoyen as an external opposition between itself and the Jew. In so doing, the young Marx anticipated much later psychoanalytical explanations of anti-Semitism as a projection. In his late critique of political economy he came to show that, in the very same way, commodities must represent their inner split into use value (their concrete individuality as material goods) and value (their abstract universality as citizens of the republic of commodities, the market) in the form of an external opposition between themselves

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and money. That's why he says (quoting Paul) "that all commodities ... are in faith and in truth money, inwardly circumcised Jews". The "critique of political economy" doesn't only deal with "economy" in the strict sense. It also provides an historical-epistemological frame for investigating the social formation and deformation of people's consciousness (both ordinary and scientific). My aim is to show that Marx's theory of capital entails a critical conception of modern anti-Semitism as a specific bourgeois form of thought, i.e. as a worldview which is necessarily and systematically reproduced within this sort of society. In particular I will focus on the very ancient connection of Jews and money and on the specific social meaning it assumed in 19th and 20th century (both in popular culture and in social and economic sciences). The main point I intend to make is that Marx's concept of money as a form of appearance of capital and the anti-Semitic economic understanding of modern society enlighten the genesis of each other. As true as it is that Marx provides a significant contribution to the historical explanation of modern anti-Semitism, as true it appears to me that a critical examination of the latter is needed in order to accurately determine what Marx's problem was.

Leandros Fischer: Germany's "Antideutsche" – A Materialist Explanation

Abstract: Germany's notorious "Antideutsche" – fanatically pro-Israeli but self-described left-wing radical, even "communist" - appear as a quirk to the non-German observer, attributable mainly to the complexities arising from modern German history. Within German left-wing discourse, the Antideutsche are seen, alternately as a legitimate-reponse-gone-bad to an alleged widespread anti-Semitism of the West German Left, or as a renegade phenomenon of former leftists making their peace with the status quo.

This paper breaks with both explanations by attributing the Antideutsch phenomenon not primarily to ideological distortions but to the particular material conditions of the West German New Left and its successors, as a largely middle-class current devoid of sustainable organic connections to the working class. Within this context, the Left historically committed two mistakes: either denying the specificities of German National Socialism and reducing anti-Semitism to just another form of racism, thus conforming to Stalinist readings of fascism; or taking the pseudosocialist pretensions of German fascism at face value and resorting to classless explanations of Nazi anti-Semitism.

This overview considers several variables of analysis, such as the experience of once-hegemonic West German Maoism, the influence of Moishe Postone's account of National Socialism, the role of Die Linke, as well as the current "Second Historikerstreit" centred around debates on postcolonialism.

Miriym Aouragh: Radical Pedagogy Against Historical Amnesia: Palestinian Political Posters, Anti-Zionism and Anti-Colonial Reverberations

Abstract: This paper is part of a collective that formed around Subversive Film with the aim to think collaboratively about two recently rediscovered sets of political posters about Palestine (the Tokyo Collection and the Brussels Collection) from the 1960s and 1970s. This project was to become a publication for Lumbung Press (as part of Dokumenta 15, Kassel, Germany) about the way the posters captivate radical possibilities. Revisiting these visual symbols both in their moment and in retrospect turned contentious. Anti-colonial politics were side-tracked by accusations of racism. The artistic exhibit "People's Justice" by Indonesian artist-group Taring Padi was retracted and in the weeks preceding and following the opening there were multiple statements implying Dokumenta 15 was antisemitic. IHRA and bans on BDS became the tools of the highest political echelons. The treatment of the art and artists from the Global South led to a storm of indignation; in quick succession the whole assumption about a decolonial art scene unravelled. Strangely, when the original project was overshadowed by the political dynamics around Dokumenta it didn't put the paper in a different light: it only confirmed its premise. A racist framework means that the swastikas on some of the posters cannot be decoded as a condemnation of the violence of settler colonialism, and the Orientalist logic suggests that it can only mean condoning Nazism. The temporal situatedness of the posters - the radical 1960s, the emergence of a New Arab Left, the revolutionary guerrilla and student movements - mean that the impending revolutionary reverberations of the posters are something to treasure. 1. they provoke reflections about the inexhaustible assaults on Palestine solidarity via the conflation of antisemitism and anti-Zionism; a non-stop ideological dog-whistle that dehumanises Palestinians and their supporters. 2. The posters also reveal the evolution of debates about Zionism, Israel, the Holocaust and antisemitism raised by Arab radicals in the 1960s/70s; these posters are to be 'read' simultaneously in terms of their artistic *appearance*, and their intellectual focus, philosophical project, and political agendas and thus their *essence*. The ideological balance of forces and political conditions during which the posters emerged, characterise the changing symbols and in turn how we interpret these.

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culture stream

Tim Jelfs: Crisis, Agency, and Form in the New Socialist Culture

Abstract: Intended as a contribution to the culture stream of this year's conference (and part of a larger research project on the culture of contemporary socialism in the United States), my paper presents an argument about how the form and content of much contemporary U.S. culture (including TV series, films, and literary fiction) symptomatize a set of unresolved political contradictions that I argue are inherent to what Barbara Foley, in a recent new book on Marxist literary criticism, has called the "changing same" of capitalist modernity.

Drawing on examples that range from the literary fiction and auteur cinema of anxious liberals like Nicholson Baker and Paul Schrader, on the one hand, to producers of new forms of socialist culture from the United States and China, on the other, I set out to show how the sense of overlapping crises experienced in the United States and elsewhere in the contemporary global North is best understood in relation to a long-running contestation for political sovereignty between the state, capital, and the masses.

This contestation finds expression, I argue, in a preoccupation with questions of political agency that manifests across different cultural forms and helps us to decode both those forms and their content as still decisively shaped by the unresolved political contradictions of modernity. That argument, in turn, I hope to demonstrate, helps us to understand how those working in fields such as my own – American Studies – might begin to theorize historical materialism's ongoing contribution to the work we do, especially in a moment in which the value of "symptomatic readings" of narrative culture has been questioned.

Daniel Neofetou: Max Stirner's Flesh: Eigenheit as Aesthetics

Abstract: Despite the fact that it was omitted from Roy Pascal's widely read English translation of The German Ideology, 'Saint Max', Marx's systematic, point-by-point riposte to Marx Stirner's *The Ego and his Own*, has long coloured interpretations of the latter book, and certainly often been taken to be the definitive word on the divergence of the two erstwhile Young Hegelians' philosophies. For Marx, as Paul Thomas summarises, 'Stirner's assertion of "peculiarity" (Eigenheit), besides being abstract and solipsistic, is also beside the point if (as at present) personal powers cannot be apprehended as social powers.' Yet, in this paper, I will contend that, notwithstanding the undeniable shortcomings in Stirner's grasp of political economy, it is precisely in the fact that it is neither abstract nor solipsistic, that Stirner's account of Eigenheit provides a glimpse of how personal powers could become social powers, by way of determinate negation. I will argue, however, that it does so not as politics, nor even as (unmediated) ethics, but as aesthetics. Moreover, in making this case, I will contend that Stirner's account of Eigenheit is not incompatible with the lineaments of an aesthetic theory discernible from Marx's early writings on sensibility, allowing for his subsequent jettisoning of their Feuerbachian foundations. Furthermore, I will posit that it is an aesthetics which adumbrates the expression of art praxis which would not emerge fully until a century after it.

Pawel Kaczmarski: The Base of Meaning. Propaganda and the Limits of Marxist Criticism

Abstract: The aim of the paper is an essentially metacritical one: it seeks to offer a possible response to a certain methodological risk that lies at the very core of Marxist literary/art criticism, and that is traditionally exacerbated whenever the work of art is assumed to have an explicitly practical-political purpose. This seems especially pertinent today, when seemingly every day Marxists in developed economies are faced with new forms of imperialist war propaganda.

The risk in question stems from two potential methodological extremities, the tension between which has largely organised the Marxist debate on art and literature throughout the XX century, both in the East and the West – from Lukacs to Brecht, from Trotsky to Brzozowski, from Williams to Jameson. On the one hand, the understandable focus on the ideological *contents* of the work may divert the critic's attention away from the social reality of the artistic *process*. On the other hand, it could be argued that the very uniqueness of the historical-materialist method, when applied to art and literature, lies in its encouragement of a certain materialist reduction, i.e. the reduction of work of art/literature to its material *causes*.

I believe that in order to find balance between these two extremities, Marxists today need to fully appreciate the distinction between *cause* and *intention* (as articulated, for instance, in Brown's *Autonomy*) as a key conceptual tool for understanding both the function and the potential limits of materialist criticism in art/literature. This, in turn, can only be done by analysing the way in which said distinction corresponds to the more traditional Marxist categories of base and superstructure.

Paul Ingram: Adorno's Exaggerations and the Limits of Social Pathology Critique

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Abstract: This paper explores the role played by style in the construction of a critical theory of society, returning to the example of the first generation of the Frankfurt School. Theodor W. Adorno often has recourse to the polemic mode, characterized by absolute formulations, emphatic language, invective and hyperbole. There is a tendency in the contemporary reception of his work to bracket such features as 'purely stylistic', deployed to give an argument greater emphasis or graphicness without really touching the truth-claims it contains. In a key essay on *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, Axel Honneth explains the function of exaggeration in the polemic against the culture industry in terms of the critical diagnosis of forms of social pathology. His influential model of social pathology critique is 'world-disclosing', transcending a given society by revealing it to be in its totality unjust, irrational or otherwise incompatible with the conditions necessary for the good life. It licenses literary devices like exaggeration as creative means for defamiliarizing existing conditions, and for ensuring that the world is seen in a radically new light. The claims thus advanced are themselves intended to precipitate the change in perspective that would allow them to be confirmed as true, meaning that they remain ultimately contingent on their success in persuading people to accept them as a description of reality. However, Adorno's own statements about the importance of exaggeration to his method suggest that this interpretation misconstrues his notion of truth, which consists in the practice of determinate negation rather than a process of cognitive transformation. By interrogating the limits of social pathology critique, I aim to elucidate and develop this approach.

room: bglt
socialist register 2023 launch: capital and politics

This volume of the Socialist Register takes off from one of the long-time editor Leo Panitch's final essays on the political economy of power and states in this phase of capitalism. A crucial aspect of this new phase of capitalism is the restructuring to corporate power between the great financial crisis and the pandemic crisis in terms of financial capital and private equity, fossil capital, and logistics and global value chains. The volume also pays tribute to Leo Panitch addressing one of the enduring themes of his writing – contemporary capitalism and socialist strategy – a crucial issue of capital and politics today as the left tries to find a new organizational compass.

Adam Hanieh: World Oil: Transformations in Ownership and Control
Rafeef Ziadah: Logistical Landscapes: Capital in the Maritime Industry
Panagiotis Sotoris: Mass Parties, Dual Power and Strategy: A Dialogue with Leo Panitch
Steve Maher: Capitalist Restructuring, State Transformation: Leo Panitch and Capitalism Today

room: llt (dlt)
workers' inquiry stream:
launch of the class composition project

Launch of the publication for the latest Notes from Below project. The Class Composition Project analyses the changes in work and the working class in contemporary Britain, based on a collective research process led by workplace militants.

This will be a panel discussion of Notes from Below editors and contributors to the project.

room: r201
new forms of dependency in latin america

Global capitalism has been transformed during the course of the early twenty-first century. The state has been morphed into a market-making institution, charged with protecting property rights and opening new spaces for capital accumulation through privatisation of state assets, new rounds of enclosures and de-risking strategies to encourage private investment in public infrastructure and development projects. Capitalism has been financialised as financial capital has become increasingly embedded within productive circuits, vital in everything from natural resource extraction to production of industrial products. China's entry into the World Trade Organisation at the beginning of the century cemented its place in world markets, with its rise spurning processes of development across the world. More recently, the increasingly apparent egregious impacts of anthropogenic climate change has concentrated minds across governments, industry and finance on the need for a transition away from fossil fuels

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towards alternatives green technologies. These changes have had a profound effect on Latin America, a region inserted into the global capitalism system as a source of natural resources and, to a lesser extent following the rise of China, cheap labour. Despite the hope of a generation of progressive governments at the turn of the twenty-first century – collectively known as the pink tide – of using natural resource extraction to forge a different type of society here – ambitiously labelled twenty-first century by the governments of Hugo Chávez in Venezuela (1999–2013) and Evo Morales in Bolivia (2006–2019) – this development strategies have proved unable to surpass the region's historic limits and their internal contradictions.

In this context, it appears that new forms of dependency are emerging, which are shaping the political economy of region and the political prospects of the latest generation of left-wing governments in the region, from Andrés Manuel López Obrador in Mexico, Alberto Fernández in Argentina, Luis Arce Catacora in Bolivia, Pedro Castillo in Peru, Gabriel Boric in Chile and Gustavo Petro in Colombia. How have financialisation, the growth of China and ongoing energy transitions reformed relations of dependence in Latin America? What are the possible routes to constructing a transformative project in this context? To what extent are this new generation of the "Left" and do we need a new "label" for this generation of governments? And what does this mean for transformative grassroots projects in the region? These are pertinent questions thrown up by this panel, which aims to advance ongoing debates over dependency, transformations of capitalism in the twenty-first century and the prospects of the latest Latin American "Left".

Penelope Anthias: “¡Tariquía no se toca!”: Resisting the Hydrocarbon Complex in Tariquía National Reserve of Flora and Fauna

Over the past decade, declining reserves in traditional gas fields of the Chaco region, combined with ongoing state dependency on rents from natural gas, has led to an expansion of Bolivia's hydrocarbon frontier into new peasant and indigenous territories. Protected Areas are key sites for such projects, following three presidential decrees in 2015 that permitted hydrocarbon development in these ecologically sensitive areas. This has generated a new wave of indigenous and peasant resistance in protected areas, as demonstrated by the emergence in 2018 of the Coordinadora Nacional de Defensa de los Territorios Indígenas Originarios Campesinos y Áreas Protegidas (National Coordinator of Defence of Indigenous Originaries Peasant Territories and Protected Areas – CONTIOCAP). This paper shares insights from ongoing research on one such conflict: rural women's struggle against hydrocarbon development in Tariquía National Reserve of Flora and Fauna, located in Tarija Department in the Southeast of Bolivia. In line with the panel's focus on relations of dependency, it analyses how the hydrocarbon complex operates locally by exercising power through a variety of institutions – from the state parks agency SERNAP, to local NGOs, to departmental authorities, to the peasant federation. I highlight how this power functions discursively (through imagined futures of gas-funded development), politically (through new forms of state territorialisation and movement co-option), through law (through legal sanctions on NGOs and a politicised judiciary), and through violence (including intimidation of activists, and the militarisation of sites of extraction). The paper also sheds light on the ways in which women activists of Tariquía have sought to defend the territory against these forces through a combination of direct action and trans-local alliances with urban activists and other social movements. This has included visits to indigenous communities of the Chaco, who bear testament to the gap between state and corporate promises of gas-fuelled development and the stark realities of inhabiting territories of extraction. I argue that these emergent networks of indigenous and peasant activism articulate territorially-grounded theories of dependency that have inspired remarkable, if provisional, victories in blocking the entry of oil companies into the Tariquía Reserve.

Chris Little: Labour Migration and the Logic of Extraction in the Americas

This paper explains contemporary and historical circuits of labour migration as a form of extractivism. Drawing from work on extractivism, labour and extractive labour in Latin America, it is attentive to the dynamic and historically specific relations between export structure, the formation of labour movements, and patterns of national economic and political development. At the same time, it works to conceptualize labour itself as a growing and politically-determinant part of the export structure of many Latin American countries.

The paper analyzes how proliferating migrant labour flows through and from the region follow the same extractive logic present in wider hemispheric and global circuits of capital. It highlights the agency of migrant labourers in seeking to better the lives of themselves, their families and their communities while also recognizing the subordination of this agency to a wider logic of extraction that is structured by the position of sending states – or locations of migrant labour-power extraction – within the regional and world economy.

The paper contends that we need to theorize processes of class formation across, as well as within, nation-state borders, and theorize migrant labour-power itself as an extractive commodity. By doing so, we can better grasp

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processes of class formation and development both at the level of the nation state and the world economy as well as in the spaces between. This analysis takes place in conversation with the literatures on uneven development and unequal exchange, exploring how cross-border class formation and labour extraction unfold and the ways in which flows of capital, including remittances, are bound up with the extraction of migrant labour-power.

Aaron Tauss: Towards a New Historic Bloc in Colombia?

On 19 June, Gustavo Petro defeated the real estate and construction magnate Rodolfo Hernández in the second round of Colombia's presidential elections. Petro is the first person ever elected from the left (Historic Pact), which also made historic gains in the House and Senate in March. In addition to peace and green capitalist development, the new president aims to strengthen public health, education, pensions, and labour law; offer better job prospects to impoverished un- and under-employed youth in town and country (and forgive student debt); fight racial and gender discrimination through a new Ministry of Equality, to be run by the country's first Afro-Colombian Vice President, Francia Márquez; and mitigate endemic violence, poverty, and environmental destruction in mining, energy, agro-industrial, and cocaine export zones. To some extent, Petro is simply following through on the program he first outlined in 2018, when he took 41.8 percent of the vote in the second round against the current president, Iván Duque (2018-2022)a. But as the choice of Márquez as his running mate indicates, Petro also responds to the demands of millions of protestors--many of them young, precarious working-class people from urban peripheries--who battled riot police, too often with fatal consequences, at the end of 2019 and again in mid-2021. Given the organic crisis of political representation that the general strikes and uprisings exposed, this will be difficult. Yet changes are evidently afoot. Will they prove substantive and lasting, as opposed to symbolic and ephemeral? Will they spur Colombia's far right, spearheaded by former President Álvaro Uribe (2002-2010), to re-organize under new leadership and banners? Finally, how did the decline of uribismo in recent years open the door to Petro's electoral rise and eventual triumph, and, more speculatively, how might petrismo transform an 'Historic Pact' into an historic bloc, capable of governing and reshaping both state and society?

Melany Cruz: From Feminist Disobedience to a Feminist Constitution in Chile

This paper examines the political trajectory of the feminist movement in Chile and its influence on the drafting of the new Constitution. Since its eruption in 2018 as a mass movement, feminism has reshaped political ideas in the country, instigating discussions about sexual violence, the crisis of neoliberalism and reproductive labour. This paper outlines two main arguments: 1) Feminist disobedience and nonviolent actions, particularly during the 2019 social uprising, built communicative power that signalled the necessity and mass appeal of a gendered perspective on a new constitution; 2) that this process enabled an important alliance between what I call feminists-in-movement and feminists-in-power, or the relationship between horizontal non-institutionalised feminist organisations and those feminists who step into political institutions (e.g., government, Constitutional Convention, and others). Although the draft Constitution could be read from a number of feminist angles, I will demonstrate the political trajectory – from disobedience to Constitution – through the inclusion in the document of three principles: gender equality, care system, and politics with a gender focus. It is through these principles that we can clearly see the impact of the feminist movement in the building of new and progressive politics in Chile, of which the draft Constitution is one consequence.

Angus McNelly: Harnessing the Storm: Searching for Constitutive Moments and a Politics of Ch'ixi after the Pink Tide

Following the end of the progressive cycle in Latin America, new social movements and transformative social forces have emerged. This article develops a decolonial reading of the work of Bolivian Marxist René Zavaleta Mercado (1937–1984) through the work of his most significant student, Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui (1949–), in order to offer a way to search for forward forwards future transformative projects. I argue the concept of 'constitutive moments' gives us pointers as to which historical threads to pick up and trace forwards and backwards through the contours of history to better grasp what is going on and what is at stake. Moreover, Lo abigarrado and ch'ixi, concepts elaborated by Zavaleta and Rivera Cusicanqui to theorise the heterogeneous character of Latin American social formations, create space for thinking through futures drawn from both beyond and outside capitalism and within its contradictions.

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marxism and urban contexts

Stelios Foteinopoulos: Urban Planning and Social Control – Exploring the Failure of the Functional City and Discussing Alternatives

Abstract: The urban planning model after the Second World War, was a direct consequence of theoretical searches of the architectural modernism of the early 20th century, when capitalist development pushed large parts of the labour force to move to urban centres, resulting in their sudden urbanisation.

A major influence on the adoption of this model was the Athens Charter, a manifesto inspired by the movement of architectural modernism of the 1930s, which for the first time defined the direction in which urban planning should move for cities to be functional in the new conditions of rapid growth. The disorder, which until then was the driving force of urban development, was considered destructive since it rapidly accumulated problems (social, public health), but most importantly, it was immune to central control and did not take into account long-term sustainable planning.

From the 1950's onwards, and while the labour movement was growing strong, administrations in Europe and the States attempted through laws to entirely change the form and the objectives of urban planning in a way that reinforced social control and social surveillance. The state's direction to replace the chaotic dimension of rapid development with excessive classification and over-determination of uses within the urban environment soon resulted in the creation of secluded cities where social mobility was obstructed, freedom was reshaped, and rights were subject to state supervision. This was when the urban planning of the 19th century met the design philosophy of the 20th century in the big cities.

The basic principles of modernism, as expressed by Le Corbusier, outlined the "functional city" whose main characteristic is the classified and separated use of activities, where all its functions serve a centrally predetermined purpose and character.

Looking into the urban geography of big cities today, shows us that the post-war idea for urban planning not only did not provide sustainable and democratic solutions but instead operated as a means of surveillance of public space, suppression of socialisation and accelerator of social conflicts.

We know that the way a city is designed, it is impossible to disconnect it from the social and class interests at play. Thus, "functional cities" not only become battlefields of social contention but further fuel competition in ways that often target the existing capitalist order.

In this study, we will examine the association of the "functional city" with the constant attempts to exert social control during the post-war period, as well as investigate alternative critical theories such as the "open city" model, which built a conception of urban planning in the antithesis of modernism, questioning social discipline, unleashing social experimentation in a way that allows us to imagine a new identity of democratic decision-making in city life for the subordinate classes.

Marianna Charitonidou: Towards a Critique of Technocracy in the Thought of Constantinos A. Doxiadis and Adriano Olivetti: Democracy, Urban Sociology and Marshall Plan Politics

Abstract: The paper is built upon the general understanding that the Marshall Plan played a crucial role in the reconstruction of Europe after the Second World War. Architecture and urbanism were very important in this respect. A starting point for the paper is the identification of certain key players regarding the connection between the politics of the Marshall Plan and agendas for urban design, such as those of the Greek architect and town planner Constantinos A. Doxiadis and the Italian industrialist Adriano Olivetti. The paper aims to clarify how Doxiadis and Olivetti conceptualised technocracy and its relation to politics and urban planning in different ways. The main objective of this paper is to compare the directions that the reconstruction projects took after the Second World War in Italy and Greece, paying special attention to the work and approach of Doxiadis and Olivetti. The formation of national identity in post-war Greece and Italy was a significant issue in various domains including architecture, urban design and cinema. In parallel, the question of the formation of national identity in the post-war years in Greece and Italy was very present in various domains including architecture, urban design and cinema. The paper analyses Doxiadis's five-year mandate at the Ministry of Reconstruction, and Olivetti's role as president of the Istituto Nazionale di Urbanistica (INU) from 1950 and vice-president of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration from 1959. Particular emphasis is placed on the examination of the Plan for the Survival of the Greek Nation, drafted by Doxiadis and his colleagues between 1946 and 1947. A hypothesis that is examined in the paper is that Doxiadis' vision regarding post-war reconstruction was characterised by top-down interventionism par excellence, while at the heart of Olivetti's humanistic socialism as the search for socialization without nationalization.

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Max Grünberg: The Planning Daemon: Future Desire and Communal Production

Abstract: Within the planning discourse two poles materialised over the last decades, a participatory ideal guided by substantive rationality is opposing an algorithmic governmentality subordinated to formal rationality. This rift within socialist thought is also observable when it comes to the discovery of needs. The presenter understands this discovery procedure primarily as a forecasting problem and demonstrates how many planning theorists dedicated to a participatory planning process call for consumers to write down their desires in the form of wish lists. As a response to this epistemically questionable discovery procedure, the state of the art in capitalist demand forecasting at enterprises like Amazon is presented, where machine learning algorithms excel at modelling interrelated time series on a global level by extrapolating demand patterns in real-time. The talk closes with a proposal to reconfigure this predictive apparatus for socialist ends and raises questions concerned with the political implications of centralising decision-making in black box algorithms.

room: b104
counterrevolution

Ferran Perez Mena: Xi Jinping's Thought, Geopolitics and China's Internal Counterrevolution

Abstract: Xi Jinping thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a new era emerged in the 19th National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party in 2017. In 2018, the preamble of China's constitution was amended to mention Xi Jinping thought. Ever since, there has been lively debate in the fields of Chinese studies and Marxist studies about its significance. The mainstream literature either understands Xi Jinping thought as a reverberation of the Maoist past or as a novel political thought to legitimise China's authoritarian regime, reproducing internalist accounts of such a phenomenon. Against this mainstream literature, this article argues that Xi Jinping thought has to be better understood against the background of China's internal counterrevolution that emerged after the Sino-Soviet split in 1966, which was accelerated after the reforms in 1979 and took a new turn during the new Sino-American geopolitical competition.

George Sotiropoulos: 'and Let the Word Perish': Revisiting the Dialectic of War and Revolution

Abstract: While Marx and Engels had occasionally allowed for the possibility of a peaceful transition to socialism, they were no pacifists; more than that, they attempted to integrate war to their materialist conception of history. The complex historical relation between war and revolution in subsequent decades both testified for the essential veracity of such a conception and made manifest the need for its continuous renewal. It is in this spirit that my paper will theorize the historical dialectic between war and revolution. On the one hand, this will provide a conceptual framework for elucidating the chasm from past revolutionary experiences, hence, the impossibility of any direct repetition of their defining political paradigms. In this way, however, it also becomes possible to embed the potential of social transformation to the existing historical conjuncture and its defining struggles.

One key moment of the dialectic between war and revolution that will be outlined concerns the negation of any threat of radical change (real or imagined): even if it was never the only motive behind its outbreak, war was expected to annul domestic tensions and instability. Such an aspect is arguably present in many contemporary wars, the one waged currently in Ukraine included. On the other hand, what seems entirely absent is the subsequent "negation of the negation", the moment when war acts as a catalyst of revolutionary upheaval. Adding to Marxist analyses that try to come to grips with this problem, my paper will highlight the mediating role of justice, conceived in a historical materialist fashion, not as a fixed ideal that must be realized but an active component of the real movement of history. Specifically, it will be sustained that the trajectory from war to revolution is not an automatic transition prompted by defeat and societal collapse, it is mediated by the intensive actuality of the desire for justice amongst the oppressed and exploited classes. From this viewpoint it becomes necessary to grasp the determinations that once gave this desire its revolutionary potency as well as those that keep its current actuality to insurrectionary and reformist forms that seem destined to be crushed or recuperated. Among other factors, like changes in class composition, one key determination will be said to be the crisis of progressive modes of temporality and their displacement by an apocalyptic imaginary. Based on this analysis, my paper will ponder on the requisite form and content of a global movement of systemic change today, by drawing from Paul Virilio's notion of the "eschatological party".

Denis C. Bosseau: "Fighting Unity" As a Strategic Problem in the Face of the Counter-Revolution

Abstract: In a recent book, Bernard Harcourt aptly described 'the Counterrevolution' as this legalised and systematised form of counterinsurgency that has now become the hegemonic model of governance in Western

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liberal democracies (*The Counter-revolution*, 2018). Amongst its tools, a militarized policing, neoliberal offensives on rights to protest, draconian immigration laws and unbridled mass surveillance, all legitimised in the name of security and national unity. For Harcourt, critically responding to this situation would mean better understanding the broader arc of the problem of counter-revolutionary governance. As he put it, we need to “*visualise the whole*” and to see this governing paradigm for what it is in order “to translate our activism into a truly effective mobilisation”. But how to collectively raise such political consciousness? Harcourt’s suggestion is that we need to heed the path of the likes of 14th century friar Ockham and the parrhesiastic courage he showed in the face of authoritarian powers and get inspiration from the acts of modern day parrhesiasts such as Edward Snowden or social movement leaders who speak truth to power and expose its limits in various ways and from various angles. The problem with this suggestion, however, is that reducing resistance to an individualisable ethical call to speak truth to power hardly seems enough. Counter-revolution demands a revolutionary organisational response, the unification of otherwise dispersed social movements and struggles into a political movement strong enough to open the door of possibility for systemic change. This task of course presents its own challenges. As Herbert Marcuse suggested, outside small radical minorities, people’s awareness of the counterrevolution generally seem to remain unpolitical, spontaneous, their resistance dispersed, reticular at best (*Counter-revolution & Revolt,* 1972). So how to foster unification in contemporary struggles, and what might such unity imply? This is the strategic problem V.I. Lenin once referred to as the hope of “fighting unity” (*A Militant Agreement for the Uprising*, 1905) and which someone like Angela Y. Davis today would speak of in terms of an intersectional-feminist approach to revolutionary struggle (*Women, Race and Class,* 1981), and it is also the subject of this paper’s examination. Reflecting on the latter’s contribution, the main claim being advanced here is that far from supposing the ‘lumping together’ of heterogenous elements of dissent into one homogenous political organisation or party, fighting unity rather supposes a more pluralist and intersectional outlook on transformative politics. Namely, one that insists on the importance of heterogeneity of resistant practices, the idiosyncrasies of each struggle, but also poses politico-strategic questions regarding the possibility of coalition building so that various subversive elements of a situation can come to ‘strike together’ when opportunities arise. For only by learning from the experiences of each subversive elements in society – the immediate challenges that each of them face and the obstacles they seek to surmount – can any comprehensive visualisation of the ‘whole’*, and effective action against it, be envisaged.

Anne Alexander: The Permanent Revolution and the Conditions for Dual Power: Reflections on Revolutionary Experience in the Middle East and North Africa

Abstract: The concentration of revolutionary experiences in the Middle East and North Africa during the last decade provides an important testing ground for theories of ‘permanent revolution’. Proposed by Marx in an 1850 address to members of the small revolutionary socialist organisation he founded, and extended by Trotsky in response to the 1905 revolution in Russia, the core concepts of permanent revolution relate to the interplay of subjective and objective conditions which make the ‘leap’ from political to social revolution possible.

Based on my study of revolutions in the Middle East and North Africa since 2011 (Revolution is the Choice of the People, Bookmarks, 2022), I will outline a framework for understanding the application of Marx and Trotsky’s theories of permanent revolution today. The key elements of this framework firstly include a method of analysing the processes of permanent revolution which proposes three axes along which the process of what Trotsky called the “growing over” from political to social revolution actually takes place. For the revolutionary crisis to develop and mature to a point where it becomes possible to implement decisions which will move society towards a social revolution against capital, there must be constant movement along these axes through processes of “reciprocal action” similar to the concept developed by Rosa Luxemburg to explain the relationship between the economic and political aspect of mass strikes (Luxemburg, The Mass Strike, 1906).

In addition to this back-and-forth motion between economics and politics, I will discuss how similar processes must also take place along an axis which lies between popular mobilisation to disrupt the old order, and mobilisation to construct a new one. A final axis of permanent revolution discussed here connects the multiple centres of the capitalist system with its peripheries. Although hard to grasp as an abstract concept, this axis runs from the “backward” to the “advanced” sectors of the economy and society at local, regional and global level and takes on different concrete, specific forms in each revolutionary context.

Secondly, I will discuss the role of those popular revolutionary institutions which emerge out of this dynamic of reciprocal action in order to guide and develop the mass revolutionary movement. In particular, I will explore the circumstances under which such institutions develop into embryonic forms of revolutionary self-government rooted in the movement from below and discuss to what extent bodies such as the revolutionary local councils of Syria and the Resistance Committees of Sudan showed potential to travel in this direction.

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room: g51
culture stream: roberto schwarz and world-literature

Roberto Schwarz has been a key figure in world-literary studies for some time now, but the resurgence of interest in combined and uneven development has led to a renewed engagement with his work. Schwarz's perceptive and nuanced analyses of Brazilian literature and culture – developed over the period of half a century – have provided scholars in literary studies and beyond with a model of rigorous, dialectical cultural criticism. The paradox of Schwarz's influence is then that it is the very specificity of his readings and interpretations – always steeped in the particular moment in Brazilian history on which he is working – that has made them so widely influential. Yet this paradox can be explained by the fact that, even when dealing with the most specific of cultural details, the interpretive and political horizon of Schwarz's work is always the modern capitalist world-system. As such, the readings of the nineteenth century Brazilian realist novel for which Schwarz is best known, although inseparable from the local trajectory of politics and economics in Brazil, are at the same time paradigmatic examples of how to study cultural production in peripheral societies from a materialist perspective.

Nevertheless, despite Schwarz's enduring influence, there have been surprisingly few attempts to assess the scope and legacy of his work. This panel will highlight the relevance of Roberto Schwarz for contemporary debates around the concept of "world-literature", defined by the Warwick Research Collective (WReC) as "the literature of the modern capitalist world-system". Key research questions driving this panel's discussion are: How can Schwarz's project of dialectical criticism, which resists distillation into easily digestible lists of "key concepts" or straightforwardly reproducible literary-theoretical models, inform and enrich current world-literary methods of reading? What does Schwarz's work, which is concerned above all with the specificities of literature and culture in Brazil, have to tell us about materialist approaches to the practice of comparativism, in which literary forms are seen as mediations of the global horizon of the capitalist world-system? And if Schwarz is understood as one of the foremost inheritors of the intellectual projects of earlier dialectical critics such as Georg Lukács, Walter Benjamin, and Theodor W. Adorno, then to what extent do engagements with his work entail reconceiving the legacy of the Frankfurt School itself, and Hegelian cultural criticism more generally?

Thomas Waller: Registration and World-Literature

Registration is a term used by the Warwick Research Collective (WReC) to describe the relationship between capitalist modernity and aesthetic form. A key component of WReC's theory of 'world-literature', registration offers an alternative both to the more familiar but now hackneyed 'representation', which became dominant with the turn to theory in British Cultural Studies during the 1990s, and to the more proximate Marxist tradition of 'reflection theory', which is undermined by an overly simplistic and mechanistic 'base-superstructure' model. In developing the theory of registration, the work of Roberto Schwarz has been instructive for WReC, both for its sophisticated study of the cultural effects of Brazilian political economy and its complex account of what Schwarz identifies as 'the difficult process of transformation of social questions into properly literary or compositional ones'. Registration itself is, in fact, a term that often appears in Schwarz's writing, as in a key passage towards the end of his essay on 'Misplaced Ideas', where he writes that artistic production 'is historically shaped and in some way registers the social process to which it owes its existence'. This paper highlights three instances of world-literary registration in Schwarz's work that both expand on and nuance WReC's model.

While Schwarz's reading of 'volubility' in Machado de Assis's novel *The Posthumous Memoirs of Brás Cubas* corroborates WReC's argument about the self-conscious transformation of formal fissures into sources of innovation, Schwarz's work also contains instances of literary registration that do not involve the critical consciousness of the individual writer. The majority of Schwarz's first book-length monograph *To the Victor, the Potatoes!*, for example, is concerned, not with the successful transformation of literary form, but rather with the failures of Brazilian authors to adopt the formula of European realism. However, as Schwarz points out, [i]t is precisely in those failings that social interest finds its true transcription'. Furthermore, in Schwarz's interpretation of Antonio Candido's reading of the 'dialectic of roguery' in Manuel Antonio Almeida's novel *Memoirs of a Militia Sargent*, it is not the author's self-conscious engagement with the most pressing issues of his time that allows him to aesthetically register the social formation of which he is a part, but rather their textual suppression and exclusion. Here we find three modalities of registration that complement WReC's theory of world-literary registration: not only registration through the successful and self-conscious transformation of existing forms, but also registration through the failure to achieve this transformation, and through the exclusion of the very social material that is to be registered.

Nicholas Lawrence: Roberto Schwarz in the Capitalocene

Roberto Schwarz's resonant phrase – 'forms are the abstract of specific social relationships' – poses a set of

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challenges for Marxist literary-critical methodology. On the one hand, it offers a model of historical materialist hermeneutics that takes the problem of form seriously, tracking the appearance of ‘historical conditions’ as ‘social questions’ that are then given form as ‘literary structures’ in works such as Machado’s **Posthumous Memoirs of Bras Cubas**. In this model, occluded social content (involving, centrally, questions of class relations and ideology) comes into view via attention to the specifics of literary forms (inherited, manipulated, invented). On the other hand, Schwarz’s motto invokes the abstraction of the commodity form itself, in which, following Marx, there is a concealment of the social relations subtending capitalist production. The abstraction in literary form both diagrams and disguises the content that gives rise to it.

This paper brings Schwarz’s methodology to bear on what Amitav Ghosh has identified as the great lacuna of literary realism, its seeming failure to engage with the realities of climate change. While Ghosh has in mind the prevailing absence of depictions of global heating, extreme weather, rising sea levels and so on in fiction that carries the mandate of representing the conditions of the present, the question of this failure can be extended to considerations of the origins and infrastructural underpinnings of the climate crisis. As with Machado’s novelistic framing of ‘misplaced ideas’ in a Brazilian society premised on the institution of slavery, so too the global class struggles present in characterisations of the Anthropocene/Capitalocene find form in a range of generic and conceptual protocols. With reference to works by Ben Lerner, Octavia Butler and Kim Stanley Robinson, the paper will investigate the potential of bringing a Schwarzian hermeneutic to the challenge of reading literary form in an age of environmental catastrophe.

Emanuelle Santos: Situating Misplaced Ideas: Travelling Theory, Literary Form and Questions of Contemporary Brazilian Literature in the 21st Century

The renewed interest in the materialist work by Roberto Schwarz in the international circuits of literary theory and comparative literature mediated by UK-US-resident scholars and institutions is a welcome development that helps solidify the intrinsic ties between art and society that seem so fragile at the level of method in these parts of the world. While in Brazil, the work by Schwarz has been key to inform how Brazil sees itself through literature via the approach of sociology of literature, abroad, the ways in which his work conceives of the place occupied by Brazil in the capitalist world-system has provided further evidence of the system’s makeover and cultural pervasiveness.

That said, much has changed in the history and culture of this South American country since the misplaced ideas of the 19th century. The society where a man with the experience of race and class of Machado de Assis gave rise to a dead narrator in **Memórias Póstumas de Brás Cubas** (1881) is not the same in which a woman with similar experiences of race and class writes **Ponciá Vicêncio** (Conceição Evaristo, 2003) using a technique she calls **escrevivência** (write-living). This paper, thus, revisits some of Schwarz’s influential formulations and asks whether the negative dialectical method proposed by the critic is still equipped to provide a framework from which to understand the relation between form and socio-historic content in the 21st century.

room: g51a
political marxist research and analysis

Charles Post (O): Title tbc.

Steve Miller: Capitalism, Commerce, and Consumer Revolution in Eighteenth-Century France: A Critical Appraisal
Current scholarship focuses on “commercial capitalism” and a “consumer revolution” in eighteenth-century France. Historians argue that commercial capitalism across the Atlantic world created the social and cultural preconditions for the French Revolution. The argument of this paper is that commerce and consumerism are not indicative of capitalism. According to Marx, capitalism entails the reinvestment of surplus, to generate more surplus in the future, and only secondarily entails consumption and a comfortable life. The immediate goal of production is the valorization of capital, and the capitalist’s comfort is only a byproduct. This valorization process requires the purchase of labour power, which is turned into more capital. Most of the population of eighteenth and nineteenth-century France, however, consisted of peasants, who possessed subsistence plots and lived in rural communities. Peasants did not present themselves to the possessing classes as a commodified labour force available for purchase to increase capital. The current scholarly focus on commerce and consumption glosses over the fundamental issue of a transition to capitalism, of primitive accumulation or how the peasants were dispossessed and turned into a commodified labour force. To demonstrate the foregoing argument, this paper will present evidence showing that the English economy grew much faster than did the French because of investments to increase the productivity of labour during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

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Xavier Lafrance: Capitalism and the State in Nineteenth-Century and Twentieth Century France

While capitalism developed endogenously in England, first in the countryside and then in industry, it was “imported” in other countries by states who had to transform social property relations “from above” so as to cope with intensifying British geopolitical power. Doing this, heads of states faced opposition from ruling classes that were using state apparatuses for “extra-economic” surplus appropriation and that tended to oppose the capitalist restructuring of traditional land tenure through which they exploited peasants. States engaged in capitalist reforms could also face stern popular resistance from below. This was certainly the case in France – the focus of this paper – where ruling class resistance to changes in social property relations and where popular mobilizations were especially intense from the second half of the eighteenth century and throughout the nineteenth century. The result was a particularly protracted transition to, and consolidation of, capitalism, which, it will be argued, began under the Second Empire and was only really completed in the post-war period. The French state began to build a competitive market environment that compelled industrial firms to engage in capitalist patterns of investment and production from the 1860s. Facing recurrent insurgent mobilization from below, however, state leaders refrained from engaging a capitalist transition in the countryside, thus severely slowing down industrialization. It was only in a period beginning after the Liberation and through the launching of the process of European integration, that state officials were finally able to impose capitalist social property relations and competitive rules of reproduction across the board. Based on this historical evidence, this paper will draw out theoretical conclusions on the dialectics between rules of reproduction (class structure) and class struggles and its impact on the evolution and transformation of modes of exploitative production.

Javier Moreno Zacarés: Political Marxism and Housing Provision

Building on the recent revival of rent theory, this paper sketches out a theoretical framework for the analysis of housing provision from a political Marxist perspective. It is divided into three parts. (1) The first part adds precision to political Marxism’s distinction between ‘political’ and ‘economic’ accumulation by reformulating the divide as one between ‘rent extraction’ and ‘capitalist production’. These are described as forms of capital accumulation with polar opposite logics, even if they normally appear entangled together in capitalist societies. Their complex interplay is showcased in the area of real estate development. (2) The paper then moves on to explore how the transition to capitalism transformed residential accumulation. Contrary to the commercialisation bent of much of critical geography, it shows how the commodification of urban space and house-rent extraction are ancient phenomena, the basics of which have changed very little since antiquity. It then teases out how the emergence of capitalism transformed residential accumulation, tracing the emergence of specifically capitalist forms to nineteenth century Britain. (3) The paper then closes with an analysis of the awkward position that housing holds in the capitalist economy, one that grates against its mandate of continuous growth. It finishes by considering the role of housing in the ‘long downturn’ of capitalist production.

Christopher Isett: Wages of Success: Taiwan’s Developmental Path and the Source of its Current Predicament

Since 2020, the western and Japanese media echo, with increasingly strident tone, alarms sounded by their governments over Taiwan’s political status. Those warnings originate in the strategic link the island today occupies in the manufacture of the world’s most advanced and sought-after semi-conductors, the importance of this technology to national economies and defense systems, and Taiwan’s historically fraught relationship with China. Against the backdrop of China’s ascendance, and challenge to U.S. hegemony in the western Pacific, the pandemic has simply accelerated state and business consternation, from Tokyo to Berlin, over their dependency on supply chains that pass through and across the Taiwan straits.

Separated from China in 1895, Taiwan became America’s ward when the Nationalist government of Chiang Kai-shek took refuge there in 1949. No longer tied to China, and unencumbered by local class interests, the Nationalists on Taiwan implemented sweeping land reform, rebuilt the party from top to bottom, and started the island on a globally unprecedented export drive. Using its command over banks and trade, and by targeting U.S. aid at specific industries, the party left manufacturers to purchase with exports the dollars they required to expand production. After two decades of rapid industrial, GDP, and export growth, economists beginning in the 1970s rushed to explain the ‘Taiwan Miracle’. Two decades later, in the politically tumultuous 1990s, Taiwan’s rapid political liberalization put political scientists to work explaining its bloodless transition from dictatorship to democracy.

This talk explores the long origins of the contemporary moment: the origins of Taiwan’s economic miracle in the Cold War, its subsequent movement within and up the global supply chain, the forces that made for Taiwan’s political transformation, Taiwan’s subsequent role in China’s economic development, and finally the political consequences of these developments for its people.

saturday plenary

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19:00 – 21:00

room: bglt

notes from below

book launch:
clark mcallister
karl marx's workers' inquiry

In 1880, Karl Marx composed a 101-question survey that formed the groundwork for a revolutionary methodology: Workers' Inquiry. Although valued for its conceptual design and practical potential, scholars have agreed that the questionnaire was, in Marx's own time, an experimental failure: receiving no responses from workers and mostly forgotten. Assessing substantial archival research, Clark McAllister's *Karl Marx's Workers' Inquiry: International History, Reception, and Responses* sets out the case for a radical reappraisal of Workers' Inquiry. This demonstrates its central role within Marx's political project. Collected and published in English for the first time, this book contains translations and variations of the inquiry from around the world, as well as workers' original responses to the questionnaire. Contextualised against Marx's longstanding push for inquiries through the First International Workingmen's Association, the text reveals the key role Marx attributed to workers' inquiry for informing the political strategies of the workers' movement. For Marx, it was clear: there can be no politics without inquiry.

Clark McAllister (Open University) will present the book with discussants.

Chair: Dante Philp

The Notes from Below plenary will be followed by a
Historical Materialism, Brill, Socialist Register and Merlin wine reception:
SOAS Bar
21:00 – until it's gone

This book is available in online articles, pdf
and other formats here:
<https://notesfrombelow.org/issue/karl-marxs-workers-inquiry>

You can buy a copy of the book here:
<https://notesfrombelow.org/shop>



NOTES FROM
BELOW

sunday session thirteen

13 november
10:00 – 12:00

room: bglt
capitalism

Clara Mattei: The Capital Order: How Economists Invented Austerity and Paved the Way to Fascism

Abstract: In this presentation I would like to present my book that will be published on November 7 with Chicago University Press. The book reflects on the operation of austerity – understood both as a set of fiscal-monetary-industrial policies and as the neoclassical theories backing them – as a powerful counter-revolutionary project. In a moment in which austerity is once again at the forefront of state policies it is timelier than ever to reflect on its logic, which, I argue, emerges clearly if one focuses on its originating moment during the crisis of capitalism after World War One. Indeed, the combination of austerity and technocracy operated successfully to foreclose the buoyant alternatives to capitalism that were emerging during the red years of 1919-1920 in western Europe. The power of austerity still lies in its capacity to protect “capital order” as the social relation at the root of our society, disempowering voices for change and increasing profit rates to the detriment of labour shares. In order to be able to break through the chains of capitalism a lucid understanding of the functioning of austerity as its main buffer is definitely crucial.

Matt Vidal: Is Control the Essence of Capitalist Management? Lean Production and the Class Struggle

Many on the left see lean production as an inherently capitalist production model, the primary purpose of which is to deskill labour, defeat unions and intensify work. The theoretical foundation of this position is the neomarxist theory that controlling labour is the primary concern of capital, warping technological development and often overriding concerns with efficiency and profit. I argue this theory is lacking in robust theoretical or empirical foundations and articulate a classical marxist alternative. While there are specifically capitalist motivations for developing technology and specifically capitalist uses of technology, the productive forces have a relative autonomy. Many technologies developed within capitalism have important applications beyond capitalist control; neither machine tools nor computers necessarily degrade labour. I argue the same case for lean production. As with most technologies, how lean is applied depends on multiple factors including ownership, the balance of power in employment relations, and managerial orientation. Lean principles of just-in-time production and continuous improvement put a premium on cognitive labour and the tacit knowledge of workers, but managers generally fail to substantively empower labour due to myopia and satisficing (rather than concerns with control). I suggest that the path to union renewal and worker control entails fighting for co-management of lean production as part of a broader campaign for workplace democracy, using social movement tactics, with inefficiencies produced by mismanagement as a key theme for such campaigns.

Conrad Herold: Mihail Manoïlescu and Unequal Exchange: On the Uses and Politics of a Labour Theory of Value in International Trade Theory

Abstract: Karl Marx did not live long enough to deal directly with the theory of international trade, though we do know that he fully intended to do so. A surprisingly small number of Marxist authors have explicitly attempted to apply Marx's labour theory of value to the analysis of international trade. Already Arghiri Emmanuel had noted this: "As for the Marxist economists, a certain inhibition seems to hold them back from venturing into a territory that Marx did not have time to explore, namely, foreign trade." New manuscripts and new developments in Marxian theory (importantly, the various new "temporal single system" interpretations) now allow us to retake this task and begin to complete the critique of bourgeois international trade theory (namely, those of Gottfried Haberler and Bertil Ohlin). A first step in this task is to review and critique the work that has already been done along these lines. A largely ignored first, relatively unsophisticated, and only partially consistent application of a labour theory of value to international trade is that of the Romanian economist Mihail Manoïlescu (1891-1950). Manoïlescu was especially important to the origins of Latin American structuralist and dependency theory – Celso Furtado, for example, assures us that Manoïlescu was studied by Raúl Prebisch – but Manoïlescu's turn to Fascism made him an unmentionable predecessor. In this paper, as a first step toward a reconstruction of a Marxian critique of international trade theory, I evaluate Manoïlescu's use of a labour theory of value in international trade. Much is to be learned, both as to the necessity of applying a Marxian labour theory of value to international trade, but also as to the political dangers (the dangers in term of working-class strategy) of such a theoretical elaboration. This paper will thus also comment on the complex reception of Arghiri Emmanuel's work in the 1970s.

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room: llt (dlt)
workers' inquiry stream: book launch: workers can win! a guide to organising at work

Ian Allinson, Zad El Bacha, Kim Moody

Rapidly rising prices, driven by climate breakdown, the Covid pandemic and war, are piling pressure on workers to organise and defend our living standards. In Britain and many other countries, the workers' movement faces these pressures from a parlous state. The rail strikes sparked a resurgence of workers' interest in unionisation. At the same time, many activists reorienting from the defeat of Corbynism want to organise at work, while there are encouraging signs of greater engagement between the climate and workers' movements.

The session will explore how to organise effectively, workers need both ideas and skills. Among the key ideas the session will explore are a commitment to workers advancing their interests through their own collective activity, a belief that workers generally make good choices when confronted with important decisions and good information, an understanding of power, an understanding of the role and limitations of unions, and a rank-and-file orientation. Workers need to combine these political ideas with good organising skills.

room: r201
culture stream: marxism and art

Shane Boyle: The Rule of Unnecessary Men: On Art and Supply Chain Automation

Abstract: The story often told to explain the turn to performance in art since the 1960s goes something like this: the dematerialisation of the art object coincided with the rise of service work in deindustrialising countries. Just as performance became newly prominent in the world of art, so too was the world of work increasingly filled with service jobs that resembled performance. As an account of the political economy of art over the past half century, this story is both true and incomplete. Among other things it fails to consider how the reshaping of work in deindustrial economies was defined by the rise of jobs not just in the service sector but also in logistics (especially in transport and warehousing). How has art since the 1960s participated in the logistical transformation of the capitalist world-system?

My talk explores this question by comparing how artists in the 1960s and today have registered significant shifts in supply chain automation. By rereading influential performances by Charlotte Moorman, Nam June Paik, Allan Kaprow and Christo through the lens of logistics, it becomes clear that 1960s performance art shared the nascent logistics industry's interest in how best to move objects. More recent works by Lydia Ourahmane, Sokari Douglas Camp and Steve McQueen offer an opportunity to reflect on how the logistical aim of improving the flow of objects is not politically neutral, but is in fact defined by the desire to discipline labour, chiefly through racialisation and automation.

Rose-Anne Gush: Instability of Form after the Global Turn

Abstract: Returning to the advent of art's hybridisation, this paper aims to supplement dominant art historical and theoretical understanding of this process in the 1960s, by looking to a longer history of women surrealist or surrealist adjacent artists (including but not limited to Suzanne Césaire, Alina Szapocznikow, Unica Zürn) in Europe and the Caribbean between the 1930s–70s. It will use this body of work to investigate Theodor Adorno's perspicacious concept of „Verfransung“, the fraying of the boundaries between the art genres, explicated in „Art and the Arts“ (1967), arguing for its relevance in resituating „global art“ in the present.

Recent developments in art history and theory have focused on contemporary art's situatedness, its praxis and urgency under globalisation (Roberts 2015; Osborne 2018). Under the rubric of the 'global turn', art historians and theorists have explored the expansion of modern art's historical centres (Paris, the Weimar Republic, the Soviet Union during the 1920s, and New York after 1945), with the rise of Biennial cultures and art fairs, these hubs expanded to become global (Edwards and Day 2013). A broad decentring and disconnection between Western modernism and art's geo-historical 'extensity' has been diagnosed, art's 'respatialization', since the 1970s shows a move in focus from the imperial centres to the 'unmarked' peripheries, which have galvanised the 'imaginative insertion of the art of the peripheries into the timelines and spaces of the imperialist centre' (Roberts 2015).

By considering how and where this corpus of work (mentioned above) emerged and how it was shaped by mobility, I aim to recontextualise „global art“ in order to show how global resonances within twentieth-century anti- or a-formal art practices register or manifest the unevenness of capitalist modernity. With a commitment to understanding this work immanent to its historical context and genealogy, and drawing on methods developed in

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social and feminist art history and aesthetics, the paper will analyse the works in light of their navigation of spatial, temporal, material and corporeal boundaries in light of art's globalisation.

Jennifer Warren: New Institutions? Legacies of the "Progressive" Art Institutions of the 2000s

Abstract: Since the emergence of "Radical Museology" in the 2000s, an apparent consensus has been reached – that the art museum holds a centrally important role in 'progressive' social transformation. This position is sometimes marked by liberal complacency and amnesia – see *The Activist Museum* by Sandell and Janes (2019), which trumpets "the museum's inherent power as a force for good." It can also take the form of Negri-tinged wishful thinking as in *The Constituent Museum* (Byrne et al, 2018). Either way, the art museum is now recast in a largely "progressive" and even "activist" role. This is a far cry from the New Museology of the 80s and 90s which emphasised the reproductive role of the museum and its relationship to both processes of racialisation and the nation state.

This discursive shift is at least in part a result of changes in museum practice – specifically the "progressive" and curator/director-led attempts to reform European art museums in the 2000s, associated with 'New Institutionalism'. This paper will critique the changes ushered in during this period and the often contradictory methodologies underpinning these efforts, with reference to a particular case study, Museu d'Art Contemporani Barcelona (MACBA). I will also consider their lingering presence today, notably in predominance of forms of outsourcing and the use of "theory" as a dominant institutional discourse. Ultimately, the intention is to critically examine this project so as to understand its limits and to provide an analysis of the state of art institutions today as the basis for future struggles.

room: b103

monthly review: celebrating the dialectics of dependency by ruy mauro marini

Cristóbal Reyes Núñez, Mariano Félix, Andy Higginbottom

This session is meant to celebrate a foundational essay from the Brazilian sociologist and revolutionary, Ruy Mauro Marini, on the occasion of its translation into English for the first time.

In *The Dialectics of Dependency*, Marini showed that, as Latin America came to specialize in the production of raw materials and foodstuffs while importing manufactured goods, a process of unequal exchange took shape that created value transfers to the imperialist centres. Capitalists in the Latin American periphery responded to this pattern by resorting to labour superexploitation – harsh working conditions where wages fall below what is necessary to reproduce labour power. In this way, the economies of Latin America, which played a fundamental role in facilitating a new phase of the industrial revolution in western Europe, passed from the colonial condition only to be rendered economically "dependent," or subordinated to imperialist economies. This unbalanced relationship, which nonetheless allows capitalists of both imperialist and dependent regions to profit, has been reproduced in successive iterations of the international divisions of labour, and continues to inform the day-to-day life of Latin American workers and their struggles. Written during an upsurge of class struggle in the region in the 1970s, Marini's masterwork was part of a collective attempt (which included the work of Vânia Bambirra, Theôtonio dos Santos and Andre Gunder Frank) to recreate Marxism to make sense of Latin American realities and its peculiar form of capitalism. However, the book, set to be released in English for the first time in late 2022, also anticipated the revival of superexploitation not only in Latin America and the global South, but around the world. It will be of interest to anyone who wants to understand how the working life and well-being of workers everywhere is tied together. This group discussion will introduce Marini and his thesis in *The Dialectics of Dependency*, before turning to explore its enduring relevance.

room: b104

sexuality and political economy i

Heather Brown: Gender, Biological Essentialism and the LGBTQ+ Movement: Do Marx and Engels Have Anything to Offer?

Abstract: Biological essentialism often appears in social science and culture in general in cyclical fashion, first as a seemingly new trend to be explored and then eventually abandoned due to both its lack of correspondence with the empirical world and its often deleterious effects on efforts to support and enhance social, political and economic equality. One of the more recent examples of this deals with essentialist understandings of gender which offer challenges to the LGBTQ+ movement for recognition, equal treatment and even the most basic right to live without the constant threat of violence for being who they are. This is particularly true of transgender individuals. Despite certain obvious limitations, I would argue that both Marx and Engels' discussions and critiques of biological

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essentialism, particularly as they are discussing women in their own time, provide fruitful ground for thinking about these issues today. It is their dialectical method, albeit applied differently by each, which allows for insightful discussions on multiple axes – not just gender, but also class and race – simultaneously without privileging one over the others.

Mati Klitgård: P/Hetronormativity and Family Abolition in Times of Transition

Abstract: In this talk, I make the point that contemporary queer accounts of family abolition must take into consideration the change in energy forms that will be necessary to prevent utter climate apocalypse. If traditional family structures are embroiled in oil imaginaries, a queer left search for alternative constructions of care and kinship must be aware of dangers and potentials in this energy transition.

Capitalist growth in the economy has over the course of the twentieth century necessitated an estimated increase in global energy expenditure of more than 14 times. As Malm (2016) has detailed, the mobility and concentration of coal and oil were instrumental in providing such an immense energy increase. With the economic reliance on fossil fuels as hegemonic energy source, a myriad of social forms and institutions were established to facilitate its extraction, production and circulation (Diamanti 2022; Wilson, Carlson and Szeman 2017). Western imperial politics and authoritarianism are for example inextricably linked to the oil adventure (Labban 2006; Mitchell 2011).

The same period also saw the rise and consolidation of the white, middle-class nuclear family and concomitant critiques from queer, anti-racist and socialist feminists. As the feminist literature on petrocultures describes, the construction of the nuclear family through tropes of white domesticity and the male breadwinner were fueled by claims to masculinity grounded in the oil imaginary. Authoritarian ‘heavy-carbon masculinities’ (Alaimo 2016) and ‘petro-masculinities’ (Daggett 2018) permeated the traditional family unit and shaped intimacy and belonging as well as the conditions for non-normative sexual and gender minorities (Reich 2022).

These years, the queer Marxist canon is seeing a renewed interest in discussions over family abolition. As Kathi Weeks (2021) explains, if the 1990s and 2000s sought to discover modes of resistance within the frames of the nuclear family form, current critiques return to the 1970s and 1980s insistence on the abolition of this form altogether. What abolition means, however, varies depending the existing regime of accumulation under capitalism (O’Brien 2019). And it depends, I would argue, on the cultural politics of the dominant energy forms of a given time.

In a time of mandatory transition away from oil as hegemonic source of energy, we are urged to reconsider the particularities of present-day family forms. How may we think about family abolition in light of the change away from oil and its various authoritarian as well as ecofascist cultural imaginaries? And how does the queer critique of the nuclear family and the concomitant construction of alternative kinds of community and care reckon with this change?

Joana Matias: Queers and the State: Portugal’s Decriminalisation of Homosexuality in the Global Stage

Abstract: Same-sex acts between adults in Portugal were decriminalised in 1982 with the removal of the articles pertaining to “vices against nature” from the new penal code, part of a larger project for social change in the wake of the Revolution of 1974. Despite a lack of grassroots input, this moment in Portuguese queer history can be read as signalling winds of change, in contrast with general Galvão de Melo’s rebuttal of the Movement of Revolutionary Homosexual Action’s demands – which included decriminalisation – on national television in 1974. And yet, contemporary publications catering to a gay audience tell a different story, one of hostile policing and limited freedom. Far from unique to the transition from fascism to democracy, decriminalisation in Portugal was shaped by the broader process of homosexuality’s resignification particular to a global north in its ascendency. The erosion of the grounds for penalising homosexuality on the basis of morality or the health of the nation, and their replacement with notions of private liberty understood as the foundation of neoliberal economies, are part of the process of Portugal’s alignment with Europe which triumphed over the more radical horizons of the revolutionary project. These changes to the status of homosexuality in Portugal point to a reconfiguration of private and public space rather than a radical break within the relation between state and sexual dissidence. Proceeding via a Marxist analysis of sexuality as a site of labour and class struggle, reports of police action in the magazine **Orbita Gay Macho**, and a transnational approach to the grammars of queer and homosexual liberation, this presentation critically interrogates the linear narrative of progress underlying the historiography of this period and asserts the importance of queerness as a lens with which to understand political history.

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room: g51a
contemporary radical politics

Eduardo Altheman Camargo Santos (O): The Ideological Traits of Platform Labour

Abstract: This communication aims to address the following questions: What are the ideological features of platform labour? What role do new technologies (algorithms, the platform itself, data extraction) play in the production of this ideology? How does the platform's internal arrangement affect the perception of exploitation and domination? How is it that such a clearly exploitative model, based on the exploitation of millions of on-demand workers by global monopolies, can often be depicted as "free" and "autonomous" by these same workers? What is the role played by new managerial methods (such as outsourcing labour instruments to workers themselves, gamification techniques, or reputation systems) in this ideological construct?

To answer these, I draw on statistics from the 2021 International Labour Organization report on platform labour and data from my own empirical research with bicycle couriers in São Paulo (Brazil). Theoretically, I resort to the works of Marxist thinkers who sought to theorize the relationship between technology, ideology, and labour in the 20th century, especially Herbert Marcuse, as well as contemporary theorists of platform capitalism, such as Nick Srnicek, Callum Cant, Trebor Scholz, among others.

The communication focuses especially on lean platforms (such as Uber, Deliveroo, 99, iFood, Gorillas, Amazon Mechanical Turk, TaskRabbit, etc.) and not so much on advertising, cloud, or industrial platforms, mainly because the main idea is to discuss the ideological consequences of platform labour.

Based on these authors and data, I will argue that the lean platform is the utmost neoliberal form of corporation, not only concerning labour precarization and class exploitation but also the diffusion of an ideology predicated upon merit, hard work (hustle), individual performance, and the nonexistence of class or societal collective structures

Secki Jose: The Informalisation of Work: Converging on Semi-Formal Employment

Abstract: This paper traces the changing nature of capitalist employment in India, especially in the shadow of recent reforms to labour regulation. Locating these reforms within historical processes of informalisation, contractualisation and casualisation of employment in the country; the paper argues that all these processes contributed to excluding India's transforming non-agricultural workforce from the benefits of formal employment. The historical processes that contributed to legislative gains for Indian workers and the reduction of workplace discrimination through formalisation then appears to be stalling, if not moving in reverse. This can be especially identified especially in aspects related to workplace discipline (leading to increased workplace despotism and discrimination) and complementary systems of employment-related social security.

Relying on a combination of historical and employment-related statistical data, the paper argues that the qualitative changes occurring to employment is dissolving the formal-informal binary that had traditionally been used to understand employment. Though informal elements are increasingly incorporated into employment within formal organisations, the paper argues that the retention of elements of formal, regular employment implies that the emerging form of employment can neither be characterised as wholly formal nor informal, but rather appears to be semi-formal. Such employment not only increases the scope for employer despotism and discrimination in the workplace, but also provides enhanced flexibilities to employers in matters regarding working conditions, thereby leading to permanent 'under-regulation' whether through legislative or collective instruments.

Martin Moorby: Insurgent Democracy and the 99%: Assembling Radical Democratic Theories Towards a 'Movement of Movements'

Abstract: One of the challenges the Left currently faces is allying together heterogenous struggles along different axes of domination into a 'movement of movements.' Such a movement requires a mode of political articulation that brings together anti-systemic struggles into a common cause without reductionism or class essentialism. This paper turns to a common thread of radical democratic thinking within the Marxist tradition to provoke and generate thinking on this challenge. I think with Miguel Abensour's concept of 'insurgent democracy'; Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri's 'multitude'; the call for a 'Feminism for the 99%' from Cinzia Arruzza, Tithi Bhattacharya, and Nancy Fraser; Chantal Mouffe's argument for a Left populism; and with Marx over the role of democratic praxis in creating the mode of articulation the Left urgently needs.

Bringing these theorists in dialogue with one another reveals different, conflicting, but also overlapping conceptions of radical democratic struggle, the specificity of the political, and the crises of post-democracy. I show how these authors and the contemporary struggles they discuss offer us resources of hope to draw on. Specifically, if we draw on a conception of the externalisation of the political, we can assemble this current of radical democratic thinking into a mode of articulating a 'movement of movements.'

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Ignasi Bernat Molina: Re-Thinking Revolutionary Strategies in Catalonia

Abstract: In this paper, I will focus on the Catalan experience of the 'indignados' movement and the independentist movement that overlapped in time condensing both movements a massive will for radical transformation. Almost ten years ago from the occupation of the squares in 2011 to the unrest after the verdict to the independentist political prisoners in 2019. Both movements have taught important lessons for those aiming to lead the communist idea. Although having different popular compositions, both movements based their strength in the massive and popular appropriation of the public space. Both movements were trying to disrupt political power and the constitutional source of that power. However, both movements had difficulties turning that potential into institutional changes affecting the material conditions for the working people. Both movements have suffered serious attacks from state apparatuses. The 'indignados' movement was a grass-roots movement challenging the political regime. However, after the momentum of the movement had gone a new party was born to channel the energy for change. The new party Podemos was the hypothesis of a vanguard that focused on the electoral terrain to achieve institutional power. The aim was to build a lighting party to run for elections to obtain immediate electoral victories. In order to become an electoral artefact a palatable discourse was necessary. Thus, all class language disappeared and it was replaced with a discourse tailored for those disenchanted with the Spanish establishment. That is, a language based on the caste, up and down, and the 99% is understood as an electoral tactic for reaching wider population. However, left populism is having serious difficulties to develop a strategy of social transformation. At the same time, the independentist movement has also shown an impressive ongoing force in the streets, but also electorally. However, this wide movement is divided. Only its anticapitalist side, that denies all the appeals to an interclassist alliance, has a revolutionary potential. This revolutionary independentism combines a rejection of the Spanish state nationalism with a critique to the capitalist social order. The revolutionary independentism has proved a strong endurance combining the national question with the socialist project. Crucially, this rejection of the Spanish nationalism ends being more difficult to incorporate into the mainstream politics. The anticapitalist independentism is already alone against mainstream independentism and Podemos which are paved the road for a second transition. However, its capacity to overcome the defeat of the 2017 is being seriously questioned as it seems to have reached its crystal glass in the mobilization for independence and in electoral terms. Escaping the current impasse to recreate a new momentum is now the central question for anticapitalist movements.

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room: g3
book launch: *james p. cannon and the emergence of trotskyism in the united states, 1928–1938*

Bryan Palmer, Mike Goldfield, Murray E.G. Smith

Bryan D. Palmer reinterprets the history of labour and the left in the United States during the 1930s through a discussion of the emergence of Trotskyism in the most advanced capitalist country in the world. Focussing on James P. Cannon, the founder of American Trotskyism, Palmer builds on his previously published and award-winning book, *James P. Cannon and the Origins of the American Revolutionary Left, 1890–1928* (2007), with a deeply-researched and elegantly-written study of Cannon and the Trotskyist movement in the United States from 1928–38.

Situating this dissident communist movement within the history of class struggle, both national and international, Palmer examines how Cannon and others fought to revive a combative trade unionism, thwart fascism and the drift to war, refuse Stalinism's many degenerations, and build a new Party and a new International, both of which would be dedicating to reviving and realizing the possibilities of revolutionary socialism. The result is a study that provides a definitive account of the largest and most influential Trotskyist movement in the world in the 1930s, a mobilization whose history recasts understandings of the more extensively-studied experience of United States working-class militancy and the place of the Comintern-affiliated Communist Party within it.

room: bglt
war in ukraine

Ilya Budraitskis (O): Putin's Regime and Its Road to War

Abstract: The imperialist invasion of Ukraine and the nuclear threat to the world that Putin's Russia poses today is the result of the evolution of the political regime that has developed over the post-Soviet 30 years. What is the specificity of this regime and what are its universal features characteristic of neoliberal capitalism as a whole? I will try to answer these questions in my short presentation.

Michael Roberts: The Economics of the Russia- Ukraine Conflict

Abstract: What are the economic forces behind the conflict? What is the impact of sanctions on the Russian economy? What is the cost of the destruction in Ukraine and the reconstruction and how will it be paid for? Who gains economically from the war and how? What are the consequences for the world economy?

Volodymyr Ishchenko (O): Post-Soviet Class Conflict Behind the Russia-Ukraine War

Vladimir Unkovski-Korica: War of the World: Twenty-First Century Imperialism and the Euroasian Steppe

Abstract: Three decades after the end of the Cold War, the world finds itself once again facing a standoff between nuclear powers as they fight a proxy war in Ukraine. This contribution asks why Russia has invaded, why and how far the West has got involved, where the struggle for Ukrainian self-determination is headed, and what this all means for the world in the 21st century.

room: llt (dlt)
world capitalism

Giorgos Galanis, Christian Koutny, Isabella Weber: Systemic Cycles of Accumulation and Chaos in the World Capitalist System: A Missing Link

Abstract: We re-examine the Systemic Cycles of Accumulation (SCA) of Arrighi (2010) and Arrighi and Silver (1999) which provide a framework for the analysis of the cyclical patterns of geographical expansion of trade and production and the related shifts of hegemonic power within the world capitalist system. Within the SCA framework, the last stage of a hegemonic cycle is characterized by what is called 'systemic chaos', however the drivers of these chaotic dynamics have not been explicitly analyzed. This article fills this gap by providing a link between the accumulation process, Harvey's (2003) spatio-temporal fix, and systemic chaos. Our approach provides the missing detailed understanding of how systemic chaos is an outcome of the contradictory socioeconomic dynamics of capital accumulation itself while being based on the key insights of the SCA framework of hegemonic cycles.

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Sam Pryke: Deglobalisation, History and Reality

Abstract: The impact of the dual crises of Covid19 and the Russian invasion of Ukraine has meant that the once fashionable word ‘globalisation’ is now usually used in relation to its given opposite: deglobalisation. In fact, deglobalisation’s media use is similar to globalisation in its fashionable phase: a given fact. My paper/presentation, drawing on the kind of discussion in the article posted below, would look at 1) the history of the term deglobalisation; 2) its contemporary reality: the evidence is mixed; 3) what deglobalised world formation is emerging (admittedly a massive subject, so only tentative thoughts); and 4), finally, which definition of globalisation can best accommodate our changed times.

Lorenzo Fusaro: Us Hegemony Today: Fragility, Decline, Terminal Crisis or Hegemonic Transition?

Abstract: Following this year’s call, this paper will engage with the “brutal and tragic reminder of the fact that imperial ambitions, inter-imperialist rivalry, and nationalism can easily escalate into open warfare, in ways that risk generalised conflict”. In particular, I am interested relating the previous affirmation to the discussion around the concept of hegemony at the international level and the current state of US hegemony. Interestingly, the main theories that engaged with the concept of hegemony (e.g. works by and inspired by Robert Cox) argued that interstate rivalry dissolved as a result of the internationalisation of production – something that strongly contrasts with the present situation. World system theory, on the other hand highlights the underlying rivalry between capitalist states, yet, suffering from economism, sustained that US hegemony has been in crisis already for several decades, and, following Boron, that we are now truly witnessing a hegemonic transition. Recently, both Chomsky and Prashad interpret that US hegemony is neither declining nor in crisis, maintaining that we should understand it as “fragile hegemony”. Building on previous work I will argue that Gramsci’s writings still offer an adequate way to understand the contemporary state of US hegemony without presenting the previous shortcomings. From the latter perspective, I will briefly outline the vicissitudes of US hegemony and argue that we might only now speak of a crisis of US hegemony, which, however, is not accompanied by a hegemonic transition.

room: r201
culture stream

Jeremy Spencer: Modernist Art History and Ideology: Orton and De Man

Abstract: The ‘social history of art’ was a euphemism for Marxist art history taken from the title of Arnold Hauser’s 1951 art historical survey. Art historian Fred Orton reflects that in the 1970s-early 1980s art history seemed to matter, something seemed at stake. What mattered was how the discipline, under the rubric of the social history of art, engaged with history and ideology: “Ideology is a process accomplished by the so-called thinker consciously, it is true, but with a false consciousness” (Engels). What is now seemingly marginalised, ideology and ideology critique, were why art history mattered. The conjunction of art history and Marxism produced a relatively unified project: a historically aware and reflexive art history that set itself against its usual functions in capitalist institutions (Orton). This project was an antidote to “celebratory art history” that compensates for painful historical realities. This paper will reconsider this “extraordinary and exciting time” through an earlier pedagogic example, the Open University undergraduate course “A315 Modern art and modernism: Manet to Pollock” (1983), and more contemporaneously, through the theoretical example presented in Orton’s ‘Aesthetic Thinking’ and his discussion of ‘The German Ideology’, “the locus classicus for puzzling ideology” (Orton), in dialogue with Paul de Man’s reading of Marx and Engels and his critique of aesthetic ideology (he envisaged a full-scale engagement with Marxism via “The German Ideology”). The paper, then, will reconsider ideology and ideology critique as art historical problems (once) transformative of the discipline.

Marta Koronkiewicz: Post-War Literary Criticism in Britain and Poland: The Case for a Comparative Marxist Analysis

Abstract: The aim of the paper is to showcase certain surprising and significant similarities between the literary criticism of two crucial moments in the history of socialism and the labour movement: British literary criticism in the years of the Attlee government, and Polish literary criticism during the formative years of the post-war Republic of Poland (later Polish People’s Republic). Rarely explicitly compared or even discussed together, these two cultural and socio-economic contexts – for all their obvious differences – also bear clear political similarities: the immediate post-war period saw both countries’ governments in the hands of explicitly socialist leaders, with a political mandate not just to enact a progressive agenda, but to build the foundation for an actual socialist state. The feeling of political agency, historical flux and the imminent emergence of new social order had to influence the left-leaning literary critics in both countries – and, as I aim to demonstrate, their understanding of crucial social functions of literature was very much informed by this general *zeitgeist*.

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In my paper I will focus on a few select areas where this influence, and the similarities between the two traditions, are either most pronounced or especially interesting. One such area is the imagined *subject* of socialist literature (or literary production under socialism) – from various conceptions of “the people’s literature” to arguments on what constitutes the actual “working class literature” in a socialist or socialist-leaning state. It is here that the debates of the late 1940s and the early 1950s seem especially pertinent to our own.

Viola Bao: Black Experientialism: The Black Arts Movement and the Cultural Revolutions of the 60s

Abstract: The question of the relationship between capitalism and culture acquires a new and pivotal role in the social movements of the 60s, due in part because of the influence of Maoism on the global New Left. In this paper, I argue that the Black Arts Movement was part of such a global turn to Maoism, which deeply shaped its view of collective artistic practice cultural revolutionary politics. Often based in Black urban ghettos with a large proportion of unemployed or underemployed, BAM institutions in the 60s aimed to invite, serve, and reflect the ghetto community in order to direct its members towards cultural reclamation, self-determination, and revolutionary action. In this paper, I will discuss the early program statements and community initiatives of one of the most influential BAM organizations in Chicago and nationally, OBAC (Organization of Black American Culture), founded in 1966 by Hoyt Fuller, Kent Rivers, and Abdul Alkalimat. Focused on the consciousness, morale, and transformation of the masses, OBAC organized cultural initiatives that promoted the creative and experimental articulation of the true base of Black communal experience, which was seen as a necessary precursor to revolution. I will particularly analyze the concept of “Black Experientialism,” coined by Alkalimat in 1967 as a philosophical conceptualization of OBAC’s core aims, which fuses phenomenology with Maoist cultural politics. While part of the same broader turn to culture, experience, and consciousness that marked the distinctive anti-capitalist politics and art theories of the global New Left, conventional Marxist art historiographies of the period tend to center Dubord’s reworking of Lukács’ concept of “alienation;” I instead argue that alternative terms emerge if we look at how the relationship between politics and aesthetics was posed differently in the context of Black experience. Moreover, while many scholars in recent years have drawn attention to modes of abstraction, satire and mixed media in the art production of BAM, this paper argues that insufficient attention has been paid to how these modes functioned within the context of the Maoist revolutionary cultural politics and community institutions from which they emerged.

room: b103
left political language and literature

George Souvlis: From the Communist Manifesto to Jacobin Magazine: Towards a historical Sociology of Radical Journalism

Abstract: This paper aims to examine the relationship of the political left with journalistic practices from the mid-19th century to the current conjuncture. My argument is that this type of relationship is not defined so much by relevant economic or technological determinants but rather by the nature of politics that different political lefts endorsed through the time. In other words, the special features of knowledge, propaganda and self-representation that the political left aimed to promote through its journalistic practices was defined by the wider politics to which its subscribed. This practically implies that the content and the aims of journalism that the political left developed reflected – most of times in a direct way – the type of politics it promoted. For example, the type politics that L’Ordine Nuovo, the weekly newspaper that Gramsci set up in 1919, promoted quite different politics to that of Pravda during the era of Stalinism. The degree to which promoted politics was emancipatory or not, the openness of the on-going debate, the cause of internationalism, the challenge of the patriarchal order, the specificities of the discussion on the social transition, the relation of the promoted Marxism with other political ideologies, the politics of everyday life and other issues found in the different forms of radical press in different historical periods and geographies were structurally linked to the political party, social movement or governmental formation to which the press was affiliated. This phenomenon should be explained with reference to the fact that the political left since the French Revolution did not aim just to interpret the world but also to change it. Thus, the journalistic practices and the institutions that accompanied it have always a prescriptive character in terms of which direction the social change will orient itself and how this will happen. The key target of the radical journalism of the political left is the capitalist system and its economic, political and ideological parameters. In this sense, radical journalism functions as an antagonistic form of public discourse against capitalism itself. Though, given what have been already said, even the way that it conceptualizes and perceives the existing system of exploitation is defined by the politics within which is inscribed. I will demonstrate my argument by presenting key examples of radical journalism that have been formed from 1850’s until today.

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Bec Wonders: A Space to Debate Socialist Feminism: Mediating Conflict Through Serialised Letter-Writing in Second Wave Feminist Periodicals

Abstract: During the British Women's Liberation Movement between 1970-90, feminist periodicals acted as discursive, woman-controlled forums through which to debate and negotiate difficult political discussions. Using the following list of socialist and Marxist feminist periodicals as primary source material, this paper provides insights into the role of print-based networks, and specifically the letter-to-the-editor pages, in facilitating the mediation of contentious political and interpersonal feminist conflict:

- Red Rag: A Magazine of Women's Liberation (1972-80)
- Scarlet Women: Newsletter of the Socialist Current in the Women's Liberation Movement (1976-82)
- Link: Communist Party Women's Journal (1973-84)
- Women's Voice (1973-81)

By applying the framework of dialectic materialism in socialist Gracie Lyon's 1976 guidelines *Constructive Criticism*, this paper reveals how the material form of the periodical enabled good-faith negotiations concerned asking whether it was possible to 'separate the Marxist and feminist criteria for change, recombine them, and finally, in the new juxtaposition, discover a more satisfying solution?' when the end of the 1970s ushered in a new era of socioeconomic conservatism in the UK. While the independently run Red Rag and Scarlet Women periodicals provided a space for carving out a socialist feminist politic by mediating underlying divisions between women, Link and Women's Voice were more editorially limited by the aims of their governing political organisations. Additionally, this paper uses social network analysis visualisations to map the traceable progression of political disagreements in letter-to-the-editor pages and evidence how the means of communication can enable the generation of feminist theory by giving space to ideological conflict. This paper concludes with observations about how disagreement and contradiction about the Marxist and socialist feminist position was mediated by serialised correspondence and, in turn, shows how the periodical form produced a material site of communication by facilitating the formulation of feminism through – not in spite of – debate. As a case study of polyvocal and dialectical communication, the documents discussed provide hopeful strategies for how contemporary debate and conflict can take place within the Left.

room: b104
sexuality and political economy ii

Alexander Stoffel: Politicizing Eros: Queerness, Pleasure, and the Modern Capitalist State

Abstract: This paper ventures a socio-theoretical analysis of over fifty years of radical queer social movements within the United States. It situates gay liberationism, black lesbian feminism, and AIDS activism in relation to the Fordist and neoliberal regimes of accumulation and shows how these transnational movements sought to negate the governing fictions of the American hegemonic order.

It starts by illustrating how the subsumption of desire has historically secured the conditions for the expansion of American hegemony. The production of ostensibly universal national ideals has been integral to managing a constitutive contradiction between US state and capital: while the state promises homogeneity, equivalence, and resolution, capital depends upon differentiation, hierarchy, and exclusion. National ideals conceal the gendered, sexualized, and racialized divisions upon which the reproduction of capital depends by positing themselves as universal, singular, and inclusive. Crucially, the mass identification of such ostensibly universal national ideals was facilitated by the subsumption of desire.

Under Fordism, the ostensibly universal ideal of the suburban nuclear family disavowed the pathologization and repression of queer and racialized populations who were unable to assimilate to the heteronormative prescriptions of family life. This family model promised an array of desires and pleasures associated with leisure time within the home. Under neoliberalism, the heteronormative family became a privatized alternative to the support structures of the Fordist welfare state. The sanctification of the private family masked the processes of dispossession, displacement, and death that constituted the underside of neoliberal gentrification, privatization, and redevelopment. No longer sustained by institutions of the state, the private family reproduced itself instead through affective structures. The private family became the site of projected fantasies of well-being, happiness, and longevity. During both the Fordist and neoliberal stages of American hegemony, the subsumption of desire was central to the reinforcement of social integration – establishing an illusion of sameness among members of the national body politic, while disavowing the particular racialized and non-normative gender and sexual hierarchies that were integral to the reproduction of the American hegemonic order.

The subsumption of desire was never total. Seizing upon the cracks within the incomplete integration of desire

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within the social order, projects of radical queer struggle were able to articulate queerness not only as a condition of pathologization, stigmatization, and subordination, but also as a site of insurrectionary pleasures, eroticism, and sociality. They politicized various queer formations, treating them as sources of non-heteronormative kinship, erotic enjoyment, and sexual pleasure. In other words, queer struggles found within queerness possibilities for rebellion and resistance against the gendered and sexualized stratifications upon which United States hegemony depended. They connected sexual freedom – understood expansively as the celebration of unsanctioned pleasures and desires, the legitimization of non-heteronormative familial structures, the proliferation of relations of care and love, and the securing of bodily autonomy – to a broader demand for social transformation.

However, this politics of pleasure was a risky endeavor. The (counter-)investment in bodily and erotic pleasures did not constitute an inherently antagonistic practice. Although it contained emancipatory promises, it risked continual recuperation and subsumption. Desire could animate radical struggles, yet it could not guarantee their success. This paper argues that radical queer social movements were defined by a (counter-)investment in pleasure as a proxy for the fundamental transformation of social relations. However, when severed from their broader political horizon, their articulations of pleasure could be deftly recuperated and harnessed for the renewal of the social order.

Alkisti Efthymiou: Watching the Pink Cloud: Class, Gender and Sexuality in Contemporary Speculative Fiction Films From Brazil

Abstract: Since at least 2014, a series of entangled crises have been unfolding in Brazil, ranging from economic instability and presidential impeachment to authoritarian governance and its mishandling of the pandemic. More specifically, under the presidency of Jair Bolsonaro, harsh neoliberal policies have been implemented at the expense of the already-struggling lower and middle classes, while Brazilian society witnesses the surge of new conservatism, extreme right-wing ideologies and state repression. This crisis-scape has given rise to cinematic expressions of critique that, through speculative fiction, attempt to challenge neoliberal governmentality.

Numerous internationally-acclaimed short and feature films such as **Once There Was Brasilia** (Adirley Queirós 2017), **Bacurau** (Juliano Dornelles and Kleber Mendonça Filho 2019), **Tremor lê** (Elena Meirelles and Lívia de Paiva 2019), **Divine Love** (Gabriel Mascaro 2019), **August Sky** (Jasmin Tenucci 2020), **The Last Romantics of the World** (Henrique Arruda 2020), **Medusa** (Anita Rocha da Silveira 2021) and **The Pink Cloud** (Iuli Gerbase 2021), to name a few, have positioned Brazil at the epicentre of speculative filmic realities in the past five years. Triggering urgent debates about heterotopias and worlds imagined otherwise, many of these cultural texts expose the workings of classism, racism and patriarchy that constitute and sustain neoliberalism in Brazil and beyond. Through analyzing films of this corpus, the aim of this presentation is to expose the connections between the sensibilities of speculative fiction in contemporary Brazilian cinema and its critique of dominant class, gender and sexuality narratives that frame the crises.

Paul Reynolds: The Future of Marxist Critiques of Sexuality: From Identity, to Struggle to Critical Paradigm Shift

Abstract: Aesthetic political movements such as the situationists, socialist realists and capitalist realists, and those who have theorised aesthetic politics from Adorno, Benjamin and the Frankfurt School through to Marcuse and more recent theorists such as Jameson, Eagleton and Stiegler, all try to tackle a central problem. To what extent can art/aesthetic imaginaries move beyond ultimately conforming to the commodified form and being part of the ‘spectacle’? How far, in what sense and under what conditions can artistic endeavour engage revolutionary dispositions and sentiments?

In this paper I want to advance an argument and see how far it goes. The argument is that it is not necessarily in the form or functions of the artists endeavour or artefact, but in the practice and context/conjuncture – the phenomenological moment when the aesthetic is shared, experienced and received. This implies three distinctions; that a distinction between active and the passive in practice and participation in artistic endeavours is important; that the aesthetic’s import is temporally and culturally specific; that rupture as opposed to conformity lies within the capacity of the revolutionary intellectual task of populating, interpreting and propagating revolutionary meanings, capturing the moment.

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room: g51a
value-form analysis

Kei Ehara, Akihito Imai: The Japanese History of Marxian Value-Form Analysis: Focusing on Unoist Approach

Abstract: Japanese Marxian economics has evolved very uniquely like animals in the Galápagos Islands. The value-form analysis, originating in Capital Vol. 1, is a notable example. We can trace the origin of Japanese interest in the field back to the interwar period, when the study on Capital was suppressed by the Fascist government. After the second World War ended, academic freedom was attained and Marxian debate was openly launched on the ground of the studies in the pre-WWII period.

Of course, Western Marxists have studied the value-form, yet we assume that their effort has been mainly confined to its relation to the labour theory of value. The so-called “value-form approach” in English literature is one type of “approaches” from the value-form analysis to the labour theory of value. On the contrary, Japanese Marxian economics is more inclined to focus on the value-form analysis itself. Most interestingly, it has been taught not in the department of sociology or other kinds of humanities, but in the department of economics in many Japanese universities, including leading universities like the University of Tokyo and Kyoto University. In Japan, the value-form analysis has been clearly regarded as the issue of economics.

Kozo Uno played a crucial role in the above history of Japanese academia. He criticised a number of propositions in Capital, including the value-form analysis as one of the most fundamental points, and presented a different framework of Marxian political economy. His influence was large enough to form a group of researchers called the Uno school or Unoists in the Japanese universities.

This paper reviews the history of Unoist value-form analysis and explore how it is currently being redeveloped in the Japanese studies. It was more than 70 years ago that Uno published his value theory: some of the arguments are naturally outdated now. It was not only Uno's opponents but also Uno's followers who criticise Uno's notions and try to shape the better understanding of today's capitalism.

In Section 1, we shall first give a brief overview of Uno's theory of value and consider why it could be accepted as the foundation of Marxian economics in Japan. Uno's drastic reformulation could not help encountering oppositions. The most important debate was the one between Uno and Samezo Kuruma, who is also still influential today for his careful reading of Marx's texts. Though the Kuruma-Uno debate is not easy to understand, it is a good reference point to grasp how important it has been for Japanese Marxists to establish the value-form analysis as a subject of economics.

Section 2 will focus on the development of Unoist value-form analysis. We see rising trends of reinvestigating it among Japanese Marxist scholars against the background of the changes in modern capitalism. Michiaki Obata launched a radical critique of Uno's methodology and has led the developments in the 21st century. We shall pick out some of the recent arguments and evaluate its progress.

Bill Dunn: Problems of Value, Money, the State Form and the Immanence of Crisis

Abstract: The relation between money and value is highly mediated. States and the interstate system are crucial to that mediation and therefore also to the crises of capitalism. The implications of this have been under-investigated. Through a series of theses of increasing concreteness, this paper describes how the mediation between value and money becomes stretched, increasing the potential for severe dislocations. Commodity money is an inherently imperfect measure of value because it possesses value itself, because money's functions come into conflict with each other and because of its unique character as a non-consumed commodity. Money precedes capitalism by millennia so if value is conceived in specifically capitalist terms, there is at least an (incomplete) process of becoming. Money measures value as 'socially necessary labour time' but in origin it typically appears in (and continues to be vital in) the interaction between more or less separate societies, also uniting and transforming them, and whatever the socially necessary labour time might have been. Commodity money as 'world money' only worked as a 'managed' system, through national and international coordination while the end of the gold standard removed any 'objective' measure, so that value manifests itself in disorderly international adjustments not in the monetary system of any one country. Prices and price dislocations (including inflationary processes) are incomprehensible without incorporating the role of states' money supply. States are ineliminably implicated in financial crises and are not the (now lost Keynesian) solution to a system escaping state control.

Riccardo Bellofiore: What Is It? Marx's Absolute Value in the Critique of Bailey and Ricardo

Abstract: Looking for the meaning of "essay" in a dictionary, one finds as suggestion an initial and tentative effort on a particular topic, dealt from a personal point of view. This is what this chapter is. Though the subject – the relationship between value, money, and labour in Marx – has been discussed a countless number of times,

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and though I have extensively written about it. Here I deal with it from a limited and may be distinctive angle. I investigate how Marx connected the notion of “absolute value” with the question of “what is it” that makes labour the unity which is exhibited in money, through value as universal power of exchangeability. The text that I am considering is Marx’s critique of Bailey in the Manuscripts 1861-63 (in the following: TSV).

What qualifies my paper as preliminary and tentative is the urgency which pressed its conception. It is a paper in English and hence mainly from an audience of readers of Marx in English. This is a disadvantage. As I have argued at length elsewhere, I am convinced that almost all the English translations of Marx are seriously deficient in reliability and conformity to the original. This problem, however, is more intensely acute in the only translation in the Theories of Surplus Value we have (or at least that I know of). The confrontation of Marx with Bailey’s criticism of Ricardo is exactly one of the key writings where the question “what is it?” and the “founding” of value in labour, and labour alone— the (in)famous labour theory of value – is extensively discussed. The positive obstacles originated from errors, confusions, obscurities of the translation are problematical to the understanding, and have to be overcome. The same cannot be said of the translation in other languages.

My perspective in what follows is that Marx’s – note: not Ricardo’s, nor Bailey’s – “absolute” value is in the crucial passageway leading from “intrinsic” value to capital as “value in process”. Mine is partially a self-criticism, since in the past I have identified “intrinsic” and “absolute” value, as most literature by friends and foes does. I now think that this identification is wrong and dangerous (my work on Sraffa and Marx alerted me about this). To be true, the elements to reach this conclusion were already there in my past work. My perpetual journey of reading, interpreting, and reconstructing Marx – three very different endeavours, by the way – has been instrumental in allowing me to come to decipher this section of TSV. In fact, Marx’s pages on Bailey in TSV (on the background of the *Grundrisse* and *Contribution*) are preliminary to understand the dialectical derivation that Capital in the various drafts tried to pursue from 1867 onwards, never reaching a definitive formulation (and I doubt that Marx would be satisfied of their present state). They deserve a close study.

Another way to characterise this paper of mine is also as an “essay” in “plagiarism.” In fact, I will stick closely to my (alternative) rendition of Marx’s mostly German text, without ever using inverted commas. I write, mostly German, because partially Marx also writes in English: interestingly enough, the English translation “corrects” his English without notice (!). It is not actual plagiarism narrowly defined for three motives: first, Marx’s original is not encumbered by any copyright; second, systematically I depart from the available English translation, and it would be impossible to specify it continuously (though I will do that parsimoniously); third, because I freely interpolate changes where I think they can sensibly portray more mature positions by Marx, which are however already implicit (e.g., distinguishing between “value” and “exchange value”). When I believe that the indication of the German term behind the English translation that I choose could help the reader to get a deeper comprehension, I will not refrain to add a parenthesis with the relevant word.

The structure of the paper is the following. In the first section, I shall give the translation for some of the more relevant and controversial expressions (though I may add some later). In the second section, which is the longest, I shall give my summary of Marx’s argument in his critique of Bailey (for reasons of space I shall reduce to a minimum the confrontation with Ricardo and the same Bailey and look mainly at Marx’s own claims). In the third section, I will fast-forward and give a quick condensed outline of how Marx’s argument looks like in the different openings of Capital, delving into its different incarnations (remember, this is an exploratory “essay”: so, I shall leave a lot aside, including essential conceptual developments). In the fourth section, I shall succinctly assess a few of the interpretations which have been given of Marx on Bailey. Unsurprisingly, those by Anglo-Saxon authors does not cope well: in short, insisting that value is a “(specific) social form”, at worst does not say much, and at best is not giving an answer but just lays bare in too generic terms a new *problématique*: the totality of the complex problem-set inaugurated by Marx’s theory of value. The last section goes over the main points and briefly concludes questioning what “exploitation” got to do with all this: it is the transition from (my) interpretation to (my) reconstruction of the critique of political economy.

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15:00 – 16:45

room: g3
capitalism and ecology

Christian Hogsbjerg: CLR James on Capitalism and Environmental Destruction

Abstract: This paper will explore the black Trinidadian revolutionary C.L.R. James's little theorised engagement with questions of the environment and natural world, situating this within his wider oeuvre as a figure who had experienced not only colonial domination in the Caribbean but also witnessed other catastrophes endemic to twentieth century capitalism, from the Great War, the Great Depression, the rise of Fascism and the Holocaust, the Second World War and then the use of atomic weapons (Hiroshima and Nagasaki). The paper will firstly examine how James might be seen to have helped pioneer contemporary theorising around the 'plantationocene' in his classic history of the Haitian Revolution, *The Black Jacobins* (1938), and his other engagements with questions of fossil capitalism, land, freedom and power in Trinidad. It will then look at how as a Marxist as early as 1951, James (and his co-thinkers) began to theorise about humanity's relationship with the wider natural world and what capitalism was doing to that relationship. As they noted, 'It is not the world of nature that confronts man as an alien power to be overcome. It is the alien power that he has himself created'. Or in less philosophical language, 'The pressing need of society is no longer to control nature. The great and pressing need is to control, order and reduce to human usefulness the mass of wealth and knowledge which has accumulated over the last four centuries.' The choice ahead for James was one of socialism or barbarism, one of rebellion or extinction, and in 1958, evoking biblical language and imagery, he noted that we are already entering 'the very valley of the shadow of death'.

Cagri Idiman: World-Hegemonies in the Making of the Capitalist World-Ecology: Lessons From the Past, Prospects for the Future

Abstract: In this paper, I propose a conceptualization and theorization of the capitalist world-hegemonies based on the world-ecology perspective. Classical Marxist Theorists viewed world-hegemony i.e., imperialism, as a distinctive phase in the development of capitalism, while the Classical World-Systems Theorists underlined their repetitive character. However, neither perspective recognized the socio-ecological constitution of the world-hegemonies. Without accounting for the socio-ecological relations, dynamics, and contradictions of world-hegemonies, however, we cannot comprehend how systemic cycles of capital accumulation intertwine with natural cycles; hence, form a dialectical unity. In contrast to both perspectives, I argue that world-hegemonies have been novel, cyclical, and cumulative patterns of organization of 'capitalism in the web of life.' Each world-hegemonic cycle relied on a new capital-labour regime and a conception of 'historical nature' premised upon science, technology, governance, and aqua-territoriality. The accumulation strategies that initially offered high productivity and profitability by historically creating 'cheap natures' – labour, raw materials, food, and energy, gradually exhausted their supply. In turn, this exhaustion expressed itself in rising commodity prices, faltering productivity, and falling profitability. Consequently, these world-hegemonic cycles were replaced by new and yet more expansive cycles. Based on this conceptualization and theorization, I adopt a two-fold periodization of world-capitalism. First, I divide the capitalist history into four world-hegemonies: the Venetian Hegemony (circa 1450-1648), the Dutch Hegemony (circa 1648-1815), the British Hegemony (circa 1815-1945), and the US Hegemony (circa 1945-208?). Second, I further divide each world-hegemonic cycle into four sub-cycles: 1) Absolute Hegemony, 2) Relative Hegemony, 3) Hegemonic Decline, and 4) Hegemonic War. I conclude that the US Hegemony has entered its Hegemonic Decline Phase in 2015, and world-historical capitalism is marching towards three possible scenarios: 1) World-Hegemonic War circa 2050, and Transition to a new World-Hegemony, 2) World-Hegemonic War and Civilizational Collapse, and 3) World-Wide Transition to a new and possibly egalitarian World-Ecology

Janne Säynäjäkangas: Pulp Capitalism: How Forests Became Shapeless Mass of Wood

Abstract: The industrial era has been shaped by fossil capitalism. The fossil fuels have made the current form of the capitalism possible and capitalism has provided the inexhaustable outlet for these dark contents of the Earth. However, fossil capitalism is not the only example of a special relationship between capital and a specific natural resource. This presentation introduces the concept of *pulp capitalism*, which describes the way in which the dynamics between capital and resources have shaped boreal forests. Pulp is a term for the wood-based lignocellulosic material that is used to make paper and cardboard. The presentation describes how the forests of Finland have been transformed to serve the interests of pulp industry, while the preconditions for non-industrial uses of forests have degraded. The theory of pulp capitalism explains this transformation by the tendency of rate of profit to fall, which drives capital toward spatial expansion and temporal compression, and toward cheaper and faster extraction of natural resources. The term also makes use of the other meanings of the word "pulp", as shapeless mass in a more general sense as well as cheap, poor quality fiction. Pulp capitalism has transformed boreal forests

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into “pulp” in the sense of transforming them into sources of cheap and shapeless, homogeneous biomass. This loss of detail has occurred in material as well as social and epistemological level. On the material level, the forests have been simplified, which can be seen, for example, in the way the number of species and their interconnections have decreased. On the social level this transformation has occurred in the way in which the diversity of the use values of the forests has decreased as the simplification of forests has harmed the preconditions for non-industrial use of forests. On the “epistemological” level this transformation has occurred in the ways in which forests are known, as the traditional and local ecological knowledge concerning the forests has been lost and replaced by simplified understanding of forests as sources for biomass.

room: bglt
race and capitalism ii

Ashli Mullen: Racialised Capitalism At the Death Knells of Neoliberalism: Tricks of Capital and the Production and Circulation of Illusory Value

Abstract: Capitalism has relied on the exploitation of antagonisms since its inception (Robinson, 1983; Virdee, 2019), which intensifies in moments of crisis. The 2008 crisis defied recovery and has raged on for well over a decade. Its related crisis of politics consists in a vacuum populated by the performative politics of state racism, wherein an amplified disaggregation of the ‘deserving’ and ‘undeserving’ is enacted in the name of austerity and immigration control. This alters forms of exploitation as capital adapts in line with new opportunities for appropriation. Drawing on three years of fieldwork with Roma migrants in Glasgow, I show how, from the new value generated by these workers each day, employers appropriate not only all value in excess of that required for the reproduction of their labour-power, but transform a necessary cost (the variable capital necessarily expended as wages) into further surplus value, by outsourcing that cost to the state (via a policy ostensibly designed to prevent migrants from ‘burdening’ it). Through the mystifying work that it is put to, the wage slip *appears* to acquire value *in itself* that exploitative employers leverage in lieu of full or ‘fair’ payment. Imbued with *illusory value*, the wage slip acquires symbolic power as a talisman that signifies a network of documented relations. This is *illusory* insofar as the *real* value – the labour-time enacted by these workers – is precisely what is *masked*. Yet what appears to be a simple receipt, a (false) record and no more, nonetheless posits both a *use-value* and an *exchange-value* that can be *utilised* to claw back some of those wages stolen by other means. I thus argue that whilst Marx’s theory of value remains indispensable, it must be ‘stretched’ to comprehend how contemporary tricks of capital are overdetermined by racialisation, furnishing exploitative relations with both their efficacy and endurance.

Jacob Sloan: The Centrality of Anti-Racist, Anti-Imperialist, and Anti-Oppression Struggles in the Proletarian Realist Novel

Abstract: In the wake of Russia’s imperialist invasion of Ukraine and its attendant devastation; the surge of some 26 million people into the streets in the US in the wake of the police murder of George Floyd and the swift crackdown on and attempt to harness and displace their self-activity; the ongoing Israeli occupation of and violence against Palestine and Palestinians; and a host of other lived capitalist crises, the brunt of which is borne by the oppressed and exploited every day, to return to the proletarian novel – or to novels of any sort, really – seems not merely ineffective but also a waste of limited time and energy. What, if anything, is a critical Marxism to gain from these novels? Why turn to narrative when the world is on fire and, to invoke Christopher Hill in the negative, still right-side up? To turn back to the proletarian novel might seem not only frivolous but also politically regressive. Much of proletarian literature was produced under the shadow of a Stalinized Comintern, which often subordinated class struggle on the ground to the national security of the USSR. Given all of this, what can these novels tell us about the importance of centralizing anti-oppression struggles? How can they speak to an emerging left that takes struggles against racism and the oppression of queer folks and women as its point of departure?

Countering the capacious category of (Stalinist) “socialist realism,” I offer my own category, just as capacious but also committed to thinking through anti-oppression struggles as constitutive of class struggle: the global proletarian realist novel. Far from flattening vastly different manifestations of capitalist exploitation into a uniform picture of reductive economism – a night, to invoke Hegel’s critique of Schelling’s monotonous conception of the absolute, in which all cows are black – the proletarian realist novel keeps faith with difference, with the heterogeneity of both the global working class and capitalist social property relations the world over. As Anwar Shaikh writes in his Capitalism: Competition, Conflict, Crises (2016), the laws of motion of capital hold together sameness and difference: “Capitalism’s sheath mutates constantly,” Shaikh argues, “but its core” – the profit motive – “remains the same” (726).

It is my contention that the global proletarian realist novel, though often produced in some sort of relation to what we could call Stalinism, advances a conception of capital’s global laws of motion that accords with Shaikh’s account

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of capital as dynamic and turbulent, as productive not only of sameness – the attempted subordination of all human relations to the production of profit – but also of difference, grounded in capital's need to legitimize various forms of inequality through social oppression. I'll trace this alternative, responsive, and dynamic Marxism as it arises in Peter Abrahams's *Mine Boy* (South Africa, 1946), Sahar Khalifeh's *Wild Thorns* (Palestine, 1976), Richard Wright's *Uncle Tom's Children* (US, 1938/1940), and Leslie Feinberg's *Stone Butch Blues* (US, 1993).

These novels advance a politics, then, that eschews economism and stagism, and they lodge their hope for future possibility in the self-organization of the exploited and oppressed. Indeed, the proletarian realist novel's commitment to realism, to rendering the socio-historical as made up of lived-in social forces that can be investigated, known, and organized against, leads it to advance a Marxist politics that centralizes struggles against oppression, that treats these struggles as struggles against the lived modalities of capitalist exploitation and thus as constitutive of class struggle more broadly.

Till Arnhold: Difference Between Racism and Anti-Semitism: An Ideology-Critical Supplement to Achille Mbembe's Concept of Racism

Abstract: The following article discusses Mbembe's concept of racism against the background of a value-theoretical analysis of bourgeois subject constitution. This subject constitution processes under the aegis of Enlightenment values of freedom and equality within the capitalist societies of the West, which is reduced to freedom in property and equality in exchange. Subjects conceived as backward, such as those of the former colonies, seem to fall out of value utilisation. For the subject of bourgeois democracies identifying with value utilisation, all those objects not integrated in capital utilisation do not appear to operate under the principle of equality and freedom. These objects are racially devalued. On the other hand, those objects that threaten the position of the value-valorising subject in value valorisation itself are revalued and given anti-Semitic connotations. Hallucinated threat scenarios such as that of the Bolshevik capitalists or the Jewish bankers from the East Coast are the cultural expressions of the anti-Semitic defensive reactions of bourgeois subjects. This value-theoretical derivation of the difference between racism and anti-Semitism formulates a critical-theoretical complement to Mbembe's notion of the "deep Negro" (Mbembe 2020, 219). It also forms points of contact for Marxist value-critical work in order to understand the phenomena of racism and anti-Semitism more deeply.

room: llt (dlt)
marxist feminist: labour, social reproduction and migration in the capitalist night-time economy

Paul Apostolidis: Microwork and Marx: Platform Labour, Social Reproduction and the "Working Day"

Abstract: In this paper, I re-examine Marx's chapter on 'The Working Day' in Capital Vol. One through the lens of night-time activity. I argue that doing this not only invites a new way of reading Marx but also sheds light on night work today and a political response to it. On the most obvious level, in this chapter, Marx renders night-time as the scene of capital's super-exploitation of workers' wage-labour in the production process. Yet examining Marx's depictions of nocturnal experience brings even more dramatically to the fore a different structural dynamic, which is capital's concerted attack on working-class social reproduction. Approached as a meditation on the privations, indignities and horrors of the night, in other words, Marx's text appears as much or more distressed by damages to workers' reproductive lives as abuses in the factory. This exegetical angle underscores that not merely the quantitative length but the qualitative substance of everyday time and freedom are at stake in the constitution of the working day, or the life-day. This reading further suggests the need to attend more than Marx does to women's work and non-work activity under capitalism. This, in turn, opens up an optic for the critique of contemporary night work, which I demonstrate in the latter part of my comments by discussing the burgeoning phenomenon of microwork. Empirical research in which I partner with the London-based think-tank Autonomy and an Exeter colleague examines the working conditions and experiences of microworkers, who earn tiny wage increments by performing minute tasks that they access through online platforms like Amazon Mechanical Turk. Marx's critique of the 'Working Day,' understood as an analysis of capital's assault on workers' social reproduction, brings into focus not just how exploitative microwork is as a form of wage labour but also how it disfigures people's social-reproductive lives. These reflections on Marx and microwork thus underscore the need for anti-capitalist politics today to concentrate on rescuing and re-enlivening social reproductive times, spaces and relationships.

Alessio Kolioulis, Julian Siravo: Night Work and Night Spaces. Delivering the City and the Politics of Space

Abstract: This paper presents a report published by Autonomy in 2021 on the challenges of night-time workers. It does so by presenting precarity as a defining characteristic of shift and night work: workers do not choose to work

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at night, but are often forced to. The rise of precarious night work is partly due to the changing nature of the labour economy. This is particularly true for delivery and care workers. Furthermore, sex work is rarely included in the Night Time Economy (NTE), but there are an estimated 72,800 sex workers in the UK and working at night is common. It is important to include them in progressive debates about the NTE. Workers in logistics – those employed in the chain that connects warehouses to retailing, are particularly affected by the precarity-shift work nexus. This report considers municipal strategies as a means to democratise the NTE, these include policy proposals and foundational infrastructures. The report argues that a key step to democratise the economy is addressing the precarity of night-time workers. The report calls for the creation of 24hr infrastructures for workers. These autonomous structures should be funded by leveraging resources from companies capitalising on the expansion of night work. Using the framework of Public Commons Partnerships (PCPs), local governments can collaborate with unions, workers and grassroots organisations on a democratic management of the NTE- The solutions and policies in this report are not intended to encourage more night work: evidence shows the detrimental health effects of shift work on workers.

Yari Linci and Sara Farris: The Temporal Reconfigurations of Social Reproduction

Abstract: Marx once argued that all economy ultimately reduces itself to an economy of time. He understood very well that no previous mode of production had preoccupied itself with the issue of time as much as capitalism. However, since Marx's own analysis of the Working Day in the first volume of Capital, most analyses of exploitation have primarily focused upon the management and control of working spaces. When social and critical theory have attempted to investigate exploitation in its temporal dimension, they have often done so only as regards direct processes of production, and primarily within the form of salaried work, despite the latter's assorted and uneven forms. With the irruption of the latest pandemic and the expansion of remote-working regimes, many analyses of exploitation have focused on the reconfiguration of urban spaces (logistics, platform and gig economy) and the reshaping of spaces – and of their use – within households. Remote working showed us not only that workspaces have taken new forms, but also that the timing of exploitation was expanding even more beyond the bounds of the 'working day'.

In this paper we will address and problematise these new temporal reconfigurations of exploitation with particular reference to social reproduction theory. Specifically, SRT can help us illuminate how the temporal dimension of new forms of exploitation has been overlooked since many theoretical interventions primarily focused on the more tangible spatial realm. Indeed, space is the sphere that appeared to encapsulate the core transformations since the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic. Ultimately, the underlying claim of our contribution is that through SRT – and some of the examples we will present – it is possible to develop a vocabulary and a set of conceptual starting points in view of addressing the novel ways in which capital nowadays captures, synthesises, and governs the time of human beings.

room: r201
culture stream: labour and policy in the arts today

With recent strikes at the Tate galleries, unionisation drives in several major US arts institutions, and the creation of groups such as Arts Workers Italia across Europe, the potential of mass, self-organised labour in the arts has attained a new level over the past years. And, in the same moment, several novel Marxist accounts of art's position within capitalist society (e.g. Beech, Vishmidt, Davis) have appeared.

Developing on those accounts, our panel will analyse the relationship between the state, policy-making, and labour forces in the arts (MV); the peculiar power of arts workers to affect the public's perceptions of social possibility (JH); and the status of class struggle and its organisational forms on art's ostensibly exceptional mode of production (RM).

Ultimately, we will ask how the changing position of the arts in capitalist society – from 'mechanized' to automated artistic production; the blurring of advertising, fashion, and 'High Art'; the new importance of the arts for municipal and national economies – relates to the recent massification and self-organisation of arts workers.

Joe Hayns: How Important is the 'Art' in 'Arts Worker'?

Roberto Mozzachiodi: The Politics of Decommodified Labour in the Production of Art

Marina Vishmidt: Policy and/or Praxis: Some Episodes from the Organising Continuum

Andreas Petrossiants (O): Preliminary Notes Toward a Destituent Art, or the Proletarianisation of the Artist

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room: b103
marxism and science

Martin Ferroni, Diego Kozlowski, Mariana Mendonça, Fernando Cazón: The Problematic Bond Between Capital and Science. a Systematic Enquiry About the Content and Form of Scientific Production

Abstract: Marx's original work clearly stated the importance of science for capitalist production, but he never questioned what kind of subject produces science and what particular forms and potentialities this production bears. This made the understanding of the determinations of the production of science a chapter yet to be written for the critique of political economy. Then, from the work of Marxists such as Bernal, Hessen or Grossman, to the current debates of academic and cognitive capitalism, many critical contributions have been made to the understanding of science. But all of them have been indifferent to the ontological-methodological principle that guided Marx's research as it was displayed on Capital. In other words, despite their importance, those researches lack methodological guidance. This being the case, in this paper we attempt to make a contribution to filling this knowledge gap by providing a systematic explanation of science as a social form immanent to capital. In the first place, this implies giving account of capital's need for science production, unveiling the content of science. Secondly, to explain how the materiality of scientific work explains the particular ways in which it is governed, i.e., the determinations of the forms through which it is regulated. This specific approach allows us to re-discuss multiple recent debates under a new light. Topics such as the commodification of science, the loss of autonomy of scientific institutions, and the relation between science, technology and education, are critically assessed.

We consider that the general necessity of science by capital lies in the fact that it constitutes the general basis upon which the production of relative surplus value takes place. A constant expansion of scientific knowledge is a condition for the ever-renewed production of relative surplus value. As Marx pointed out, although the production of relative surplus value takes place through the pursuit of extraordinary profits by individual capitals, its result is the expansion of the valorisation capacity of the total social capital. We then identify the characteristics that science needs to have as a form of knowledge in order to properly fulfill its role of boosting the accumulation capacity of total social capital. We find that as a need of total social capital, science is in its essence a form of objective, codified, public and collectively produced knowledge. Science is thus the base of general knowledge at the disposal of each individual capital, which they further develop as technologies in search of extraordinary profits. In turn, it is a product that is produced collectively; in other words, the entire working class engaged in the production of science can be considered as a single collective worker, something that is expressed when scientists are referred to as being part of a scientific community.

We then proceed to examine what particular forms of organization derive from the peculiar materiality of scientific labour. Our main finding in this regard is that scientific production is one that cannot be directly organized by individual capitals. Firstly, given the creative nature of scientific labour, its production process cannot be organized by capital. Secondly, since science needs to be publicly available to capital as a whole, individual scientific pieces cannot be put in circulation by individual capitals as commodities. Thirdly, given the creative, non-repetitive character of scientific labour, the collective worker who produces science cannot be directly coerced by the capital that employs him. We conclude that these tasks rely on the collective worker that produces science itself. Firstly, the norms through which the scientific production takes place are sanctioned by the scientific community. Secondly, the circulation of scientific pieces is in charge of every individual research team, and it is mediated by the evaluation of other scientific workers -the peer review process-. Thirdly, the coercion through which the labour power is put in motion takes fundamentally the form of self-coercion, the resolve on the part of the scientific workers themselves to expend their labour power in the appropriate way to demonstrate that it has the attributes required by capital. In this sense, although it is an activity self-organised by the collective worker who produces science, it does not cease to be an alienated practice. It only ceases to be so insofar as it takes alienation itself as the object of its work.

The findings in our work can help the scientific community to understand the widespread evidence of inequality in the scientific system. But more fundamentally, it can help to clarify the alienated nature of its own activity and the revolutionary potentialities it carries.

David Schwartzman: A Strategy Grounded in Science

Abstract: Science, thermodynamics and climate science in particular, should inform an ecosocialist Global Green New Deal (GGND) strategy to confront the growing threat of climate catastrophe, imperative to simultaneously opening an ecosocialist path in this century. This strategy captures the divisions in capital, notably between its fossil and pro-solar power components while recognizing the opportunities for advancing working class power as a GGND unfolds. I see no other plausible strategy yet presented which has this potential.

In spite of the positive contributions of degrowthers in their critique of capitalism, the degrowth solutions offered

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are highly flawed and their brand is not likely to be welcomed by the global working class, even as it attracts sections of the professional class. Because of their appropriation of Georgescu-Roegen's fallacious entropy concept, degrowthers fail to recognize the critical difference between the high efficiency capture of the solar flux generating wind/solar power and the fossil fuel energy supply. Sufficient supplies of this renewable energy greater than the present global energy consumption level can eliminate energy poverty and have the capacity for climate mitigation and adaptation, phasing out extractive industries.

At the same time "green" capital must be challenged by building a global regulatory regime necessary for environmental, worker and community protection. Recognizing the formidable obstacles ahead that can block the unfolding of an ecosocialist GGND the necessary conditions to overcome them must be anticipated and confronted.

José Sarrión-Andaluz: Science and Marxism in the Age of Ecological Collapse and Artificial Intelligence

Abstract: In this paper we intend to examine some of the challenges that the current development of the scientific-technological complex under capitalism generates for the relations between science and Marxism, both from an epistemic and an ontological point of view.

To this end, we will focus especially on the contributions of the Spanish philosopher and logician Manuel Sacristán (1925-1985), a prominent anti-Francoist leader and pioneer of the ecologist and anti-NATO movement in Spain, as well as the most relevant Marxist thinker in the Spanish language, known for his solid training in contemporary logic.

We will point out the dialogue of Marxism with the philosophy of science and the need for the establishment of a core of the politics of science within the philosophy of science, confronting both irrationalism and crude positivism.

We will give an account of Manuel Sacristán's elementary notions of logic, epistemology, ecological thought, his dialogue with some of the main philosophers of science of the 20th century (Russell, Carnap, Quine, Popper, Kuhn), and his position with respect to some central authors of the socialist tradition, mainly: Marx, Engels, Lenin, Lukács, Gramsci and Althusser.

Through these relations of Sacristán with the authors he studied and introduced in Spain, we can see a philosophy of science with four characteristics: his anti-dogmatism, which allows him to adopt epistemological positions not common in the Marxism of his time; his attention to the historicity of science; the vindication, in the texts of the late 1970s and 1980s, of a shift from the philosophy of science to the politics of science; and his opposition to both irrationalism and positivism. Finally, I would discuss very briefly the implications of his notion of science for his Marxism.

From Sacristán's reflections on the scientific-technical complex we can find useful pointers for confronting certain challenges of the present from a Marxist perspective, such as the advance of artificial intelligence algorithms in all branches of industry and the situation of ecological collapse in which we already find ourselves.

room: b104
can defeat be conceptualized? on writing the entry 'defeat' for the historical-critical dictionary of marxism

Victor Strazzeri, Paul Reynolds, Panagiotis Sotiris

The paper raises the question of the role of historical defeats in the development of Marxist thought and whether a specific attitude towards defeat (and how to reckon with it) exists within the Marxist tradition and associated socialist movement. From Marx and Engels, to Luxemburg, Lenin and Gramsci, the major purveyors of the materialist conception of history all dealt with major defeats in their lifetimes; indeed, these defeats were often an inflection point in their intellectual production. The paper examines how these and other Marxist thinkers confronted defeat and asks whether the historical and theoretical insights of this survey might hold keys for emancipatory forces in a conjuncture – the last half-century – marked by major defeats: of the global left, the labour movement, of state socialism, etc. Finally, the paper also aims to present to conference participants the editorial principles and peculiar mode of work of the Berlin-based lexicon project it is being produced for, the Historisch-Kritisches Wörterbuch des Marxismus [Historical-Critical Dictionary of Marxism]. Given the collaborative and open-ended nature of this lexicon project, inputs from the discussion will serve as a basis for the reworking of the entry draft, due to be published in the HCDM's vol. 10/I (Negation der Negation – Ökofeminismus ['Negation of the Negation' to 'Ecofeminism']). In conclusion, other possibilities to contribute to the HCDM project will be explored.

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marxist theory and critique iv

Michael McCarthy: The Problem of Class Reductionism

Abstract: With renewed popular interest in socialism, class has come back on the intellectual agenda. But so has the familiar charge of “class reductionism.” We argue that this charge conflates two analytically distinct issues, what we term the structural and political primacy of class. Structural primacy concerns the place of class structure in social explanation. Political primacy concerns the place of class subjects in radical social change. With this distinction, we identify four separate positions with respect to the primacy of class, focusing on the positions we call “class abstractionism” and “class dynamism” within Marxist theory. While “class abstractionism” presumes to derive the political primacy of class from an account of its structural primacy, the abstract character of this account in fact presupposes political primacy. In contrast, a more adequate account of structural primacy represented by “class dynamism” requires us to abandon the presupposition of class’s necessary political primacy.

Dogukan Dere: Marxism and the Question of Democracy: Past and Present

Abstract: All have been associated with democracy; city-states of Ancient Greece, modern bourgeoisie societies, and the people’s republics emerging as the components of the worldwide revolutionary wave after WW2. Democracy, as a social and political concept, is one of the vaguest, most disputatious, yet the most widespread ones. Marxism provides no exception in this respect. It has been a very central and very contentious topic within Marxism since its early days. The discussions and disputes about the democratic duties of the working class and the revolutionary party, the democratic revolution, and the related question of allies have been fiery and decisive topics among the working-class movement in general, and within Marxism in particular. Today, we are again passing through times of ideological disputes and troubles regarding the question of how the working class and its revolutionary parties should position themselves in democratic struggles. At one end, we have fearful agitation towards collocation and alliance with all bourgeois forces that are seemingly not fascist or autocratic; and, on the other end, we have a sectarian extreme that disregards democratic struggles or totally and vulgarly subsumes them into a socialist revolution.

In this paper, my aim is to make a two-folded contribution to these discussions. In the first part, I will provide a very brief presentation of how the questions of democratic struggle, democratic revolution, and alliances were handled within Marxism across different times and spaces. In this endeavor, I will mostly dwell on the canonical works of Marxism (Marx, Engels, Luxemburg, Lenin, Trotsky, Mao, etc.). In the second part, I will aim to conduct a concrete, historical materialist analysis of the current democratic crisis with a critical engagement with contemporary thinkers (Laclau & Mouffe, Balibar, etc.). Based on the analysis of underlying economic and political analysis of the intra- and inter-class relations, I will discuss the relationship between a socialist revolution and the democratic crisis during our times.

Lukas Slothuus: The Political Theory of Rearguardism

Abstract: While vanguardism has long been a central topic of debate within emancipatory politics and political theory, rear-guardism has escaped sufficient scholarly attention. In this paper, I theorise rear-guardism as collective protective legitimisation of existing movements and struggles, protecting these from attacks by dominant forces as well as actively propagating the importance and justification of their struggles without co-opting or directing these from the front.

I first sketch Lenin’s vanguardism and Laclau and Mouffe’s radical indeterminacy. I then juxtapose Boaventura de Sousa Santos’ theory of the rear-guard with Antonio Gramsci’s work on leadership, specifically his critique of maximalism. Both offer favourable resources for how to deal with the problems of undue and illegitimate centralised leadership and for overcoming the seeming stalemate between overly strong formulations of either vanguardism or indeterminacy. Yet Gramsci provides an important corrective to de Sousa Santos’ de-materialised strategy of rearguards as confined primarily to the epistemological justice-domain.

sunday plenary

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17:00 – 19:45

room: bglt

re-thinking the theoretical foundations of
progressive and revolutionary politics
in contemporary capitalism

Camila Vergara (University of Cambridge): Critical Legal Theory and The Making of Proletarian Law: Plebeian Institutions Against Transnational Oligarchy

Alessandra Mezzadri (School of Oriental and African Studies): Unbounding Exploitation: Labour Surplus Extraction, Value and Struggles Beyond The Wage

Mai Taha (London School of Economics and Political Science): Social Reproduction as Struggle: Homes, History and Anti-Colonial Revolution

Chair: Demet Dinler

In the 25th anniversary of Historical Materialism we revisit the two founding principles of our journal: interdisciplinarity and Marxist pluralism. In the editorial of our first issue in 1997 we encouraged the systematic integration and cross fertilisation of various fields of knowledge against compartmentalisation. We also committed to creating a forum for debate between those working in different Marxist traditions and non-Marxist traditions. We recognised the need to engage with questions of gender, racism, ecology, culture and aesthetics. In the closing plenary of our 2022 conference, we celebrate achievements and future directions for these objectives. Our speakers discuss how they engage with Marxist and other traditions through the lenses of law, institutions, labour, value, social reproduction and revolution. They reflect on the political implications of theoretical innovations in the context of historical and contemporary struggles in Chile, India, UK and Palestine.